

Marion Roddewig (2013). Peer group counseling in healthcare and nursing. Effects on the students' well-being. Mabuse-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main

The effect of peer group counseling on the students' well-being in healthcare and nurse education. Study on guidance and training program designed for peer group counseling in healthcare and nursing and their effects on emotional well-being

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### Summary

Even though the trainees in healthcare and nurse institutions experience similar working and training conditions, however these conditions are perceived differently burdensome and lead accordingly to various stressful reactions. The main topic to explore of this rather basic research is the mental health of the trainees. The results are supposed to answer questions about the relationship between emotional well-being and coping strategies when meeting the requirements posed by healthcare and nursing education.

First of all, it should be identified particular internal and external resources which are activated by those students who manage to feel permanently well or succeed to constitute well-being. On the other hand, the guidance and training program will be also examined to find out whether the peer group counseling developed by the author can contribute to the reduction of stress and enable students to better meet the requirements set.

Designed as a quasi-experiment and covering the whole period of training, the study on well-being was divided into four fixed dates of data collection (at the beginning of the training, at the beginning of the second and third year of training, and on the last day of a school leaving before the verbal exam).

With the help of the sentence finishing tests and questionnaire "Emotional well-being in nursing education" four variables were examined: well-being, self-image, social support, and coping. In addition, at the end of the training the evaluation of the guidance and training program was carried out by a questionnaire created for this purpose.

The methods used in the research proved their worth for the emotional well-being measurement as well as for testing the program of guidance for peer group counseling. Also, a comparison of extreme groups - students with habitual well-being and students with habitual unwell feeling - identified the variables "self-image" and "coping" as meaningful self-regulation resources for the sustainability and restoration of well-being.

The most important findings of the study are:

- The program developed for the target group turned out to be particularly valuable for boosting resistance to stress. Comparing the results of the experimental and control groups, t-test showed some positive effects of the intervention measure for the *generalized resistance resources: self-image* (positive self-image:  $p=0.006$ ) and *coping* (situation assessment:  $p=0.007$  and problem solving competence:  $p=0.034$ ).
- The intervention measures on the level of *social support* had only partial effects. Still, it is noteworthy that the students from the experimental group associated significantly more *sympathy with other students* in the sentence finishing tests to the end of the training than the students of the control group. This outcome may indicate that the guidance and training program made a positive impact on the classroom climate.
- In the third year of training, well-being was described more frequently in the experimental group than in the control group. Moreover, it could be ascertained that the number of trainees, who at the beginning of the training had specified habitual unwell feeling, was reduced in the experimental group to 62.5 percent at the end of the training and in the control group to 30 percent.
- With regard to guidance and training program the students from both extreme groups described an increase in their cognitive and social skills, especially knowledge and raised competence in establishing of communication and consultation processes. The vast majority of the students perceived the guidance and training program as a meaningful part of their learning.

On the whole, the guide program can be estimated as perfectly feasible and beneficial to health promotion. As a method of self-directed learning it helps develop action and problem solving competence as well as compensate for negative effects of learning-induced stress.