

Special Article

Time Management in Nursing –Hour of need

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Abstract

Time is free and priceless, it is not we have it but it is how we make use of it. Nursing is profession in which nurses need to work under pressurized working conditions many at times. Time management is about how one manages self. One cannot manage the time; one can only manage how he/she can use it Organizing and prioritizing the patient care activities is of prime importance for providing quality care and to maintain the personal and professional balance. Nursing students need to cultivate the skills of effective time management along with other life skills for the ease of transition to a graduate nurse. Time management is not only setting and achieving the goals but also accomplishing in minimum possible time. Good time management techniques and skills are essential for functioning more effectively and to focus on results. Good time management benefits in several ways including greater productivity, less stress, improved efficiency, more opportunities for professional advancement and greater opportunities to achieve career and life goals. Nursing is a profession requiring the skills in performing different tasks during the course of day for coping with time limitations and pressure. Understanding the importance of time management and skills in gaining it is very essential.

Key words: Time management, nursing students, nursing

Introduction

Time is considered the most valuable commodity in our lives. Time management refers to planning the time available in par with personal goals, while keeping individual likes, dislikes and preferences in mind (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012). Availability and presence of time determines the development other sources (Ghiasvand, Naderi, Tafreshi, Ahmadi, & Hosseini, 2017).

Time management is about how one manages self. One cannot manage the time; one can only manage how he/she can use it (Spidal, 2009). Time management is all about finding smartest, healthiest, and most rewarding way to use the same 86,400 seconds which each one of us given on every day (Homisak, 2012).

Importance of time management

Individuals need to control and monitor his/her personal and professional time efficiently. This requires skills in goal setting, setting priorities, planning and organizing skills and minimizing time wasting (Gordon & Borkan, 2014). Deciding on how one spends the time is very important to make oneself productive and more organized. Inability to have the strategic plans, not having plans for the day, failing to prioritize, misplacing the items and searching for misplaced items, use of excessive telephone calls, internet, emails, surfing, and being disorganized will contribute to wastage of the time (Spidal, 2009). The way individual handle the time determines, whether they will be depressed or psychologically tense and one who

cannot organize the time well complain about having no time and fail in managing their own time (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012). Hence, time management is not only setting and achieving the goals but also accomplishing in minimum possible time (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012).

The commitment to change is very essential for time management. Good time management techniques and skills are essential for functioning more effectively and to focus on results. Good time management benefits in several ways including greater productivity, less stress, improved efficiency, more opportunities for professional advancement and greater opportunities to achieve career and life goals. In contrast, if the time is not managed effectively it may lead into several consequences such as missed deadlines, poor work quality, high stress level and negative influence on career path (Meiring, 2017). People, who determine time and work, decide entertainment time and organizes the aims only to make best achievements will always have lower stress and pressure and as whole allows development of self (Said, 2014).

Need of time management for nursing staff

Nurses are indispensable part of the health care system (Blevins & Millen, 2016). The continual and growing shortage of nurses demands working smarter than harder for improving quality care (Said, 2014). Employees working in a busy health settings should be having an essential skill of good time management (Ancel & Yilmaz, 2016). Increasing pressure demands effective time management and menace professional satisfaction (Gordon & Borkan, 2014).

Nursing is a profession requiring the skills in performing different tasks during the course of day for coping with time limitations and pressure (Ancel & Yilmaz, 2016). Nurses need to meet the expectations of patients, peers, managers, along with completing the nursing activities in a given shift. Contingencies also arise in the schedule which need to be identified as high, medium and low priority and should be best fit in the shift by the nurses (Cleary & Horsfall, 2011).

Inadequate time management has shown delay in patient care and patient safety. Whenever, time limitations are more nurses may not be able to

think critically, prioritize and tend to make more errors. So, planning the patient care for the day, prioritization and delegation is very much essential (Blevins & Millen, 2016). For professional nursing practice and work performance nurses should have good time management skills and different time management strategies (Said, 2014).

Nurses, especially newly graduated ones need to structure the day based on the activities those are productive and time wasting. This gives the base in identifying activities and goals for patient assignments and care for smooth functioning. However, nurse also must realize and understand that as the day progresses he or she must be flexible and may have to change the plans. Today's fast-changing environment of health care and to address the needs of the patients, nurses need to show effectual time management skills. Graduate nurses must also have good time management skills along with professionalism and communication for the foundation of success (Blevins & Millen, 2016).

Distress on the job and some stress naturally comes for being a nurse. Knowledge on prioritization of the tasks during the shifts can make huge differences in reducing the stress. Prioritizing and little planning can make the nurses to plan better and manage the time for their work and imparting the quality care. This also may help to spend time relaxing and socializing at work without feeling nervous and exhaustion. Better balance between professional and personal life for working more effectively and efficiently can also be achieved by better time management. Nurses need to work smarter, instead of harder by learning time management skills. The skills of good time management is crucial to survive the busy shift of day to day in nursing (Said, 2014).

