# TOOLKITS AND STANDARDIZED PATIENT EXPERIENCES: PREPARING NURSES TO COMMUNICATE AND LEAD

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## Objectives
- To describe the development of toolkits for use with undergraduate nursing students
- To examine how Standardized Patient Experiences (SPEs), in conjunction with toolkits, maximize student mastery of communication and leadership skills in mental health

## Design and Implementation
- Toolkits met a core skill set and provided a consistent teaching approach.
- Learning objectives, pre-SPE activities, assignments, video vignettes, feedback rubrics, and post-SPE activities.
- Topics included:
  - Therapeutic communication in a mental health setting
  - Managing hallucinations and delusions
  - Interviewing strategies for those with substance abuse disorders
  - Assessing trauma
- Focused on building leadership skills:
  - Collaboration with the multidisciplinary team
  - Advocacy
  - Conflict Management
- Each student completed the toolkits and participated in SPEs
- Debriefing led by faculty.
- Students reviewed their own video-recordings and completed self-reflections.

## Background
- New nurse graduates often struggle with leadership skills.
- Unique challenges in a mental health setting: strategies are needed to help novice nurses apply best practice to care for individuals with complex issues.
- Shorter lengths of stay and restrictions on caring for patients deemed too unstable can lead to fewer opportunities for students to master these vitally important skills.
- Caring for individuals with mental illness requires a core set of skills:
  - Knowledge of various disorders
  - Therapeutic communication
  - Collaboration with the multidisciplinary team
  - Proficiency as an advocate whether for individuals, families, groups, or populations
  - Conflict management skills.
- Students rarely experience working with families, groups, or populations as part of their nursing education.

## Evaluation and Findings
- Standardized Patient Experiences (SPEs) allowed practice in a consistent and safe environment.
- Using rubrics, faculty provided formative and summative feedback to students about:
  - Therapeutic communication skills
  - Assessment/management of patients with mental health diagnoses
  - Application of leadership skills.
- Growth was noted in students' communication and leadership skills and ability to care for patients with common mental health issues.

## Implications and Recommendations
- Use of SPEs and toolkit activities were highly effective in helping students meet a core skill set in mental health nursing and leadership.
- Implementing these activities with registered nurses is recommended to evaluate their utility in a different setting.

## References

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