

## APPENDIX B.5 EARLY CULTIVATION OF SELF-CARE PRACTICES

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**Introduction:** New nursing students are acculturating to a profession, applying liberal arts and science knowledge to new (often abstract) concepts in a demanding baccalaureate program. Within days and weeks, students are exposed to stress from academic load, new guidelines for dress and communication, and acute clinical situations that may include death. Many times, very few have the life skills to deal with the trials that accompany this new role. The practice of loving-kindness and equanimity extends to the self and, too often, a student nurse's lack of personal awareness and ability to cope result in physical, psychological, and/or spiritual distress. The student nurse will be able to work through the hurdles and challenges that lie embedded in the path to becoming and create a foundation for self-care during his or her nursing practice.

**Significance:** A nursing student's present and future success, as a nurse and caregiver, may be improved by possessing effective strategies to deal with the stressors of school and care of the ill and injured. Students are immediately immersed into a stressful environment beginning on the first day of nursing school. The provision of early lessons related to self-care could minimize or eliminate sequelae resultant of the stressors.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to provide the nursing student with strategies to cope with and manage life challenges in a healthy and effective way to promote success in the roles of nursing student and caring nurse. Although lessons will be learned through the program and their careers, the lessons for self-care management are to be embedded on entry into the program in the first week of the curriculum.

**Setting and Participants:** The project affects prelicensure of bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) students at Nevada State College. The intervention would be implemented in the first lecture in a first semester course, Nursing Fundamentals. The typical cohort size varies from 32 to 48 maximum and the participants are instructed by graduate nursing degree-prepared instructors. The theory lecturer acts as the course leader and delivers the content. The remaining educators are in the role of clinical instructor.

**Project Description/Process:** The project is rooted from two of Dr. Jean Watson's Caritas Processes<sup>®</sup>. They are the practice of loving-kindness and equanimity within the context of caring consciousness and cultivation of one's own spiritual practices and transpersonal self, going beyond ego self (Watson, 2008). Students will be taught lectures related to theory, personal strategies, availability of resources, and interventions to manage stress commonly associated with a BSN nursing program. This occurs in the first week of nursing school and the content covers short-term, medium-term, and long-term interventions. Clinical instructors will further assist with recognition and refinement of the content and practice of self-care to meet individual needs. Clinical shifts will begin and end with focus, centering, and reflection.

**Project Outcome(s)/Projected Outcomes:** Student nurses will practice interventions and promote strategies to help them cope with the stress associated with nursing and nursing

school. In addition, student nurses will report successful use of the interventions when dealing with challenges.

**Project Evaluation or Partial/Projected Evaluation if Not Completed:** No tool currently exists but a Likert-style scale will be designed and used to measure the effectiveness of the lessons. This assessment will be made in the first and final weeks of the semester.

**Future Directions:** This program could be implemented into the nursing curriculum for the full-time cohorts and, in time, the part-time cohorts. With properly designed assessment tools, legitimate research can be performed to measure the true efficacy of the andragogical interventions.

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## REFERENCE

Watson, J. (2008). *Nursing: The philosophy and science of caring* (Rev. ed.). Boulder: University Press of Colorado.