Resilience in Nursing Students: An Integrative Review

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INTRODUCTION
- Resilience is the ability to overcome adversity and includes how one learns to grow stronger from the experience (McAllister & McKinnon, 2009).
- Protective factors related to resilience include optimism, sense of humor, flexibility and self-efficacy (Stephens, 2013).
- The Carnegie Foundation report recommends that nurse educators shift from socializing nursing students to emphasizing the formation of nurses (Hennes, Sutphen, Leonard, & Day, 2010).
- Research has identified resilience as important for nurses because of the demanding role they have, and the chaotic environments in which they work (McAllister & McKinnon, 2009).
- Recommendations from research on resilience in nurses suggest that resilience training be incorporated into nursing education (Jackson, Firtko & Edmondson, 2007).
- Nursing students are subjected to higher academic stress compared to students in other majors (Edwards, Burman, & Hebdin, 2010).
- Clinical education exposes the student to death and dying, communicable diseases and diverse lifestyles (Stephens, 2013).

AIM AND QUESTIONS
The aim of this integrative review is to examine the literature related to resilience among pre-licensure nursing students.

Specific questions guiding the review included:
1. How is resilience among nursing students defined or described?
2. What factors affect or contribute to resilience in nursing students?
3. In what ways has resilience been promoted among nursing students?

Method
Integrative review including theoretical, qualitative and quantitative work.
- Whittemore and Knaff’s five stage integrative review method: problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, presentation (2005)

Search Strategy
- Data bases searched: CINHAL, ERIC and PsychINFO

Results
1. Definition and Description of Resilience in Nursing Students
- Resilience in nursing students is not well defined, broad definitions from psychology are generally used.
- Authors describe resilience in relation to a stressor, offer a set of personal characteristics then identify a coping outcome (Thomas & Hunter, 2016).
- A concept analysis defines it as: “Nursing student resilience is an individualized process of development that occurs through the use of personal protective factors to successfully navigate perceived stress and adversities. Cumulative successes lead to enhanced coping/adaptive abilities and well-being” (Stephens, 2013, p.130)

2. Factors Affecting Resilience in Nursing Students
- Support
  - Support from family, friends and faculty were found to positively affect resilience in two qualitative studies (Crombie, Brindley, Harris, Marks-Manar & Thompson, 2012; Carol, 2011)
  - Family support was identified most frequently
  - Quantitative work has not been done in this area
- Time
  - Taylor and Reyes (2012) found statistical significance in the resilience measurements of perseverance and existential aloneness between the start and end of a semester.
  - Older students scored higher on resilience instruments than their younger counterparts (Pitt, Pevsner, Levett-Jones & Hunter, 2014).
- These studies use different instruments to measure resilience, these studies suggest that time impacts a student’s resilience (Thomas & Hunter, 2016).
- Empowerment
  - Empowerment and resilience was correlated in one study (Thomas & Hunter, 2016).

3. Strategies to Promote Resilience in Nursing Students
- Reflection: Theoretical work posits that faculty can promote resilience in students by teaching them to reflect and persevere in the face of conflict (Hodges, Kelley & Grier, 2005).
- Empowerment: Faculty can coach students to reframe challenges into positive and meaningful learning experiences.
- Support: Faculty can coach students to reframe challenges into positive and meaningful learning experiences.
- Connection: Students can be engaged to access support systems.
- Prevention: Intervention studies showed that frequent short doses are more beneficial than longer spaced out doses of the intervention. When and how to deliver these interventions need further study.
- Research in this area will inform faculty on how to promote resilience in nursing students. Ultimately impacting the quality of care by producing more resilient nurses

Discussion
A consistent definition of resilience in nursing students is lacking. Clarity of the definition would allow for comparative measurement and strengthen the science.
- The theoretical work illustrates that it is reasonable to think that reflection increases resilience in students, further research is needed to support this claim.
- Faculty can coach students to reframe challenges into positive learning experiences. In addition students can be encouraged to access their support systems.
- Intervention studies showed that frequent short doses are more beneficial than longer spaced out doses of the intervention. When and how to deliver these interventions need further study.

References
Whittemore and Knafl's five stage integrative review method: problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis, presentation (2005)