

Learning Activity: Reflective Care Plan – Substance Use Disorder and Housing Instability

Description of Activity:	In this activity, students examine a clinical encounter or provided case scenario involving a patient with SUD and housing instability. They then have the opportunity to 'rewrite the script' based on their learning.					
Keywords:	Substance use disorder, harm reduction, communication skills, stigma in health care, addiction neuroscience.					
Type of activity	☒ Didactic ☐ Simulation ☐ Clinical	Recommendation on when introduced in curriculum?	☐ Early ☒ Mid ☐ End	Suggested Course:	☐ Health Promotion /Assessment/ Fundamentals ☐ Acute care ☒ Chronic care ☐ Pharmacology	☐ Population/ Community health ☐ Leadership ☐ Other:
Competency addressed:	☒ 1. Provide respectful, compassionate, person-centered care for people experiencing homelessness (PEH) 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 X 3. Collaborate with client and appropriate Interprofessional community members to optimize health in PEH 4. Advocate for improved health for PEH					
Learning Activity:	Written care plan activity Analysis of care provided and opportunity to rewrite the script					
Time Required:	Approximately 3 hours					
Preparation of the student:	Assignment: Reflective Care Plan – Substance Use and Housing Instability Nurses frequently care for patients whose health is shaped by substance use, housing instability, and barriers to healthcare access. These encounters can be clinically complex and influenced by communication style, stigma, and structural factors. In this assignment, you will reflect on a clinical encounter and apply course concepts in a realistic care plan for a patient with these barriers. You may choose either: Option A: A clinical encounter you experienced in practice (preferred) Option B: The case scenario provided in this module Please don't include any identifying patient information. Length: 2-3 pages. Organized using the provided headings. Instructions Write a 2-3 page care summary and improved plan. Organize your paper using the following headings. 1. Brief Scenario Describe the patient situation in one short paragraph. Include: • care setting • primary health concern • relevant substance use and/or housing factors					

- how the interaction unfolded

2. Nursing Assessment

Using concepts from this module, identify additional assessment considerations.

Address the following areas:

Substance Use

Consider including information such as:

- substance(s) used
- route and frequency of use
- overdose risk factors
- previous treatment experiences
- patient goals related to substance use, including safety planning

Health Concerns

Examples may include:

- infection or wound complications
- Unrecognized or untreated comorbidities
- withdrawal symptoms
- mental health concerns
- chronic disease or nutrition risks

Housing and Social Context

Consider how housing status may influence care:

- ability to store medications
- access to hygiene or wound care
- transportation or follow-up barriers
- access to food or social supports

3. Stigma and Provider Assumptions

Reflect on how stigma may influence healthcare interactions.

Identify 2-3 potential examples of care team assumptions or stigmatizing practices, such as:

- labeling language
- assumptions about motivation or “compliance.”
- limited engagement with the patient
- focusing only on the immediate medical problem

Briefly explain how these factors may affect trust, communication, or care outcomes.

4. Rewrite the Script (Therapeutic Communication)

Rewrite a portion of the interaction using person-centered and non-stigmatizing communication as modeled in the videos and reading provided for this lesson.

Provide 2-4 example statements or questions.

Examples of supportive approaches may include:

- “Would it be okay if we talked about your substance use so I can better understand your health risks?”
- “My role is to support your safety and health. What concerns do you have right now?”

Your goal is to demonstrate:

- person-first language
- curiosity rather than judgment
- harm-reduction framing

5. Harm Reduction Care Plan

Identify 3-4 nursing approaches that could reduce health risks and increase trust in the healthcare team. Approaches can occur across the ADPIE nursing process: Assessment, Diagnosis, Planning, Intervention, Evaluation

	Your answers may be related to any part of this process. Some examples are provided below: • overdose prevention and/or safer use education • Developing an infection prevention, wound care, or skin health plan with the patient • Assessing level of engagement or barriers to care (often the patient is an 'expert' on approaches, and can identify barriers to follow through). • screening for infectious disease • referral to harm reduction or treatment programs • safety planning for 'rough sleepers.' Is the place where they sleep physically and personally safe? Is substance use related to the need to stay awake for safety? Briefly explain why each intervention is important. 6. Housing and Care Planning Considerations Explain how housing instability or homelessness may influence the care plan. Consider factors such as: • medication storage • hygiene and wound care • follow-up appointments • transportation barriers • competing survival priorities (Maslow's Hierarchy) 7. Practice Reflection In 3-4 sentences, reflect on what you would do differently in future encounters with patients experiencing substance use or homelessness. Evidence and Citations Your assignment must include a minimum of 3 APA citations supporting evidence-based interventions or approaches. In-text and Reference list required.		
Assessment	Formative:	Summative: Submitted paper	Potential Assessment Strategies: Class or small group discussions on how plans of care were revised
Resources:	Heyd, A. (2024, July 25). <i>Language is power: Nurses' role in advancing patient-centered care</i>. <i>Canadian Nurse</i>. https://www.canadian-nurse.com/blogs/cn-content/2024/07/25/language-is-power National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018, June 6). <i>Understanding drug use and addiction drug facts</i>. National Institutes of Health. https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction NYC Health. (2022, September 19). <i>Reducing stigma in healthcare settings: Why language matters</i> [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3ONhwF2blo The Science of Addiction. (2018, April 4). <i>Addiction neuroscience 101</i> [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwZcPwlRRcc Winkle, J. (2020). <i>How to talk to patients living with substance use disorders</i> [PDF]. Oregon Health & Science University. https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-		

	11/How%20to%20Talk%20to%20Patients%20Living%20with%20Substance%20Use%20Disorders.pdf Zaganelli, C. (2024, July 8). <i>How does a harm reduction approach benefit clients? Can it help save lives?</i> [Video]. <i>Canadian Nurse</i> . https://www.canadian-nurse.com/blogs/content/2024/07/08/q-and-a-video-cristina-zaganelli
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Date:	5/8/2026