Is Lateral Violence Training Needed in Nursing School???

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Nursing literature consistently identifies novice nurses as the most likely to experience lateral violence in the healthcare workforce. With that statistic in mind, faculty at USC decided to offer lateral violence workshops to senior students. Several faculty members attended the train-the-trainer program sponsored by the Upstate AHEC and training sessions with senior nursing students began in fall 2010. The focus was on identification of lateral violence and skills to address it should it occur. Multiple sessions of approximately 30 students per group were held utilizing the AHEC program Lateral Violence among Nurses: Let’s Get Rid of It.

As part of the program, the students anonymously completed a Personal Experience of Workplace Violence survey. The sheets were collected and redistributed to others in the class. The questions were read out loud and the students responded by raising their hands based on what the survey in front of them stated. The outcome was very impressive. Without exception, the student results mirrored the results of a survey of 900 nurses in the upstate who were the first to undergo the AHEC program. Approximately 90% of both student groups and nurses had witnessed lateral violence with 83% identifying themselves as a victim of lateral violence. Nonverbal innuendo was listed as the most frequent form of lateral violence. Novice nurses were the most frequent target and the most overwhelming and startling statistic was that lateral violence is typically ignored. One can extrapolate that the lack of action to stop the violence is why it has continued for so long.

The AHEC program has a board game, Can We Talk?, which is played at the end of the session to give participants practice responding to different situations of lateral violence using a format for effective feedback model:

- **Describe** the situation (“When…happened,“)
- **Explore** or express your thoughts, feelings or concerns given the benefit of the doubt (“Was it your intent to…“)
- **Specify** what you want them to do differently next time (“In the future, would you…“)
- **Consequence**—state the positive consequence when they do as you ask (Bowers & Bowers, 2004)

The program evaluations from the students showed high satisfaction with the program and most made statements that they would be better able to address issues of lateral violence as nurse.

So YES--Lateral violence awareness and training is needed for nursing students to stop it in the future.

References:

Information about lateral violence training materials is available at [www.upstateahec.org](http://www.upstateahec.org).