

EXPOSURE TO DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILIES, TOWARDS THE END OF LIFE: THE 3RD YEAR NURSING STUDENT EXPERIENCE.

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Background

Caring for patients with a life-limiting cancer requires the ability to clearly communicate. (1)

End of life communication can be challenging for nursing students. (2,3)

Cancer Nurses can help prepare students for death and dying and difficult conversations.

Aim: To understand how prepared 3rd year nursing students feel to engage in difficult conversations, in the end of life context.

Methodology and Methods

Methodology: Qualitative descriptive research approach.

Ethical approval granted by the University. Ten third-year undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing students consented to semi-structured interviews.

Thematic analysis using the Braun and Clark reflexive thematic analysis approach. (4)



Image: <https://www.wallpaperflare.com/nurse-helping-patient-photo-medical-senior-health-doctor-wallpaper-azkds>

Results

Participants were not sufficiently prepared for death and dying and the related difficult conversations.

Five themes were created that focus on the 3rd year nursing student experience.

Major Themes

- 1 Death denying culture.**
 - Earlier preparation to understand death and dying.
 - Understand that death and dying are part of the nursing role.
- 2 Prior personal and professional experiences of death and dying.**
 - Experience can help them prepare.
- 3 Observing RNs during clinical placement.**
 - Observing RNs communication skills and abilities.
 - Unprepared for first deaths.
- 4 Effective Communication.**
 - Knowing what to say.
 - Knowing how to respond to emotion and distress.
- 5 Impact on self.**
 - Having an awareness of impact on self.
 - Coping strategies used.

Conclusions.

The participants were not sufficiently prepared for death and dying and the related difficult conversations.

Cancer Nurses have a key role during clinical placement in preparing, teaching and supporting students.

Preparing future nurses to engage in difficult conversations may improve the patient and family experience and assist nurses in building a skill set to engage in open and honest communication.

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4. Braun, V and Clarke, V 2006, 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol.3, no. 2, pp. 77-101.