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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health crisis that has resulted in widespread illness and deaths, as well as significant economic and social disruptions. Nurses are at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19, often working in conditions of tremendous stress with limited resources and complex ethical dilemmas. As a result, nurses are at risk for stress injuries and burnout as the pandemic wears on. Nursing students are also affected by the pandemic in their own lives and as they bear witness to the impact on the nursing profession. Early recognition and mitigation of stress and emotional trauma is important to help prevent burnout. Education, identifying stress using a Stress Continuum Model, and the development of a resiliency plan can help to reduce the feelings of helplessness that are often associated with emotional trauma. This presentation will describe the innovative and just-in-time educational and support resources designed for nursing students. Key features of an online “Stress Impact and Care for COVID” course and associated support groups run by trained PMHNP students will be described. Course participants completed pre and post-course surveys measuring achievement of training objectives, level of burnout, and health-related locus of control, as well as the DASS-21, Impact of Event Scale, and qualitative participant feedback from the trainings and support groups. Results will be presented on data collected beginning in February 2021 through project completion. Future implications for nursing faculty and nurse leaders for addressing the impact of stress and providing support for nursing students will be discussed.