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# Recruitment of Men into Nursing: Changing Attitudes

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# Recruitment of Men into Nursing: Changing Attitudes

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School of Nursing

Comprehensive Exam presented in partial  
fulfillment for the degree of Master of Science  
May 11, 2006



# Introduction

- **Historical Contribution**
  - 18<sup>th</sup> century UK: Advent of voluntary hospitals
  - Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century: Asylums and Workhouses
  - Florence Nightingale: Men?
  - 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries



# Introduction

- Why more male nurses?
  - Nursing shortage!
    - By 2020: 700,000 nurse deficit (29% of demand)
    - Reasons for shortage
    - Men currently make up 6% of US RN's
    - Men currently make up 10% of nursing school students
    - What if men entered nursing in equal numbers? **NO SHORTAGE**



# Purpose

- Alleviate shortage by recruiting men into nursing
- Review of literature
  - Focus on experiences of male nurse
- Needs Assessment
  - Undergraduate males
- Intervention
  - Changing attitudes



# Theoretical Framework

- **Sister Callista Roy**
  - Roy Adaptation Model of nursing
- **Humans part of adaptive system**
  - Person (in this case aggregate)
  - Environment
  - Health
  - Nursing Care
    - Delivered through 6-step nursing process



# Literature Review

- **Persistent themes:**
  - **Barrier: Gender issues**
    - Nursing as a feminine profession
    - Women superior to men in nursing
    - Sexual orientation
  - **Professional advantages**
    - Hiring
    - Promotion
    - Pay



# Gender Issues

- Nursing as a feminine profession
  - Many studies qualitative
  - Highlights:
    - Whittock and Leonard (2003)
      - Interviews with 42 male nurses
      - Uncomfortable caring for women of same age
      - Excluded from gender-specific care
    - Cyr (1992)
      - Survey of 25 male nurses
        - Most negative aspect of nursing:
        - Perception of nursing as female profession





# Gender Issues

- **Highlights (continued)**
  - **Okrainec (1994)**
    - Descriptive, questionnaires
    - Both male and females
      - Females were superior in providing care
  - **Kelly, Shoemaker, & Steele (1996)**
    - Qualitative, focus groups, 18 male nursing students
    - Friends who thought all male nurses were gay
    - Many felt a need to show wedding rings/talk about family to acknowledge their heterosexuality



# Professional Advantages

- Williams (1992)
  - Qualitative, interviews, men in nursing, teaching, social work, library sciences
    - Many men feel their 'token' status is an advantage
    - Management
    - Men expected to work full time and be breadwinners



# Professional Advantages

- **Cyr (1992)**
  - Some men reported pay as advantage
- **Barkley and Kohler (1992)**
  - Questionnaires to male high school students
    - Most have high opinion of male nurses
    - Only 10% considering it as a career
    - Why?
      - Pay?



# Methods

- 11 question survey: Likert scale
- Questions examined:
  - Views of nursing as female profession
  - Questions of sexuality
  - Ability of males to provide adequate care
  - Career Advancement
  - Pay

A person wearing a blue surgical cap and a white face mask, looking down. The background is a blurred blue and white.

# Methods

- **Sample**
  - Undergraduate males at large public university
  - Must be 18 or over
  - Must be proficient enough with computers to access and use university e-mail account
  - Must be able to read and write (type) English



# Methods

More detail about  
vendor

Can we actually see it on  
line during your  
presentation?

- **Conducted online**
  - E-mail sent, inviting participants
  - Sent from student researcher's university e-mail account
  - Random search of directory for participants
  - Served as information sheet
  - Contained a link on bottom to survey
  - Directed to vendor site
  - Vendor stores all data, collects no personal info: Anonymous
- **Incentive**
  - Offered chance to win basketball tickets



# Methods

- Original e-mailing: approximately 10 messages from each letter of alphabet
- Future mailings to meet larger sample size
- 601 messages sent, 52 returned
- 46 completed (8.3% response rate)
- 18 ineligible: Final sample size: 28



