

Can an education module in emotional intelligence, enable student nurses to enhance their nurse-patient relationships?

Introduction.

By James Caley.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a measurement of how well individuals understand, regulate, and harness emotion within themselves and others (Schutte, Malouff, Coston, Jedlicka, & Wendorf, 2001).

When investigating this four key questions emerge:

- Why is EI important for nurse-patient relationships?
- How Should EI be measured?
- Can EI be taught?
- What recommendations can be drawn from the research?

Why is emotional intelligence important for nurse-patient relationships?

Emotional intelligence involves perceiving, understanding, Using, and managing the emotions of yourself and others. The ability to perceive and understand emotions is necessary to empathetically engage with others, it is also an important skill when assessing a patients mental state (Lyon, Trotter, Holt, Powell & Roe, 2013). Understanding ones own emotions results in a self-awareness, which leads to emotional fluency and allows nurses to be more reflective in their practice (Lyon, et al. 2013). High levels of EI are also positively linked with social skills, and being more cooperative and effective in facilitating inter-personal relationships (Schutte, et al. 2001). This is important because effective nursing meets the social and emotional health care needs of individuals

How should EI be measured? Trait vs. Ability

	Trait EI	Ability EI
Measurement	Self reported questionnaire.	Measures the ability to decipher emotion from Picture, faces, and voices.
Positives	Tests are often cheap or free to use.	The reliability and validity of ability tests such as the MSCEIT has been extensively examined (Brackett & Mayer 2003).
Limitations	Participants may not be accurate when reporting their own emotional abilities and it is also suggested that when self reporting it is easy to	Tests are often expensive and require training to utilise (Brackett & Mayer 2003).

Can EI be taught?

Taking courses and reading books on EI can lead to a higher level (Salovey, & Grewal). Perception, appraisal, expression and, understanding and analysing emotions have been shown to be improvable with training. Emotion identification, and emotion management have also been found to be positively changed, even when tested six months after the training (Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczak & Hansenne, 2009). These studies unfortunately all had relatively small sample sizes and were all conducted using trait based EI alone.

What Recommendations can be made from the research?

- EI education modules should be incorporated in nursing training.
- Assessment of EI progress should be completed with an ability based test such as the MSCEIT.
- More research needs to be conducted on the effectiveness of teaching EI to student nurses especially using an ability based EI test.

References: Brackett, M., & Mayer, J. (2003). Convergent, Discriminant, and Incremental Validity of Competing Measures of Emotional Intelligence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin Pers Soc Psychol Bull*, 1147-1158. Lyon, S., Trotter, F., Holt, B., Powell, E., & Roe, A. (2013). Emotional intelligence and its role in recruitment of nursing students. *Nursing Standard*, 41-46. Nelis, D., Quoidbach, J., Mikolajczak, M., & Hansenne, M. (2009). Increasing emotional intelligence: (How) is it possible? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36-41. Schutte, N., Malouff, J., Bobik, C., Coston, T., Greeson, C., Jedlicka, C., Wendorf, G. (2001). Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Relations. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 523-

Rational producing a poster.

As an aural and visual learner I was excited to hear about the opportunity to produce a visual assignment. I personally find information easier to understand and remember when it is displayed with colour. This is the way I think about things in my mind's eye. The other advantage of producing a poster is the knowledge transfer seminar, where I can stand in front of my work and talk about it. Satisfies the aural aspect of my learning style. My research content also benefits a poster format as the message of the importance of emotional intelligence direct and easily understandable, while at the same time it is important for anyone interested in emotional intelligence to know about the differences between trait based, and ability based emotional intelligence. There is a large gap in the nursing research of emotional intelligence as all nursing research I found on the topic has used trait based Emotional intelligence. Hopefully after reading my poster people may be interested in conducting research on ability based emotional intelligence within a nursing context in the future.

PICOT Model

① Category ② Information relating to the question
③ Explanation

Problem	Student nurses effectively connecting with their patients on an emotional level.
Intervention	An emotional intelligence program being introduced as part of the bachelor of nursing program.
Comparison	Nurses who complete emotional intelligence modules compared to those who don't.
Outcome	The nursing students exhibiting a higher level of emotional intelligence and understanding how that related to the nurse patient relationship.
Timeframe	Time frame is not an issue in this investigation.

This has helped me to formulate the research question:

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