Coming Soon from the American Red Cross: A Ready-Made Course to Prepare Your Nursing Students For Disaster Volunteering

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In January 2007, *Dean's Notes* published a detailed description of the importance of preparing nursing students for disasters (Schmidt, 2007), as well as several strategies for accomplishing this goal. One of the strategies, employed at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Nursing in Little Rock, received the 2009 American Red Cross Susan Hassmiller Award. Since 2004, UAMS faculty have collaborated with the American Red Cross of Greater Arkansas Chapter to offer four disaster courses to all senior students enrolled in their Community Health Nursing course. The courses include:

1) Introduction to Disasters, which provides an overview of all the services the Red Cross provides during disaster relief efforts;
2) First Aid, which is required of all Red Cross disaster volunteers; the CPR/AED components are omitted since nursing students enter the program with those certifications;
3) Shelter Operations Overview, which explains the operation of Red Cross shelters; and
4) Disaster Health Service Response, which orients students to the protocols and guidelines that Red Cross nurses follow when providing health care to clients.

The 2009 Hassmiller Award provided funding to the Red Cross of Greater Arkansas to host "train-the-trainer" classes for faculty in other Arkansas nursing programs. Dr. Cheryl Schmidt demonstrated how the four disaster classes are taught, and attendees received the resource materials to offer the courses in their nursing programs. Shortly afterwards, Dr. Sharon Stanley, Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross in Washington, DC, contacted Dr. Schmidt to discuss the possibility of creating a customized course for unlicensed nursing students, scaling the four courses down to a single 4-hour course as part of a Red Cross National Student Nurse Program. Ms. Janice Springer, expert Disaster Health Services Red Cross Nurse from Minnesota, joined the team to develop a course that would provide the basic information unlicensed nursing students would need in order to serve under supervision as disaster volunteers. She taught a similar modified course for public health nurses and for nursing students in Minnesota, and it provided the foundation for the proposed course for nursing students. Dr. Schmidt, Ms. Springer, and Dr. Stanley served as the Course Development Team. The end result was a new course, ready-made for future nationwide distribution: *Red Cross Sheltering and Disaster Health for Nursing Students.*

An Advisory Committee provided feedback during the development of the Red Cross National Student Nurse Program. Members represented the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the Collegiate Commission on Nursing Education, the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the National League for Nursing, the

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National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, the National Student Nurses' Association, as well as staff at Red Cross National Headquarters. Periodic conference calls kept the Advisory Committee informed, and the course was ready for pilot testing by early Fall 2010.

A call for pilot school proposals was disseminated through the American Red Cross, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the National League for Nursing, and the National Student Nurses' Association during the summer of 2010, resulting in over twenty applicants willing to pilot-test the course during the 2010-2011 academic year. Criteria included a nursing program with a dedicated faculty member who would partner with an experienced Red Cross nurse in a local Red Cross chapter. Pilot schools were selected based upon geographic distribution throughout the Red Cross regions, as well as the strength of ties between the nursing programs and their local chapters. The Course Development Team also selected a mix of ADN, BSN, and LPN programs for the pilot phase because the course is designed to prepare all unlicensed nursing students; no diploma programs applied for the opportunity. The twelve pilot programs include:

Brigham Young University, Provo, UT (BSN)

Concordia University, Austin, Austin, TX (BSN)

Grand Canyon University, Chandler, AZ (BSN)

Hagerstown Community College, Hagerstown, MD (ADN, LPN)

Lakeview College of Nursing, Danville, IL (BSN)

Mount Carmel College of Nursing, Columbus, OH (BSN)

Penn State School of Nursing – Hershey, Hershey, PA (BSN)

Regis College, Weston, MA (BSN)

Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN (ADN, BSN)

South Florida Community College, Avon Park, FL (ADN, LPN)

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, HI (BSN)

University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS (BSN)

In order to teach the pilot course in their programs, nursing faculty will collaborate with their Red Cross partner nurses to access the course materials through a Learning Management System (LMS) hosted by the Heartland Center for Public Health Preparedness associated with Saint Louis University in Missouri. The LMS will allow access to and tracking of student registration, scheduled courses, student and faculty materials (e.g., instruction guides, presentation slides and handouts, pre- and post-tests, course evaluations, and completion certificates). The LMS tracking aspect will allow the Red Cross to determine how many students who took the course actually became Red Cross volunteers. The long-range goal of the course is about instilling a sense of volunteerism in nursing students in order to better serve client needs in disaster. Specifically, one course objective is to increase the number of nurses available to volunteer with the Red Cross during disaster relief operations. The course developers believe that it will also better prepare nurses as spontaneous volunteers, even if they choose not to volunteer currently with the Red Cross or another disaster response organization.

After the pilot phase and final course refinements are completed in August of 2011, the Red Cross will make *Red Cross Sheltering and Disaster Health for Nursing Students* available to all interested nursing programs. While waiting, nursing faculty who are interested in the Red Cross course are encouraged to establish strong working relationships with their nearest Red Cross chapter.

