

Nurses Educational Programmes

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Why is a Refresher Course Necessary ?

Science is so rapidly changing medicine and nursing, that individuals need assistance and guidance in adjusting themselves to these changes. It is, therefore, necessary to help every nurse toward adjustment for the efficient nursing service in keeping with changing trends.

Refresher Courses Help :

1. The nurse to develop a better understanding between individuals and closer team co-operation.
2. To develop team spirit.
3. To build up professional knowledge.
4. The individual toward better understanding of other fields of work and the need to co-ordinate them as one unit for community health service.

Advantages :

1. Such courses can be attended by those who are unable to take advantage of other opportunities *e.g.*, long term courses.
2. Usually there is no examination at the end of the course which is one of the fears that often keeps older nurses from attending post-graduate courses.
3. The subjects included in the refresher courses are usually from the known to the unknown.
4. Every individual is able to contribute something of her experience.
5. Members attending the courses are usually those interested in particular fields and, therefore, can exchange ideas freely.
6. Every individual has the opportunity to participate.
7. Helps members to realize the various difficulties of others and so promote better understanding and co-operation.

8. Helps the individual to recognise her own importance and that of others' role in the health team.

9. Helps to broaden one's knowledge both professionally and generally.

10. Equips the individual for better work in her particular field of work.

By whom and how may it be conducted ?

Refresher courses may be conducted by the hospitals with the aid of the Superintendent, Matron, Ward Sisters and Tutors. The Matron, Tutors and Ward Sisters could hold a meeting to first decide the most urgent needs in the particular hospital. After considering the purpose and aim of the course this can be represented to the final authority with a request for financial assistance and other support.

The purpose and aim being considered and approved, the staff should meet again and elect or appoint two committees. One administrative committee which may consist of the Matron as Chairman, Assistant Matron, any Senior Ward Sister and the Home Sister.

Second committee to be the Education Committee. The Senior Tutor as Chairman, other Tutors and Senior Ward Sisters.

The Administration Committee will see to the accommodation, food, conveyance, duties etc., and make the necessary arrangements.

The Education Committee will prepare the outlines of the course, arrange for lecturers, classroom facilities and other requirements.

When these two committees have formulated a plan they should get together again and exchange progress, after which a final report should be prepared and given to the Superintendent of the Hospital.

The number of candidates to attend such a course should not be more than twelve.

Period of the Course : Usually two or three weeks.

Panel of Teachers :

These may include sister tutors, doctors, a psychologist if available, sisters to cover special fields of education.

Subjects :

Some of the subjects that could be included in a Ward Sister Refresher Course are : Principles of administration, Ward Teaching, Public Health Orientation, Ethics and Professional adjustments, opportunities for nurses, The Role of the Ward Sister, Modern Medical and Surgical Nursing, The Professional Organisation and the Nursing School.

Result of Refresher Courses.

The result will depend on the individual co-operation and the active part they play. At the end of the course, you will hear many say, *"This course has been of benefit to me and I am glad I had this opportunity. I have learnt so much now."*

Well, actually all along they are aware of many of the things they say they have now learnt, but the course drew these things to the surface and clarified difficult situations and solved certain problems. Thinking things together always helps to give confidence and encouragement to those eager to learn.

Further a better atmosphere is established as the staff become aware of each other's problems and are willing to work for better patient care.

The progress of the Refresher Course can be weighed later after about a year by the use of questionnaire, report discussions and observation.

Various Refresher Courses have been arranged by the W.H.O. but it is not possible for all nurses to attend these courses. Therefore, the hospitals can arrange for short term refresher courses for the nurses in their area. It is with this in mind that this article has been prepared.

Types of Refresher Courses :

1. Ward Sisters Course.
2. Public Health Orientation.
3. Administration.

Perhaps the readers will be glad to know that the former Hyderabad State arranged for such courses which many of our nurses were happy to attend them.

A course was arranged for the Matrons and Senior Nurses who are to be future Matrons in Andhra Pradesh. It was a 3 days course only, as we could not spare the Matrons for a longer period. In the mornings they visited the hospitals, wards, nursing schools and studied the Nursing School Programme. In the afternoon they had lectures and discussions.

A Public Health Orientation Programme was also arranged for Sister Tutors and Ward Sisters.

Three groups of Ward Sisters Courses were held.

Besides the above courses Refresher Courses were held, with the help of International Staff under the W. H. O., for Ward Sisters, Paediatric nurses and Auxiliary Nurse-Midwives. Methods of Teaching and Supervision was the subject of another course.

Please note that this is not the ideal way of planning Refresher Courses but it helped to meet our immediate needs.

The preservation of health is a duty. Few seem conscious that there is such a thing as physical morality.

— HERBERT SPENCER