OCNE Clinical Education Pilot Project: Neighborhood Clinical Experience Model

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The Neighborhood Clinical Experience Model (NCEM) was proposed to more fully integrate population-based nursing throughout the OCNE curriculum. The first phase of integration, the focus of this demonstration project, was to pilot the NCEM in preparation for use in the OCNE population-based nursing course, NRS 410. The Neighborhood Clinical Experience Model (NCEM) pilot project, a new type of placement, provides clinical learning opportunities in population-based care. A NCEM placement is an alternative to the traditional precepted clinical placement in a community and/or public health setting. Although described as "new," the NCEM is similar in many ways to a previous model in public health, "district" nursing. The philosophy of NCEM is to "take the healthcare provider to the community." NCEM is a service learning model and as such should provide benefit to the neighborhood as well as the student. The purpose of the NCEM pilot was to demonstrate that this type of placement is feasible and provides students with population-based care clinical learning activities.

The NCEM pilot project was implemented over 3 quarters. Twenty-four nursing students and one clinical faculty were assigned to a specific neighborhood and anchor agency within that neighborhood. Students, working in groups of 2-5 focused on specific populations within the neighborhood (seniors, children, families, residents from a variety of ethnic groups) and a variety of neighborhood organizations (schools, churches, beauty shops, senior centers, community service organizations, neighborhood associations, low income housing settings, etc.). Several assessment strategies were used by students, including PhotoVoice. Students worked closely with their clinical faculty, neighborhood leaders and neighborhood residents to assess the neighborhood, learn residents' perspectives about health and related concerns, and support neighborhood residents in the development of programs and/or policies to maintain and improve health.

The NCEM pilot was successful in providing students with population-based learning experiences. Students and faculty were always cognizant of being guests in the neighborhood. During this pilot, excellent clinical learning opportunities were identified that could be incorporated throughout the entire OCNE program of study where nursing students/clinical faculty would develop longstanding relationships and partnerships with residents and agencies in one consistent neighborhood. The expansion of the NCEM throughout all three levels of the OCNE curriculum would allow expanded opportunities to support neighborhood residents' efforts to improve their neighborhoods and consequently, health outcomes.