

Effectiveness of a Mentorship Program on Burnout in Distant Learning DNP Students

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Abstract

Background and Purpose: Nurses, graduate students, and healthcare providers remain at high risk for burnout, yet there are limited data evaluating burnout in Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students. Resilience strategies through mentorship have been shown to reduce burnout. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a student-student mentorship program in distant learning DNP students.

Methods: A pretest-posttest design was used to evaluate a student-student mentorship program at a large, academic nursing school. Participants included students enrolled in a DNP program. Burnout was measured using Maslach Burnout Inventory Student Survey's (MBI-SS) three subscales—emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy. Emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy between pre- and post-intervention were analyzed using Wilcoxon Signed Rank test. In addition, program attendance, enjoyment of participation in the program, and connection to peers were reported using descriptive statistics.

Results: Emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy scores of 11 DNP students trended downwards after the initiation of the mentorship program, but change was not statistically significant. Majority of participants enjoyed mentorship program (81.9%) and felt a connection to peers (54.5%). Perception of connection to peers decreased by 14.2% in the mentorship phase compared to pre-mentorship phase, but it was not statistically significant.

Conclusions: The student-student mentorship program did not show a statistically significant improvement in burnout. One might argue that burnout remained stable pre and post due to additional stress imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. Burnout might have been lower in this population without student-student mentorship program.

Implications: This is the first study reporting burnout using MBI-SS scale in distant-learning DNP students through a student-student mentorship program. Findings from this study have implications for both nurse educators and DNP students. Nurse educators need to consider formalizing such student-student mentorship programs, and DNP students should embrace the opportunity to utilize such programs to decrease burnout.

Keywords: Nurse Practitioner, student, burnout, Maslach Burnout Inventory, resilience