

A Personality Disorder Gathering: Using Simulation to Create a Transformative Learning Experience

Pamela Adamshick, PhD, RN, PMHCNS-BC *Associate Professor of Nursing* and Jennifer Landis, BA *Simulation and Multimedia Technician*
Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing, Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA, USA

Background

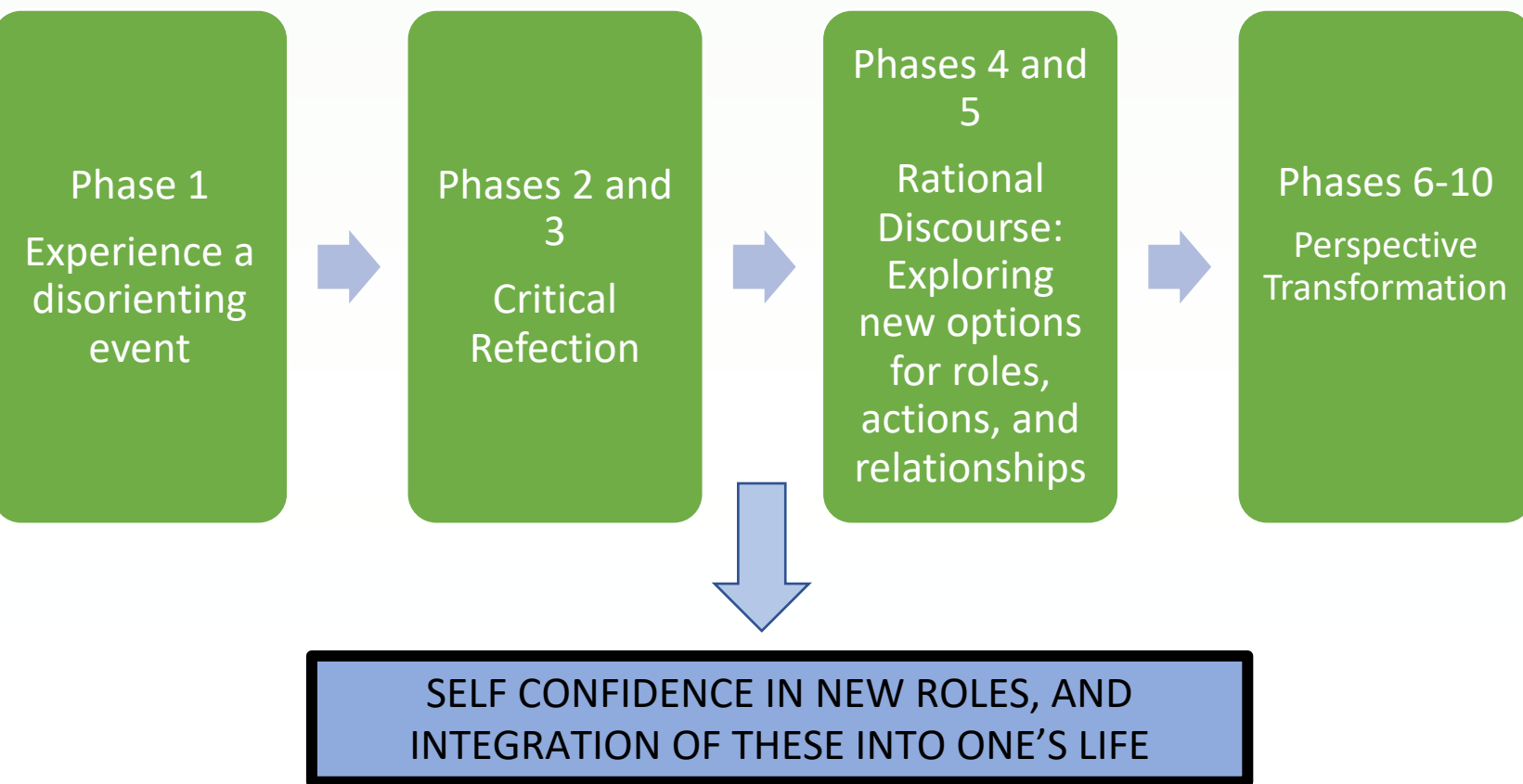
- Literature is lacking on how to use simulation to illustrate and practice interactions with people with personality disorders (PD).
- Standardized patient actors (SP's) can provide realistic psychiatric/mental health situations in which learners may explore: (Witt et al., 2018)
 - Communication
 - Assessment skills
 - Self-awareness
 - Professional growth
- Debriefing after a simulation with SP's further enhances active engagement in learning (Dreifuerst, 2015). :
 - Reflective processes connect thinking with action.
 - Learning transfer occurs from one environment to another.
 - Learners identify how to inform future patient encounters in other nursing care situations.

