

Addressing adverse childhood experiences (adverse childhood experiences) in nursing education to improve practice and professional well-being: Opportunities and challenges

SUNY Downstate College of Nursing seeks to integrate interprofessional education (IPE) of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) into the nursing curriculum to provide knowledge, skills and training for nurses to address ACEs in practice and promote professional wellbeing through self-awareness of their own ACEs and the potential impact of ACEs on practice. ACEs are childhood events that produce toxic stress and can result in poor health, social and economic outcomes in adulthood, including poor work performance, absenteeism, burnout and lower quality of patient care. Many providers lack knowledge about ACEs and consequently do not ask their patients about them. It is

thus imperative that nurses be trained to identify and screen their patients for ACEs and that nurses are aware of their own needs for self-care related to ACEs. Opportunities: To date, knowledge about ACEs has not translated into health professions education and little is known about ACEs prevalence among student or practicing nurses. ACEs IPE represents innovation and can fill major gaps in nursing preparation. There are numerous pathways for integrating IPE ACEs in the nursing curriculum. Faculty and students have shown great interest in learning about ACEs and are beginning to develop ACEs research projects. Students' reactions to pilot assessment activities further demonstrates a compelling need for ACEs training, skill building and increasing students' capacity for self-knowledge. Challenges: ACEs is a highly sensitive topic. Integration of ACEs into curriculum and studies to assess ACEs among nurses must carefully balance educational needs with ethical considerations in education and research.



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Biography

Shirley Girouard has been instrumental in promoting research among student nurses, seeking evidence for education & practice, & advocating for healthcare system change that best meets population health needs & addresses the social determinants of health. She has demonstrated strong leadership & made significant contributions in many areas including direct services for children & families; research; teaching; workforce development; & health policy reform & advocacy. She has recently published a commentary on the importance of addressing ACEs in nursing in a special supplement of *Academic Pediatrics* (September 2017), one of only a handful of articles on ACEs in nursing.

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