Creating a Culture of Caring for Online Learners

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Agenda

- **Goal**: create a sustainable structure and format for meaningful online learning and student support
- Introduce helpful theories for designing online learning and advising
- Focus on creating a culture of caring
  - Translating nursing education’s focus on care and caring attitude into online academic advising
Types of Learning

- Remote learning (in-person learning converted to synchronous/asynchronous virtual environment)
  - Emergency Remote Learning (2021 CHLOE 6 Report)
- Distance learning (has an online component but could also have in-person requirements)
- Online learning (100% online, potentially asynchronous, learning created specifically for a virtual format)
Online Learning by Numbers

- Pre-COVID: 37.2% of college students were taking classes online
  - 17.6% of students exclusively online
  - National Center for Education Statistics, 2019

- Impact of COVID: 86% of CHLOE 6 respondents (361 institutions) indicate increased or much greater priority for online learning post-COVID
Care & Caring Theories in Nursing

"Professional identity of nurses is closely linked to the concept of caring" (Jones, et al. 2020)

Caring Theories in Nursing:
- Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring
- Kristen Swanson's Theory of Caring
Jean Watson's Human Caring Theory

Caring Science Assumptions

- Integrating practices of love and caring in our personal and professional lives can have a monumental impact on our world, creating a more loving, caring, humane, and moral community of human beings.

- Demonstrating caring ideals and ethics in nursing professional practice has the potential to create significant positive change for our societies. Nurses respect others and care about their health.

- To be kind and loving to others, we must demonstrate those same practices on ourselves. This includes grace, forgiveness, compassion, mercy, equanimity, and dignity.

Kristin Swanson's Theory of Caring

Five Caring Processes:

- Knowing: avoid assumptions
- Being With: emotional presence
- Doing For: competently attending to needs of others while preserving dignity
- Enabling: facilitating growth and transitions
- Maintaining Belief: faith in other's capacity to be successful

Six Elements of Caring Communication

- Offer Full Presence
- Shared Humanity
- Attend to the Individual
- Demonstrate flexibility
- Ask for and provide frequent clarification
- Point out favorable opportunities yet acknowledge challenges

Culture of Caring Online: Considerations

- Communication! Communication! Communication!
  - Across studies and reports, students indicate strong and consistent communication is crucial to conveying care for online learners
- Online learners are missing the informal/social opportunities to learn information
- Embrace role as front door and phone operator of the institution
  - Take time to know and convey university resources (through newsletters, program announcements, in individual email responses, etc.
- Advisors as main source of information and primary representative of the institution
- Warm referrals wherever possible
Culture of Caring in Practice

- When time is short for a caring response:
  - Utilize email templates that can be tailored
  - Automated communication plans
  - Targeted reminders at key points of semester
- Targeted outreach during current events: to students of color during BLM protests, to Texas residents during the winter freeze
- Appreciative advising & physical space: how to replicate a welcoming environment in a virtual space
- Flexibility and empathy
Culture of Caring in Practice, continued

- Pay attention to your response time: online learners get anxious faster because you are the primary connection to the institution
  - Convey out of office in advance, have a substitute contact
- Accessibility
  - Readability of documents and websites
  - Student choice in meeting formats
  - Transcribing/captioning video, closed captioning in meetings
- Outreach
  - Drop-in hours
  - Email
  - Phone calls
  - Text messaging
Reflection Questions

- What elements of a caring philosophy have you already practiced as an advisor?
- What elements did you learn today that you plan to implement tomorrow?
- What strategies did you adopt during COVID that you plan to keep?
- What learning have you taken away from our COVID circumstances?
References


References


Questions?

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