Need of time management for nursing students

"I am sorry, I did not have adequate time to study for the exams, and I did not have time to complete the assignment in time", is the voice raised by many students. The predicament of not having adequate time for doing necessary tasks for students in the academics is frequently experienced phenomenon. Is there any instant solution for this problem? Why it is some people achieve much more than others? And the answer for this is effective time management (Meiring, 2017).

Success of a University student depends on their ability and efficiency of utilizing time. Students need to learn managing the time efficiently so that they will be able to apply it with same efficiency in the professional life (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012). Nursing is skill oriented programme and students need to gain the knowledge required for the profession to practice in the future (Mirzaei, Oskouie, & Rafii, 2012). Time management is a crucial and important skill for the nursing students to acquire so that the competence can be enhanced in the quality of service (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012). Concentrating on effective time management essential to reach success in life. For a nursing students' development of clinical competence and success, skills of time management are essential (Ghiasvand, Naderi, Tafreshi, Ahmadi, & Hosseini, 2017).

Time management skills have also shown effect on anxiety among students. Statistically significant negative correlation was found in time management inventory score and the state anxiety (-0.203) and trait anxiety (-0.307) ($p=0.000$) scores among nursing and midwifery students (Kaya, Kaya, Pallos, & Küçük, 2012). Results of a study conducted to assess the relationship between time management skills and anxiety and academic motivation of nursing students in Tehran showed statistically significant negative correlation between time management questionnaire scores state anxiety ($r= -0.282$, $p< 0.001$) and trait anxiety scores ($r= -0.325$, $p<0.001$). The study also revealed statistically significant positive correlation between the students' time management questionnaire score and academic motivation scale score ($r= 0.279$, $p< 0.001$).

A study concluded with emphasis on necessity of planning for improving the time management skills for enhancing academic motivation and reducing the anxiety among nursing students (Ghiasvand, Naderi, Tafreshi, Ahmadi, & Hosseini, 2017). Thus, good time management skills among student can reduce the anxiety. Little knowledge on shift activities, inadequate planning and time management skills of nursing students may result in stress and apprehension (Cleary & Horsfall, 2011).

Preparing oneself to clinical environments, being more successful in examinations and achieving

better balance between personal life and work is enabled by effective time management by nursing students (Mirzaei, Oskouie, & Rafii, Nursing students' time management, reducing stress and gaining satisfaction: a grounded theory study, 2012). Along with the University life, nursing students face various stressful factors. In a study conducted at Brazil to assess the influence of stress factors and socio-demographic characteristics on the sleep quality of nursing students showed that high stress level was predominant for time management. Difficulties in curriculum activities conciliation with other social, emotional and personal demands was the most common experience (Benavente, da Silva, Higashi, Guido, & Costa, 2014).

In nursing clinical setting can be unbearable and overwhelming for nursing students. Leaping out of the safe boundaries of the classroom to the busy, noisy, and sometimes life or death environment of the clinical setting or hospital can completely frazzle the students. Realizing the need of time management and skills in time management are then very essential, as they don't learn good time management may cause them to be overwhelmed and can burnout in managing personal life and duty shifts (Bullen, 2015).

Nursing students also need to acquire the clinical skills in the background of high activity level, potential of distractions which is inherent and occasional emergencies, which demands the skills of effective time management to remain focused in clinical learning. Nursing students should be aware about the importance of time management to build on their existing skills. Introducing the ideas and practices on time management in the clinical setting and class room among nursing students is an hour of need for planning, prioritizing and to apportioning the time effectively (Cleary & Horsfall, 2011).

Strategies for effective time management:

There is also no universal style of time management which fits for all people. Every individual must organize their time according to their needs as every individual is responsible themselves (Said, 2014). Determining the learning goals, scheduling realistic time to achieve the goals, prioritizing, using activity log or to-do list, keeping the learning track, liaising appropriately

with the teachers are some of the tips which student can adapt to manage the time effectively (Cleary & Horsfall, 2011).

Nursing staffs need to be appropriately oriented to the personnel and functioning of the unit, aware of the nursing activity of the shift to effectively manage the time. Clarity of knowledge, competency in the skills and confidence are also essential determinants of effective time management (Cleary & Horsfall, 2011). Arriving early to plan the work, listing down the activities that need to be done, prioritizing these activities, estimating the time needed for each activity, spending the time consciously, cautiously spending the time for unscheduled activities, learning to say 'no', organizing the home life delegating the tasks are some of the strategies which can be adapted for effective time management (Said, 2014).

Conclusion

Students also must pursue their studies, preparing for the academic requirements and exams, attending extracurricular activities apart from personal activities. Understanding the importance of time management and skills in gaining it is very essential for students. Moreover, for a student gaining mastery in this skill also help in development of healthy and well-rounded personality. Time management is an exceptionally important skill for nursing students for their academic life and career since they must be prepared for unanticipated emergencies and urgencies at work place. Hence, it is vital for the students to understand the significance of the notion of time and gaining time management skills.

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