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5-2024

## Using Simulation to Enhance Undergraduate Nursing Education

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### Recommended Citation

Moore, Lori Prewitt and Selwyn, Candice N., "Using Simulation to Enhance Undergraduate Nursing Education" (2024). *CoTL 2024 Posters*. 1.

<https://jagworks.southalabama.edu/cotl2024-poster/1>

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# Using Simulation to Enhance Undergraduate Nursing Education

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## Maternal-Child Health in Alabama

Women and children in Alabama are particularly vulnerable to poor health outcomes due to major psychosocial stressors and systemic barriers to healthcare access:

- High rates of living in poverty (44<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in the U.S.).
- High rates of being exposed to violent crime (44<sup>th</sup> of 50) and other adverse childhood experiences (39<sup>th</sup> of 50).
- 14.5% of youth in Alabama experienced a major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year
- 66.8% (34,000) of youth in Alabama did not receive mental health treatment for their MDE

**Alabama ranks 50th out of 51 states in having the least access to mental health care.**

**Developing a knowledgeable healthcare workforce competent in caring for the women and children of Alabama benefits our community**

## The Role of Simulation-based Education in Improving Maternal-Child & Behavioral Health

Clinical practice is a critical yet complex and challenging component of professional development for student nurses.

Human patient simulation activities are used routinely in nursing education to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application of clinical experiences.

Simulation-based training and experiences incorporate best practices from adult learning, education, instructional design, and clinical standards of care.

Incorporating these best practices can develop student nurses' professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes while allowing them to train in a safe environment.

Expanding innovative simulation-based training can enhance quality and safety and develop competence and confidence in students and practicing health professionals.

**In 2023, the USA College of Nursing received a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to enhance simulation education training, resulting in SUCCESS: Serving the Underserved by Collaborating with Clinical partners to expand nursing Education utilizing Simulated Scenarios**



## Improving Nursing Students' Self-Efficacy in Caring for Adolescents Reporting Depressive Symptoms

In the Spring of 2024, SUCCESS launched their first enhanced simulation-based education training experiences with a cohort of 96 undergraduate nursing students enrolled in maternal-child nursing courses.

Using Zoom as a simulated telehealth platform, students engaged in a simulated scenario with a standardized patient acting as an adolescent experiencing clinically significant depressive symptoms.

### Learning Objectives:

- During the Simulation Encounter the Learner will:
- Perform a patient interview including a depression screening using the PHQ-9 tool.
  - Based on the results of the PHQ-9, educate the patient about the recommended next steps.
  - Perform a patient interview including an anxiety screening using the GAD-7 tool.
  - Based on the results of the GAD-7, educate the patient about the recommended next steps.
  - Perform a patient interview including a suicide screening using the asQ tool.
  - Based on the results of the asQ, educate the patient about the recommended next steps.
  - Provide patient education for substance abuse to include E-cigarette use (vaping) and substance abuse.
  - Demonstrate therapeutic communication in caring for an adolescent patient.
  - Discuss the legal and ethical issues related to caring for adolescent patients while maintaining their privacy.
  - Acknowledge differences in how anxiety and depression might present in patients with different genders, races, and ethnicities.

### Case Highlights:

**Background Information:** Parker Sims is an 18-year-old adolescent patient. Her mother talked her into making an appointment after her professor called with some concerns. Her English professor approached Parker after class with concern for her dropping grades, lateness to class, and generally unkempt appearance, which occurred within the past month. She told the teacher that she felt worthless and hopeless and began to tear up. The professor informed her of the resources on campus and asked if she could call her mother, and she agreed.

**Presenting Problem:** "I've been having headaches and feeling anxious, but I only made this appointment because my professor called my mom"

**Symptoms:** Difficulty sleeping, decreased appetite (doesn't weigh herself but clothes are loose), guilt depression, anxiety, hopelessness, helplessness, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, constant worry, rumination, irritability.

## Evaluation Results



**28% of students report intentions to become a pediatric nurse following graduation.**

Survey Item	Pre	Post
I feel confident in assessing depression in patients.	3.62	3.88
I feel comfortable in dealing with depressed patients' needs.	3.67	3.88
It is rewarding to spend time looking after depressed patients.	3.51	3.60
I am more comfortable working with physical illness than with mental illness.	3.54	3.73
My profession is well placed to assist patients with depression.	3.78	3.91
I feel confident in assessing suicide risk in patients presenting with depression.	3.70	3.87

Note: items measured on a 5-point Likert scale; 3 = neither agree/nor disagree

