Know Yourself

Experiential Family Assessment Strategies: Impact of Mental Illness on the Family Partnering with NAMI-GA Families

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Objectives

- Discuss an innovative experiential teaching strategy to assess families who have a member with severe and persistent mental illness.
- Create an action plan that integrates this strategy into their undergraduate mental health curriculum.
- Discuss a variety of methods to evaluate students’ cognitive and affective learning during and after the family assessment class.
Inviting NAMI members into the classroom to tell their family story is an effective, value and emotion laden experience which has the capacity to transform.

“Aone of us had to stay up all night because Tom was out in the yard and the neighborhood at night trying to find the people who were after him. We were afraid he would frighten the neighbors and get shot by one of them or police.”

Affective Experiential Learning

• Change Attitudes
• Decrease Stigma
• Promote Advocacy
• Explore Values
• Transform Care
• Be Compelling!

Create an experience that
Why we do it?

- Expose students to a family in crisis
- Record, Interpret & analyze data
- Formulate realistic family focused interventions
- Integrate affective and cognitive components within the experience
- Prepare students to care for mentally ill persons and families in crisis.

What learning experiences are available?

- Competition for clinical sites
- Few opportunities to meet with family members
- NAMI Support Groups not available to large groups of students
- Thinking "outside the box"
- Bring the "community into the classroom"

The Process

- Partnering with NAMI families
- Suggested Interview topics
- Selecting & preparing NAMI families
- Role modeling interview techniques
- Value of the Genogram
- Inviting students to participate
- Debriefing
- APA paper and family plan of care
- Nursing Research
Create an Action Plan

- Break into groups
- Brainstorm and share creative ways you can incorporate family content into your course
- Involve adjunct/part time faculty in the process
- Accessing families thru local NAMI affiliate

What students say...

- “I don’t believe I would have the strength to do what they do, I can’t imagine being so caring and loving under the circumstances”.
- I saw how much the family tried to keep it together for him... like a protective barrier to the world”

What students say...

- “I have a sister who has Bipolar Illness”
- “I think my aunt has Schizophrenia. My family is Hispanic and does not believe in mental illness. They think my aunt is being punished by God”
- “In Poland, my country, people don’t talk about mental illness...they are ashamed”
* "A lot of love... I did not expect such unconditional love".

**What students say...**