

Substance Abuse Among Nursing Students

Nursing school is undoubtedly a stressful experience even for those students who have adequate resources and coping strategies. When students are not able to cope with the stress, sometimes they resort to using substances. “It is critical for nursing program leaders and nurse faculty to examine what is occurring in their programs at the student level and identify and implement strategies to address the complex issues associated with substance use and misuse among their nursing students” (Rattner, 2021, p. 607).

This article discussed the reasons that some nursing students use substances to cope, and made recommendations for ways nursing schools can support these students. The suggested strategies will be helpful for all students and not just the afflicted ones. The policies include designating a faculty member or a member of the administrative staff as a confidential advisor for those at risk (Rattner, 2021). Amending the curriculum by adding a course that addresses the issue of substance use and misuse in the nursing profession, and producing a handout that outlines the policies, identifies the confidential advisor, and provides resources for those seeking help.

Students with Disabilities

“The lack of social justice for nurses with disabilities includes discrimination with admission to nursing programs, discrimination in achieving employment, outdated job descriptions/essential functions, and denial/refusal of accommodation requests” (Roth & Cameron, 2024, p. 227). The authors also state that the goal of nursing is to help patients return to their baseline in terms of their health while providing holistic care. For nursing students with disabilities who are fortunate enough to gain admission to a nursing school, accommodation can and should be made.

Although social justice is commonly thought of from the perspective of health equity for healthcare consumers/partners and communities, there is a clear opportunity to challenge and expand this viewpoint to include the nurses and other healthcare professionals as an integral part of this work rather than a tool that can be used to achieve it. (Roth & Cameron, 2024, p. 227)

Part of a nursing professional development coordinator's job is advocating for inclusion policies and accommodation for people with disabilities endeavoring to become nurses. These could take the form of a dedicated ASL interpreter for hearing impaired students, assuring that the nursing school is ADA compliant for wheelchair access, and updating buildings, rooms, and elevators with Braille instructions for blind students.

References

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