Theoretical Framework

Mezirow's Theory of Transformative Learning (1991)

- Major concepts:**
Learners use prior knowledge to interpret a revised meaning of their own experience.
The process may take learners out of their comfort zone.
This situation provides guidance for future action.
- Theory is grounded by three themes:
Experience: event occurs that challenges one's point of view
Critical Reflection: become aware of one's assumptions and habits of mind
Rational discourse: begin to question and reconstruct dominant narratives

10 phase transformation process



Purpose and Objectives

The **purpose** of the “Personality Disorder Gathering” was to engage student nurses in transformational learning about Personality Disorders.

Objectives of the simulation experience:

- Utilize principles of therapeutic communication while interacting with persons with specific personality disorders.
- Identify factors of a person's general appearance, speech, behavior, mood and affect consistent with selected personality disorders.
- Create a nursing plan of care for specific individuals.

Process: Immersive Mental Health Experience

Setting: A casually furnished and comfortable room on campus was chosen for the gathering. Five SP's portrayed 5 different Personality Disorders. The premise behind the gathering was that both students and SP's were inadvertently assigned to the same room for their respective meetings.

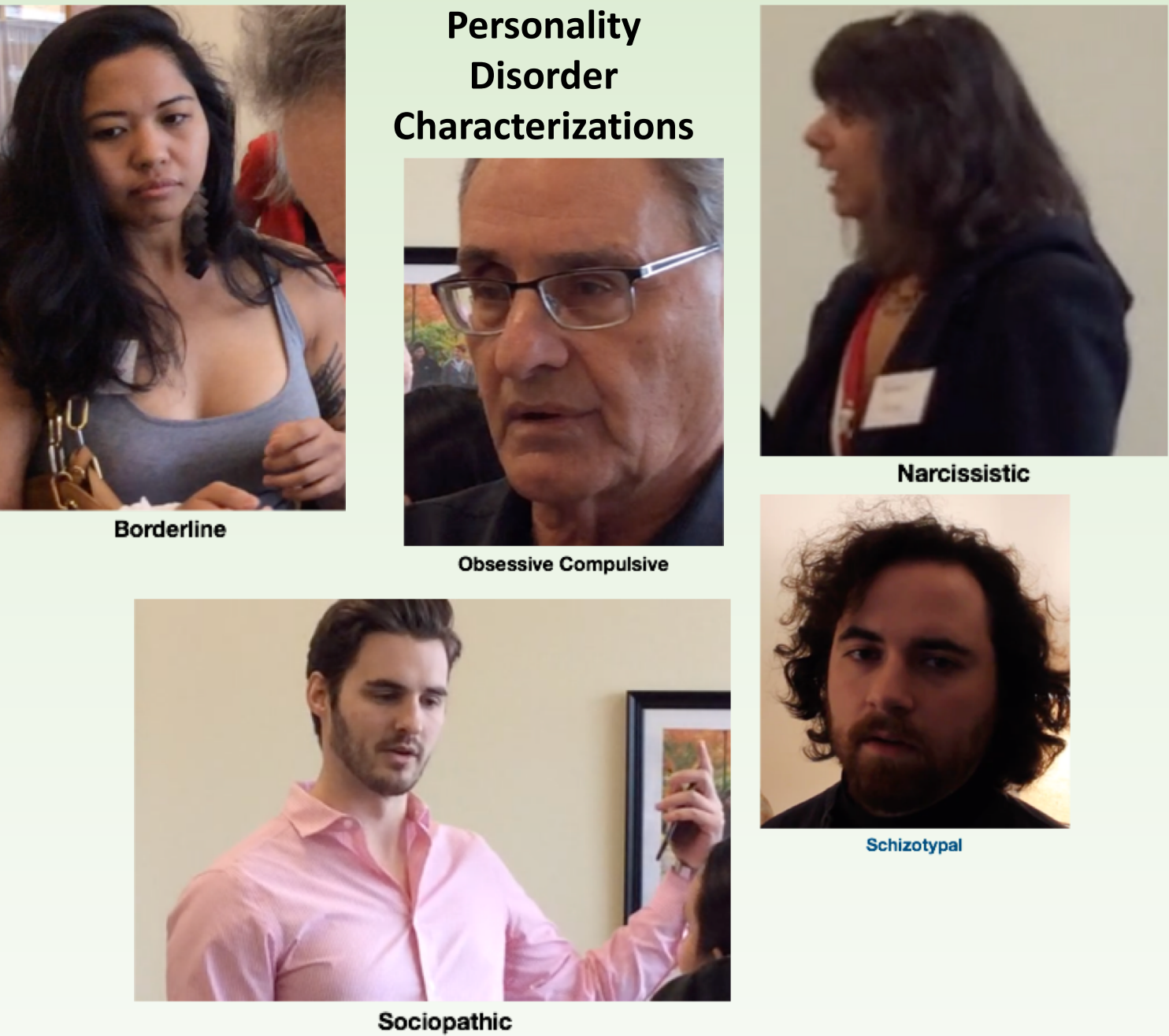
Pre-Brief:

