The modification of two tools to measure emotional intelligence in undergraduate student nurses: A mixed method pilot study

Laurel Collin

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The modification of two tools to measure emotional intelligence in undergraduate student nurses: A mixed method pilot study

Laurel Collin
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This thesis is the report of a research study submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Laurel Collin
Abstract

The modification of two tools to measure emotional intelligence in undergraduate student nurses: A mixed method pilot study

Nurses need a range of strategies to manage their clinical practice while helping patients to cope with their health problems. Stress and inefficient coping skills of student nurses have been shown to lead to attrition within the university and later, on graduation, in the workplace. Student nurses can learn some of these strategies as they are expected to cope with issues associated with the practical nature of nursing, university demands and home life. One strategy offered is the use of emotional intelligence (EI). An ability to monitor and regulate emotions may contribute to an increase in the repertoire of coping skills. A preliminary investigation uncovered several instruments that purported to measure this concept, but none that could be used with nursing students. Thus, the aim of this study was to identify instruments that could be modified for use with a student nurse population.

The Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU) and the Situational Test of Emotional Management (STEM) were previously used with psychology students and were deemed possible contenders. It was intended that the study would be a pilot for further studies. A mixed method embedded study was implemented to address the aim of the study. It was divided into three phases that were sequential with one phase informing the next. The initial phases were involved with questionnaire development, including issues of validity and reliability. The final phase was the testing of the questionnaires pre/post an educational intervention aimed at enhancing the EI of a small group of student nurses. Questionnaire development involved student nurses’ focus groups and subject matter experts. The educational intervention, utilizing problem based learning, was facilitated with a separate group of students from those who were involved in testing the questionnaires. Findings from the study indicated that the modified STEU and STEM reflected undergraduate nursing experience and heightened their EI. It is proposed that EI can offer a valuable resource for student nurses when faced with the stresses associated with undertaking university studies. Thus, a recommendation emanating from of this study is to embed EI into nursing courses.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is an account of my research, and contains as its main content work that has not been previously submitted for an award of degree, or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed

Laurel Collin