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Fostering Leadership Skill Development to Address the Triple Aim Goals at Two Colleges of Pharmacy

Jennifer D. Robinson, Pharm.D. | Shannon G. Panther, Pharm.D., BCACP | Rachel A. Allen, Pharm.D. | Curtis G. Jefferson M.S. | Kelsey Brantner, B.S.| Nanci Murphy, Pharm.D.

Introduction

Developing effective leaders as change agents is an important step in addressing the current and emerging challenges of the US healthcare system. Transforming our healthcare system to one that meets the Institute for Health Improvement (IHI) Triple Aim goals requires leaders who are able to: 1) advance health care through clinical excellence, 2) actively contribute to design more cost- efficient, effective models of care, 3) promote health in their communities, 4) display organizational leadership, 5) participate in advocacy and policy development, and 6) advance discovery, research, and scholarship.

Community pharmacists are well-positioned to help achieve the IHI goals by increasing access to health care services in rural and underserved communities, improving the quality of the patient care experience (patient outcomes and satisfaction) and reducing unnecessary health care costs through health promotion, early detection of disease, and better chronic disease management. It is important that Doctor of Pharmacy programs collaborate with community practitioners to provide educational experiences that advance the practice of pharmacy ensuring development of leadership and management skills new graduates need to be fully engaged in collaborative, coordinated, patient-centered care.

Objective

To develop, deliver, and evaluate an educational module designed to increase student pharmacists' skills and confidence in addressing unmet patient care needs and the Triple Aim Goals in community pharmacy settings.

Methods

Leadership course modules were developed collaboratively between two Doctor of Pharmacy programs. Trainings focused on developing student pharmacist leadership skills through exposure and application of leadership theory through group projects with four community partners. The live course was delivered to two cohorts including all second-year student pharmacists during the fall 2015 term. Pre-course and post-course surveys of student confidence and comfort level in leadership skills and implementation of patient care services were utilized. All students were assessed to identify knowledge regarding and practical application of leadership theory.

Learning Modules

1: IHI Triple Aim and the Future of Pharmacy Practice & Introduction to the Clinical Service Project

2: Determining Personal Strengths Utilizing StrengthsQuest™

3: Applying Personal Strengths to a Team

4: Team Leadership Debrief & Discussion and Introduction to Pitching an Idea

5: Project Presentation to Live Audience

Optional Activity: Applying for a Mini-Grant

Results

Pre and Post surveys were utilized to assess student confidence and perceived leadership skillset development on a scale of; 0 (no confidence/not at all important) – 100 (complete confidence/extremely important). For the confidence scale questions, students rated how confident they felt in each area when they filled out the pre-course assessment at the start of the course (PRE). On the post-course assessment, we asked students how confident they felt at the time they completed the assessment (POST) and also asked them to, knowing what they know now, think back to how confident they were in each area at the beginning of the course (THEN). Data is included for the students who completed both the pre-course and post-course assessments.

Question (n = 191)	Then (SD)	Pre (SD)	Post (SD)	
Confidence in Leading Change	54.895 (3.139)	63.474 (3.072)	70.947 (2.46)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Identifying & Describing Personal Strengths	61.368 (2.711)	73.789 (2.651)	80.947 (2.154)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Identifying & Fostering Strengths in Others	60.211 (2.948)	68.534 (2.716)	75.211 (2.557)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Identifying New Services	52.316 (3.066)	58.482 (3.149)	72.105 (2.48)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Developing a Plan	52.632 (3.247)	58.337 (3.113)	75.053 (2.512)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Implementation	54.421 (3.394)	61.414 (3.122)	73.579 (2.523)	$p < 0.001$
Confidence in Creative Decision Making	57.526 (3.238)	63.351 (3.176)	74.737 (2.599)	$p < 0.001$

On the surveys student pharmacists were also asked to select all that apply for the following questions:

A) Which areas of leading change have you improved since the beginning of this course?

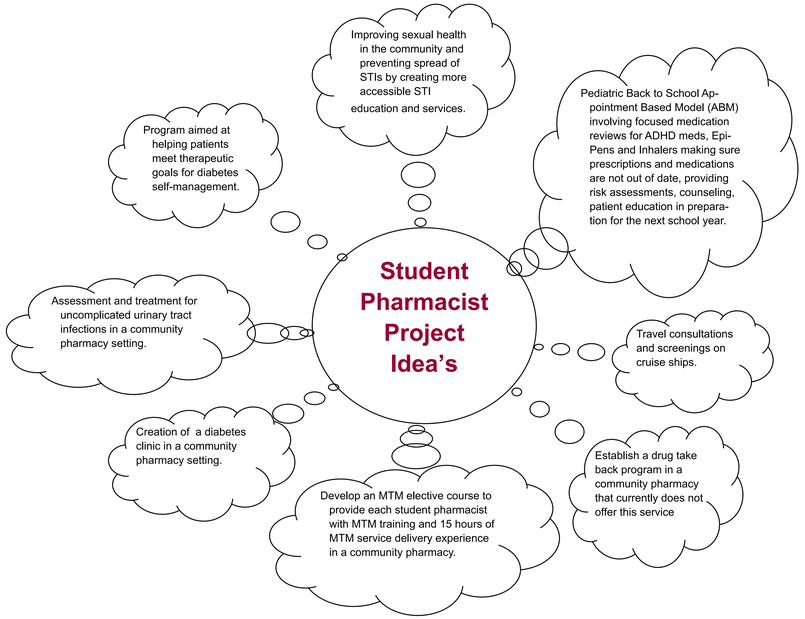
B) Which areas of leading change do you feel comfortable applying to the community pharmacy setting?

Question A (n=192)	Number	%
Create Urgency	56	29.17
Form a Guiding Coalition (team)	106	55.2
Create a Vision	124	64.58
Communicate Decisions	142	73.96
Empower others to act on the vision	91	47.4
Create Quick Wins	59	30.73
Build on the Change	84	43.75
Institutionalize the Change	49	25.52

Question B (n=192)	Number	%
Create Urgency	75	39.06
Form a Guiding Coalition (team)	105	54.69
Create a Vision	118	61.46
Communicate Decisions	145	75.52
Empower others to act on the vision	96	50
Create Quick Wins	66	34.38
Build on the Change	100	52.08
Institutionalize the Change	49	25.52

Conclusions

A five module training series with a corresponding community based clinical business solution proposal project was successful in increasing the confidence and comfort level of student pharmacist's leadership skillset at two Doctor of Pharmacy programs. Students identified that working on a project in a team had the strongest influence on their leadership skill development.



Future Directions

Three future goals have been set to enhance and expand this project:

1) Follow the students who are moving forward with project implementation. This will include student, and community partner self-assessment of the implementation process and outcomes associated with the project. Additionally, questions will be asked in regards to what challenges are encountered with the project and how those challenges were addressed.

2) Expand the number of students who participate in the implementation of the projects in the community pharmacy setting.

3) Share the leadership modules and this training approach with other Doctor of Pharmacy programs.

References

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