For further information about this exciting opportunity, please contact Dr. Cheryl K. Schmidt at schmidtcherylk@uams.edu. DN

Reference
Schmidt, C.K. (2007). Strategies to prepare nursing students to respond to disasters [Electronic version]. *Dean's Notes, 28*(3), 1-3. Retrieved from http://www.ajj.com/services/publishing/deansnotes/jan07.pdf

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Additional Resources from NSNA

NSNA Guidelines for Disaster Preparedness, Recovery, and Relief Projects (2010)
http://www.nsna.org/Portals/0/Skins/NSNA/pdf/2010%20Disaster%20Guidelines%20final%20draft%20KGCA.pdf

Disaster Preparedness Reference and Resources (2010)
http://www.nsna.org/ProgramActivities/DisasterPreparedness/ReferencesandResources.aspx

NSNA Disaster Preparedness Page (includes links to NIMS Certification Courses)
http://www.nsna.org/ProgramActivities/DisasterPreparedness.aspx

NSNA Resolution #8: *In Support of Including Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Pre-Certification in Nursing Curricula* (2008)
http://www.nsna.org/Portals/0/Skins/NSNA/pdf/Resolution2008.pdf

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Nurses Rank as Most Trustworthy Profession in Annual Survey

In Gallup's annual survey that ranks occupations by their perceived honesty and ethical standards, nurses finished as the most trusted profession for the 11th time in 12 years.

According to the survey, 81% of respondents believe nurses' honesty and ethical standards are "high" or "very high."

"It's extremely gratifying to know that the public continues to hold the profession in such high esteem," American Nurses Association President Karen J. Daley, RN, PhD, MPH, FAAN, said in a news release. "The public's high regard for the profession, coupled with nurses' education and skills, makes nurses well-positioned to play a major role in the transformation of the nation's health care system."

The Institute of Medicine recently released a comprehensive report calling for a larger role for nurses in providing patient-centered care in a reformed health care system.

Survey results are based on telephone interviews with 1,000 adults. Nurses were first included in the Gallup poll in 1999 and have received the highest ranking every year except 2001, when firefighters took first place. DN

Visit http://www.gallup.com/poll/145043/
Nurses-Top-Honesty-Ethics-List-11-Year.aspx
to view the complete Gallup poll results.

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You may be surprised when the publisher or editor contacts you with questions concerning your submitted figures or tables. Reputable publishers and editors will (and should) ask if you own the images, and if not, where you obtained them and if you have permission to use them. You think, "Hang on – I got these from Google. Google doesn't own them, and everyone in the world can view them online already. Doesn't that make them free?" No. Not by a long shot.

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Conclusion

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Publishing your work can be a challenging and daunting experience, but it should also be a rewarding one. Seeing your name in print beside the title of your published work is cause for celebration. Don't jeopardize your efforts and hard-earned accolades by not understanding the laws of copyright. DN

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Note: For more information on properly crediting sources, refer to the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual* (6th ed., 2010).

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Image and Social Networking Discussions at MidYear

On Friday, November 5, 2010, in Cincinnati, OH, the NSNA hosted an "Image and Social Networking" session during the MidYear Conference. Fashioned in the style of a led discussion group, the session focused on today's popular social networking Web sites and how our behavior on these sites can directly affect the image of nursing. Many student leaders and faculty attended and shared their questions, concerns, and experiences (both positive and negative).

Many people related personally to the concept that what we do with our private lives should have no bearing on our ability to excel in our career; however, while agreeing with that idea, most attendees recognized that social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are a novel blend of our private and public lives. It's not simply our private time spent on social networking. Social networking sites are becoming a standard forum for airing our grievances and private details on a very public platform, especially when we ignore privacy setting options and leave our profiles open to the public. The majority of the group was aware of privacy settings which can be utilized to keep details private. The general consensus, however, was that these privacy settings are not infallible and it's up to us, as leaders and future leaders of the profession, to adjust our Internet behavior accordingly.

Attendees shared many suggestions with the group:

Make your "tweets" private by adjusting your Twitter settings so no one can read your messages unless they request to follow you (subject to your approval).

Adjust your Facebook settings so no one (not even your Facebook friends) can see photos that you are "tagged" in. By doing so, you may prevent any unprofessionalism or embarrassment from being tagged in an inappropriate or unrelated photo by family, friends, or acquaintances.

Utilize networking sites aimed at building professional relationships, such as LinkedIn. These sites allow for professional networking without the hassle of Farmville posts, tagged photos, or other unprofessional comments.

When applying for a job, close down your accounts or adjust your privacy settings so that no one can view your wall. Many reported that when recruiters receive resumes, they are immediately searching Facebook for unsuitable behavior.

For now, Facebook and Twitter are not going anywhere and attendees all agreed that they can be wonderful networking tools. This is an easy and free method of keeping in touch with specific people and groups; however, the underlying message remained that nurses are seen as nurses regardless of where they are or what they are wearing. Inappropriate behavior in public reflects poorly on the profession, even when seen only by our personal friends. Similarly, inappropriate behavior on the Internet reflects just as poorly.

NSNA is exploring how to draft social networking user guidelines. Comments or suggestions are warmly welcomed. Send me your thoughts at jonathan@nsna.org. **DN**

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