Purpose

The purpose of this abstract is to determine how service learning can enhance the clinical experience of nursing students outside of acute care settings. The value of service learning for nursing students includes an understanding of the community’s needs, cultural awareness of diverse populations, and development of skills in the areas of leadership, communication, and collaboration.

Background

Texas is ranked among the ten highest states for teen pregnancy. Teenaged mothers are less likely to receive prenatal care and are more likely to have low-birth-weight infants. Therefore, community-service projects may improve outcomes for teenaged mothers. A partnership between the Healy Murphy Center, an alternative high school for pregnant and parenting teens, and the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA) integrates the mission and purpose of both facilities in serving the needs of the community.

Methods

A pre-survey questionnaire was given to the teens prior to beginning the wellness program. The 8 participants were surveyed on their topics of interest. A total of 32 second semester undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students participated in implementing the wellness program at the Healy Murphy Center. The community-service project was incorporated during the students’ obstetrics rotation. Each week a small group of 10 students prepared interactive games and creative lessons to engage teen mothers in health promotion. A different group of nursing students rotated every week to present new topics related to maternal-child health, fitness, and nutrition.

Results

Nursing students gained an appreciation of the day to day challenges of teen mothers, and acquired a broader understanding of their health care needs. 62% of the participants were present to take a post-survey questionnaire. The teens verbalized positive feedback regarding the experience and expressed interest in obtaining more information on nutrition and fitness.

Conclusion

This was a pilot project. Collaboration between UTHSCSA and the Healy Murphy Center was limited by time and resources. However, the UTHSCSA School of Nursing will continue to partner with the Healy Murphy Center to develop and teach the wellness program, as well as obtain ongoing assessments and a formal evaluation from the teen mothers and nursing students.

References


Special Acknowledgements

UTHSCSA School of Nursing
The Healy Murphy Center
Ms. Janie Whitely, Program Director
Ms. Cristina Vandusen, School Nurse