

Treating Test Anxiety with Diffused Aromatherapy

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Aromatherapy is a form of complementary/ alternative medicine (CAM) that uses aromatic plant oils, called essential oils, for the purpose of altering one's cognitive, psychological or physical wellbeing.

Method: In Fall 2014, aromatherapy was offered to 140 nursing students while testing. The students selected from four essential oils offered (Lavender, Peppermint, Frankincense and Ravensara). A drop of oil was placed on a 3 x 0.3 inch paper strip. The student would inhale the diffused oil scent from the strip, as needed, throughout the test.

Seventy-four (74) students elected to use aromatherapy while testing. A survey was completed by these students at the end of the semester evaluating their aromatherapy experience. The results of the survey were positive; 56% of the students indicated aromatherapy helped decrease anxiety while testing. One hundred percent (100%) of those surveyed expressed their desire to use aromatherapy for future testing.

It is imperative for educators to provide innovative strategies to maximize student performance and graduation rates.



Nursing programs educate adult students to the professional nursing role. Student nurses experience stressful learning environments related to advances in technology, patient demographics, national patient safety standards and high expectations in the clinical and classroom settings. One of the barriers to nursing student success is test anxiety, which potentially reduces student retention and graduation rates. Educators need to research and offer anxiety-relieving strategies to students to foster student success.

References:

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