

Review article

Self-esteem and assertive training to decrease stress among nursing students**Vaishali Jadhav, Natasha Mahajan**

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Abstract

In the life of adolescence, the phase from childhood to early adulthood is an important one. Since, the huge pressure forced on adolescents due to the complications and ambiguities of this transition, in this case, their level of excitement increases and sometimes it appears in the form of sensitivity and intense excitement. Assertiveness is the direct, honest and appropriate expression of your feelings, thoughts, needs, wants, opinion or rights in a way that respects the rights of others. Assertive behavior promotes equality in a human relationship, personal power and self-confident. Becoming more assertive empowers individuals by promoting self-esteem and help to act in own best way. Assertiveness is an antidote to fear, shyness, passivity and even anger. As nurses work in different situations they have to be assertive in order to meet the challenges and to win the cooperation from others. This review focus on the assertive training and related factors.

Key words: Assertive training, nursing students

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1. Introduction

Academic stress is a mental and emotional pressure, tension or stress that occurs due to the demands of college life. Some academic stress is normal for all college students because of the stress that comes from being exposed to new educational concepts adjusting to new social setting and taking on the larger workload. Too much academic stress can contribute to depression and physical illnesses which can, in turn, negatively affect academic performance. [1]

Although attending college can be rewarding experience it also can be a time of considerable anxiety and stress for students. The combination of many stressors of college life such as planning for the future, struggling with exams and assignments, meeting the demands of challenging professors, deciding on a major and transitioning into financial and emotional independence

can be an overwhelming experience for many wonder whether they will be able to meet their own expectations as well as those of their parents and friends.[2]

There have been many studies which have reported a strong relationship between stress and college students. Some individuals are more sensitive to some stressors than others so the person's characteristics and behavior patterns must be looked at to determine their importance and their vulnerability to stress. Stress has been associated with major life events, daily life hurdles and changes in life. [2] Too much stress can interfere with a student's preparation, concentration and performance. [3]

Assertiveness enables to withstand the stress. Those suffering from bullying and stress need to have a high level of assertiveness to resist and cope successfully. Hence it was considered vital to increase the level of assertiveness of nursing students. [4] Assertiveness is not something that is inherited. Assertiveness is a skill that anyone could learn if he decided to, lack of assertiveness is only rooted to the way of dealing with others you got used to, this way may be letting go of your rights or fear of standing up for yourself. Being assertive requires only thing, your decision. [5]

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Reviews related to the level of assertiveness among nurses.

A preliminary pilot study was conducted in Ireland, to evaluate the development and results of an instrument that describes the assertive behaviors of nurses by a 44-item questionnaire collected data from 27 registered nurses. The results showed that items that feature strongly in the respondents reported behavior are allowing others to express opinions, complimenting others and saying no. These findings suggest that nurses behave in a passive way, conforming to the image of a nice nurse. Nurses were less adept at disagreeing with others opinions and providing constructive criticism. [13]

An exploratory study to compare the assertive behaviors of trained nurses at work and in general life situations was conducted. Questionnaire and interview technique are used to investigate the behavior of a small sample of sisters, staff nurses and enrolled nurses in general hospital settings. Trained nurses are found to be less assertive at work than in general life situations. In the work situation sisters are more assertive than staff nurses. The enrolled are the least assertive of the trained nurses. Factors which promote assertiveness at work include knowledge, confidence, experience and the wearing of the uniforms. Factors which inhibit this behavior are tradition, training and the hierarchical structure within the hospital. The use of assertiveness tends to be situation specific. Assertiveness viewed as a positive behavior and is of value to nurses, but there is mixed feeling about the usefulness of assertive training. [14]

A questionnaire survey among the undergraduate nursing students in Greece was conducted to assess the level of assertiveness. The study population was composed of nursing students in different semesters at one school in Central Greece ($n=298$) who agreed to complete a questionnaire on assertiveness level assessment, which had been translated into Greek and adapted to this population. All students present in class completed the questionnaire, representing 80% of the total population of active students. Mean assertiveness scores between semesters were compared by ANOVA and comparisons between the responses of the first semester students and responses of advanced semester students were done by Pearson's chi-square. The main finding of this study was that the assertiveness levels displayed by students increase slightly in advanced semesters by comparison to those displayed by first-semester students. It concluded that assertive behavior should be encouraged through learning methods. Nurses should preferably obtain this training throughout their studies. Instructors have an essential role in the improvement and achievement of assertiveness training curriculums for undergraduate nursing students. [15]

