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Playing Games: A Play on Nurse Education

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An innovative exercise demonstrating simulation in develop learning and empathy in student nurses. The lecturer acts as narrator encouraging and nurturing the student to become the centre of the learning. This innovative session enhances the understanding of the specific need of clients with cerebral palsy.

Playing Games: A Play on Nurse Education

Abstract for simulation conference June 2010: Bron Roberts and Sept 2008 Dip HE Nursing for people with a learning disability. University of Huddersfield

Simulation exercise to highlight the difficult passage of food through the digestive tract associated with Cerebral Palsy and Hyper-tonia

This simulation exercise is to consolidate previous learning around anatomy and physiology with application to an individual who has Cerebral palsy with associated hyper-tonia. The student group discuss and plan the pathway of food through the digestive tract aided by visual aids. The aim is to identify the various roles and functions of the organs of the digestive tract.

The human body is then simulated by the student group, group members becoming the body parts of the digestive tract. A mouthful of food is taken in the simulated body and passes through the various elements of the digestive tract termination at the anus. The lecturer supports this process by acting as 'narrator' telling the story of the foods passage.

The second stage of the exercise the students simulate the body and digestive tract of an individual with Cerebral palsy and hyper-tonia. The differences and contrasts are evident immediately, as soon as food is offered, there is difficulty in controlling the muscles of the mouth and taking the food into the mouth, the tongue struggles to move the food around the mouth incorporating the saliva and producing a bolus. The large range of difficulties, from muscle spasms, to compressed and misplaced organs, which are encountered along the length of this process, are highlighted by the simulation and the narrator.

By becoming the body the students learning opportunity is widened, the difference and difficulties are highlighted by the students' simulation and acting of the process. The two parts of the exercise can be compared and contrasted to enhance the understanding and empathy for the individuals' experience of eating and food digestion. The students recognise the rationale behind, the size of food portions, symmetrical upright positioning and helpful strategies such as regular position changes which enhance the food passage and abdominal massage.

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