

REMOVING BARRIERS: AN ONLINE LEARNING MODULE FOR NURSES TO ELIMINATE STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS PEOPLE LIVING WITH BLOOD-BORNE VIRUSES

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Background/Purpose: People living with HIV continue to experience stigma and discrimination when accessing healthcare. Many factors influence the lives of people living with HIV, including country of birth, culture, aging, sexuality and injecting drug use. Stigmatising attitudes and discriminatory behaviours relating to these factors, as well as the virus itself, can adversely impact an individual's access to engaging in screening, treatment and monitoring for HIV and other blood-borne viruses (BBVs). Nurses are central to the care of people living with HIV and have an opportunity to be leaders in dismantling stigma and discrimination.

Approach: A new online learning module (OLM) enables nurses to reflect on how stigma and discrimination can impact on care they provide to people with a BBV. The OLM focuses on topics which research suggests contributes to stigma and discrimination in healthcare settings. Nurses have access to five modules which explore the manifestations of stigma and discrimination, dispels myths about transmission, reinforce the efficacy of standard precautions, emphasise the nurse's role in maintaining privacy and confidentiality, and explore the intersectional sources of stigma and discrimination.

Outcomes/Impact: The OLM will provide valuable insight into the attitudes and behaviours of nurses providing care to people with BBVs. This presentation will highlight comparisons between pre-course and immediate post-course survey data to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practice of participants completing the OLM. Data from a three-month follow-up survey will be presented which will evaluate sustained awareness, knowledge acquisition, and implementation to practice.

Innovation and Significance: Nurses are well placed to contribute to meeting the overarching goals outlined in the Eight National HIV Strategy of the virtual elimination of HIV transmission, and elimination of the negative impacts of stigma and discrimination. To do this, nurses will need to challenge their own attitudes and beliefs, those of the nursing peers and the structures they work in.

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