Literature related to self-esteem and effect of assertive training

A study was conducted to assess the effects of web-based assertion training for Japanese hospital nurses based on their assertion knowledge, attitude and behavior, job stress and depression. Twenty five nurses from an urban tertiary hospital in western Japan completed the 70 minute assertion programme during 3 weeks. The changes between pre-training and post-training and between pre-training and 1 month after the training were tested. The findings showed that assertion knowledge and voluntary behavior in assertive behavior had increased at post-training and remained higher a month later. [6]

An experimental study was conducted to assess the effect of an assertiveness training on the assertiveness and self esteem level of 5th grade children. The samples for this study were from Ankara University Development Foundation Primary School. 24 students participated in the study. The experimental design was used in which 2 groups were compared on pre-test and post-test measured by using Assertive inventory and coppersmith self esteem inventory observations were collected through the record sheets. The experimental group was given an 8 weeks training. The result revealed that there was significant difference between the two groups based on assertiveness scores and found that assertive training proved effective in raising self-esteem among those children. [7]

A study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of an assertiveness training program on nursing and medical students' assertiveness, self-esteem, and interpersonal communication satisfaction. 69 participants whose scores on the Assertive Scale were $< \text{or} = 50\%$ (i.e., low assertiveness) and who were willing to participate were included and assigned to an experimental group (33 subjects) or comparison group (36 participants; participants were matched with the experimental group by grade and sex). Participants in the experimental group received eight 2-h sessions of assertiveness training once a week. Data were collected before and after training and again one month after the end of the training using the Rotter's Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement Scale, Sex Role Inventory, Assertive Scale, Esteem Scale, and Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory.. The result revealed that assertiveness and self-esteem of the experimental group were significantly improved in nursing and medical students after assertiveness training. [8]

A study was done to investigate the effectiveness of an assertiveness training programme on adolescents' assertiveness level. To select subjects for experimental and control groups, it was considered some criteria such as "Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS)" scores, voluntariness, teachers' opinion, and permission of students' parents. The data was collected through

“Rathus Assertiveness Schedule”. For the experimental group assertiveness enhancing programme as an independent variable was carried out during 50-70 minutes lasting 12 weeks. During this period the control group did not receive any treatment. The ANCOVA analysis results have shown that assertiveness training program was effective on adolescents’ assertiveness level. The results were discussed in the light of related literature. [9]

The study was conducted to determine the effect of an assertiveness training program on self-esteem and assertiveness skills of students at the Faculty of Nursing, Alexandria University. The samples composed of “80” nursing students, they were divided randomly to “40” students for study group and “40” for control group. The data were collecting by using assertiveness scale and self-esteem scale. A negative statistical significant correlation was proved between assertiveness skills and self-esteem, i.e., as students’ assertiveness skills score increases (becomes better), students’ self-esteem score decrease (becomes better). Also, a statistical significant difference was found between both of assertiveness skills and self-esteem mean scores of study and control groups immediately post and one month after program. The study concluded that assertive behaviour and self-esteem can be learned and that students studied at faculty of nursing can significantly benefit from an assertiveness training program to increase their assertiveness skills and self-esteem. [10]

A study was conducted in Chhattisgarh, India in a CBSE English medium school with 160 students to check the effectiveness of assertiveness training programme on self-esteem and academic achievement in adolescents. The study adopted pre-test–post-test control group design. Experimental group was given assertiveness training but control group was not given any training. After intervention, subjects were tested on the same measures again. It was concluded that assertiveness training programme was effective by 30.25% on self-esteem but no potential effects are found on academic achievement of adolescents. [11]

A study was conducted to assess the level of assertiveness among professional nurses at College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Winona State University, Minnesota. The sample was composed of 500 registered nurses (64% response rate), chosen randomly from the list of active licensees registered with the Minnesota (USA) State Board of Nursing, who completed and returned an assertiveness questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) and a personal/professional data form. The oldest group of nurses (60-76 years) was significantly less assertive (73.5%) than any of the younger groups of nurses. Nurses practicing with a diploma as the highest level of education were significantly less assertive than nurses having a baccalaureate or above. There was a significant

difference in assertiveness between groups of nurses practicing in different clinical specialties. [12]

Conclusion

The review concluded that the assertiveness training program is always helpful and it increases the assertiveness level and reduced the state of being victims. Further did not affect the state of being bullies

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