- Set the stage for the gathering
- Describe the objectives
- Clarify nursing role/identity
- Class session two days prior on Cluster A, B, and C personality disorders
- 12 minute video depicting personality disorders prior to sim



Methods and Interactions

- Descriptions and case studies were developed for 5 Personality Disorder roles: Schizotypal, Narcissistic, Borderline, Sociopathic, and Obsessive-Compulsive.
- SP's were oriented to their roles several days ahead.
- Thirty-seven students in groups of 7-9/group joined in a 15 minute interaction with all the SP's.
- The Personality Disorder Gathering was presented 5 times with video-recording of each simulation.



Debriefing: Occurred with each small group of students with 20 minute discussion related to:

- How did they feel about the interactions?
- What was their role?
- What was their reaction to being in a community setting?
- What was done well?
- What could have been done differently?



Results

Survey Results

35/37 respondents (94.5% response rate)

Survey Question	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	N	% agree
Has your confidence in this skill improved as a result of the simulation?	32	3	0	35	91.43
The SP accurately portrayed the scenario	33	1	1	35	94.29
The SP added to the realism of the encounter	34	0	1	35	97.14

Content Analysis of survey comments

Themes related to the Simulation:

- The process facilitated self-reflection.
- Encounters occur with many people in life who display these personality types.
- Concepts learned apply to life in the larger community.
- Felt “challenged that simulation was in the community, but it made the experience more realistic.”
- Identified “nurses need to balance empathy with caution in care of people in society.”

Innovative Aspects

- Students were not aware of which personality disorders would be displayed.
- Interactions were unstructured. SP's were coached to engage in behaviors or converse in style representative of their assigned PD.
- The environment was set up for mingling and casual interactions.
- Students functioned independently and made decisions about how to interact and/or intervene.



Conclusions

Mental health disturbances are seen in the community or primary care settings. Thus, scenarios from this Personality Disorder Gathering can mimic those occurring outside acute care realms.

Student nurses displayed Mezirow's transformative learning:

- Reflected on deeper understanding of personality disorders.
- Discussed the impact of new knowledge on their professional nursing role and identity.
- Gained perspective on application of new behaviors into professional and personal roles in acute care, primary care, and community situations.

Implications

Introduce concept of Narrative Medicine into Simulation: (Charon et al., 2017)

- Place the story of the person with a personality disorder in the center of the scenario. Tape record the SP's introduction of each characterization and show at start of simulation.
- Meet as a person first who has a family and life responsibilities
- Create a realistic environment or real world setting where interactions can occur informally, yet are based on objectives.
- Natural and unassuming exposure to the person's story might increase understanding and empathy.
- This approach could be used for many mental health situations, acknowledging the needs of patients and caregivers to be heard and valued, and to have care that responds to those values and needs.

Further Study

- Expand upon psych/mental health simulations with SP's to include care of the patient and family caregivers in the home.**
- Explore further application of Mezirow's transformative learning theory to psych/mental health simulations.**

References

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