Elder Abuse in the United States: A Teaching Strategy for Nurses

Overview of Teaching Strategy

More the two million older adults are abused in the United States each year according to the National Center on Elder Abuse. It is estimated that 90% of the abusers are family members or caregivers. With a growing aging population, the need for student nurses and nurse to correctly identify abused older adults is significant. Forms of abuse include: Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment, and Financial Abuse. This teaching strategy can be used to enhance the learning of students in beginning pre-licensure nursing courses. Student will recognize and discuss the various forms of abuse in older adults, and identify resources that could potentially assist older adults in this situation. In addition, students will use the ACES to identify vulnerable older adults at risk for abuse. Lastly, this teaching strategy can be utilized in a variety of teaching/learning situations: didactic lectures; clinical settings such as post-clinical conference/debriefings; simulation scenario debriefings; or small seminar discussions. In addition, the teaching strategy can be used with practicing nurses as a professional development activity, as well as when orienting new graduate nurses.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Assess and recognize the various forms of abuse in older adults.
- Assess the older adult's understanding of the various forms of abuse.
- Identify factors that contribute to elder abuse.
- Discuss available resources to assist older adults affected by abuse.
- Describe the role of the nurse when providing care to the older adult in an abusive situation.
- Describe the complexities involved in making care decisions for older adults suffering from abuse.
- Identify the legal rights of an older adult who is victim of abuse.

Essential Knowledge Domains

- Assess Function and Expectations
- Coordinate and Manage Care
- Make Situational Decisions

ACES Essential Nursing Actions

- Individualized Aging
- Complexity of Care

NLN Education Competencies

- Nursing Judgment
- Human Flourishing
Getting Started

This teaching strategy focuses on assessing the risk factors related to abuse of older adults, coordinating and managing care of abused older adults, and making situational decisions with older adults. The strategy enhances the student's human flourishing and nursing judgment.

- Provide the learners with the ACES framework and discuss communication techniques when assessing function and expectations in older adults.
- Using the ACES framework, ask the learners to discuss a situation where they suspected abuse in an older adult but weren’t sure how to address it.
- Play the following video link. This activity can take place in lecture, seminar, or in pre or post conference for clinical, if internet access is available.
- Using the link, review the ANA's Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements with the students. The Code of Ethics for Nurses was developed as a guide for carrying out nursing responsibilities in a manner consistent with quality in nursing care and the ethical obligations of the profession. Use this link to discuss the ethical responsibilities of nurses when providing care to older adults.
- Using the link, discuss the various forms of elder abuse with the students. The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) is an association of researchers, practitioners, educators, and advocates dedicated to protecting the safety, security, and dignity of America’s most vulnerable citizens. It was established in 1988 to achieve a clearer understanding of abuse and provide direction and leadership to prevent it. Since 1998, NCPEA has been a partner or participant in the National Center on Elder Abuse, funded by Congress to serve as the nation's clearinghouse and resource for abuse and neglect.
- Discussion Questions: Use the following to facilitate a discussion with your students related to the video and case study presented:
  a. Identify and describe the form(s) of elder abuse experienced in the video. Give examples from the video to support your information.
  b. What risk factors for elder abuse and/or neglect were evident in the video for the individuals presented?
  c. What are the nurse's ethical responsibilities for a client who is a victim of abuse/neglect viewed in the video?
  d. What do you think the patient is experiencing?
  e. Consider the possible outcomes of implementing falls precautions or not. What are the risks and benefits to the patient? To the nurse?
- Play or read the Red monologue. This activity can take place in lecture, seminar, or in pre or post conference for clinical:
  o Download an audio file »
  o Download the script for the audio file »
• Discussion Questions: Use the following to facilitate a discussion with your students related to the video and case study presented:

  a. What are your concerns for Red? Give examples from the video to support your information.
  b. What is the cause of the concern?
  c. What else do you need to know about Red?
  d. What are you going to do about it?
  e. What do you think Red is experiencing?
  f. Consider the possible outcome if the nurse does nothing in this situation.
  g. Consider the possible outcomes if the nurse takes action. What are the risks and benefits to Red? To the nurse?
  h. What steps should be taken to resolve this ethical dilemma?
  i. Discuss how nurses can determine if a patient is cognitively intact in making care decisions.

Students should be encouraged to explore web sites such as the Try This® and How to Try This resources and Innovative Care Models websites for additional assessment tools and information.

Materials

- Video presenting Elder Abuse.
- Discussion Questions located below under “Getting Started”.

Students should be encouraged to explore web sites such as the Try This® and How to Try This resources and Innovative Care Models websites for additional assessment tools and information.

Suggested Readings and Resources

- Elder Abuse Emerges From The Shadows of Public Consciousness
- Abuse in Later Life Wheel

Assessment Tools

ConsultGeriRN.org the website of the Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing at New York University's College of Nursing, contains many evidence-based assessment tools. Located on the ConsultGeriRN website is a variety of assessment tools on topics relevant to the care of older adults. The How to Try This series is comprised of articles and videos demonstrating the use of the Try This series®. How to Try This articles and videos are listed under their respective Try This article. Those listed below can be used to assess, evaluate, and discuss the needs of older adults and abuse, with students.

Click here link to go to ConsultGeriRN.org and the Try This® and How to Try This resources.

- Elder Mistreatment Assessment
- Modified Caregiver Strain (For caregiver/family members)
- Confusion Assessment Method (CAM)
- Katz Index of Independence in Activities of Daily Living (ADL)
- The Lawton Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) Scale

Teaching Strategies
© National League for Nursing, 2015
Author Information

Tamika Curry, MSN, RN
Assistant Professor - Community College of Philadelphia, PA
tcurry@ccp.edu