

Learning Activity: Concept Mapping – Policy and Homelessness

Description of Activity:	This assignment can be completed individually, in small groups, or in the classroom utilizing whiteboards. Students create a visual concept map of policies that influence the health of the unhoused population. They identify areas for advocacy utilizing the Keller Wheel.					
Keywords:	Policy, social determinants of health, advocacy					
Type of activity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Didactic <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Clinical	Recommendation on when to introduce it in the curriculum.	<input type="checkbox"/> Early <input type="checkbox"/> Mid <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> End	Suggested Course:	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Promotion /Assessment/ Fundamentals <input type="checkbox"/> Acute care <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic care <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Population/ Community health <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Competency addressed:	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Provide respectful, compassionate, person-centered care for people experiencing homelessness (PEH) <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Evaluate clients for social determinants of health needs, including housing status and related aspects of safety, access to food, social support, and other relevant domains <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Collaborate with the client and appropriate Interprofessional community members to optimize health in PEH <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4. Advocate for improved health for PEH					
Learning Activity:	<p>Concept Mapping: Policy & Homelessness</p> <p>In this assignment, you will create a concept map to visually organize and connect key ideas about how policies influence people who are experiencing homelessness. A concept map shows how different ideas relate to each other, using boxes or circles (for concepts) and arrows or lines (to show relationships).</p> <p>The United States spends more money on health care than any other country, yet our health outcomes remain poor in relation to this spending (Campaign for Action, 2020). This disparity is evident in the health of our unsheltered population, who experience 3.5 times the probability of death (mortality rate) than the general population (Vasquez, 2024). Policies shape how funding is allocated to address homelessness, focusing either on prevention (upstream) or on managing its effects (downstream). Analyzing health care policies highlights the broader societal factors that contribute to poor health outcomes.</p> <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by exploring the following two national websites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Alliance to End Homelessness at https://endhomelessness.org/about-us/policy/ National Coalition for the Homeless at https://nationalhomeless.org/health-care/ Locate at least 3 policies in your state or community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider policies on where people are allowed or not allowed to sleep, access to parks, bathrooms and other public spaces, policies that assist in rehousing, eviction and rent control. Now look at health care specific policies. These might come from experiences in your clinical rotations and work in healthcare. 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider policies that aid in assistance with social determinants of health, or that serve as barriers to accessing or participating in care. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Once you have gathered a total of 6-10 policies, create a simplified label for each policy. Organize these policies visually, in a way that shows how they connect to and influence each other, and the unhoused population. Use arrows, linking words (like "causes," "leads to," "requires"), and clear labels to explain the relationships between concepts. Utilize the Keller Wheel and select at least 3 areas where nurses can intervene to create or influence policy change for their unhoused patients. Give at least 1 specific example for each area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify each intervention as Community Level, Systems Level, or Individual/Family Level. Nursing intervention at this level requires nurses to push to the edge of their scope of practice. The Future of Nursing Campaign for Action calls for nurses to function at their full potential, and states that "the most effective population health advocates are connecting patients' problems with larger systems' (Campaign for Action, 2020).
Time Required:	45-90 minutes.
Preparation of the student:	<p>Reading before class:</p> <p>Campaign for Action. (2020). <i>Population health and the future of nursing conclusions</i>. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. https://campaignforaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PHIN-Conclusions-Report-508.pdf</p> <p>Handout for In-Class:</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Health. (2019). <i>Public health interventions: Definitions and practice levels</i>. Minnesota Department of Health. https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/research/phncouncil/docs/PHInterventionsHandout.pdf</p> <p>The in-class activity requires searching websites for policies.</p>
Resources:	<p>Campaign for Action. (2020). <i>Population health and the future of nursing conclusions</i>. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. https://campaignforaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PHIN-Conclusions-Report-508.pdf</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Health. (2019). <i>Public health interventions: Definitions and practice levels</i>. Minnesota Department of Health. https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/research/phncouncil/docs/PHInterventionsHandout.pdf</p> <p>National Academy of Medicine (2020). <i>Population health and the future of nursing conclusions</i>. Campaign for Action. https://campaignforaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PHIN-Conclusions-Report-508.pdf</p> <p>National Alliance to End Homelessness. (n.d.). <i>Ending homelessness through policy</i>. Retrieved April 27, 2025, from https://endhomelessness.org/about-us/policy/</p> <p>National Coalition for the Homeless. (n.d.). <i>Health care</i>. Retrieved April 27, 2025, from https://nationalhomeless.org/health-care/</p> <p>Vasquez, L. (2024, February). <i>Estimating mortality rates for the US homeless population</i>. National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/digest/202402/estimating-mortality-rates-us-homeless-population</p>
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