# Discussion

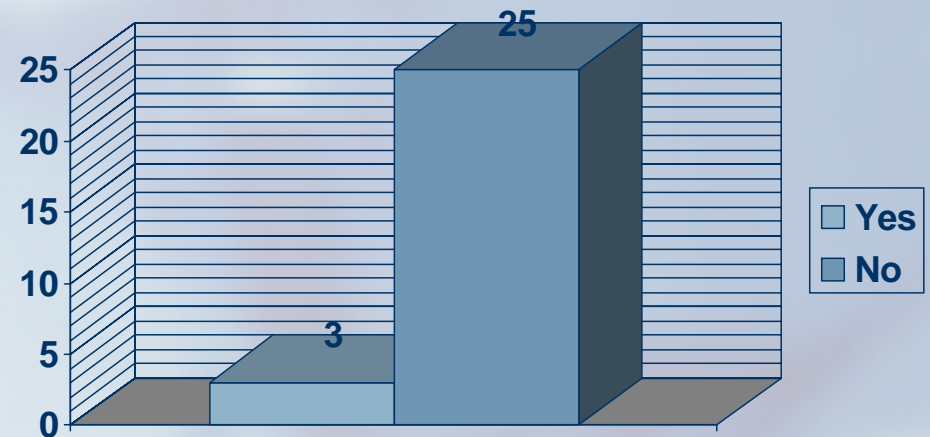
- **Back to framework:**
  - Answers demonstrate a clear need in alterations of environment, 'health' deficit is present
  - Reflective of indifference, ignorance towards nursing
- **Findings...**





- Clear need for recruitment: 11% have considered nursing at any time in life

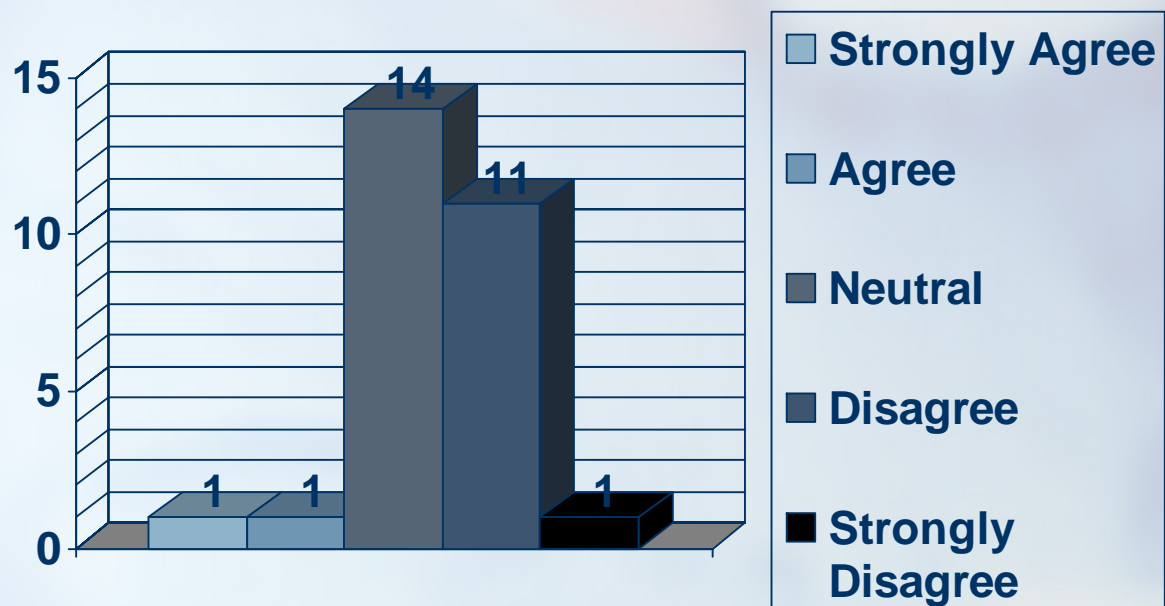
Have you ever considered a career in nursing?





## Schools actively recruit men into nursing

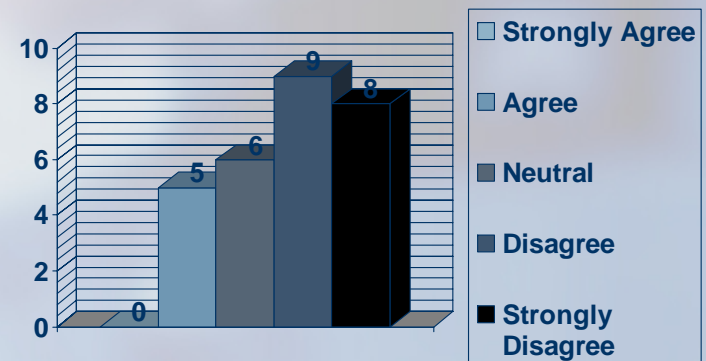
- Clear that schools aren't pursuing male students



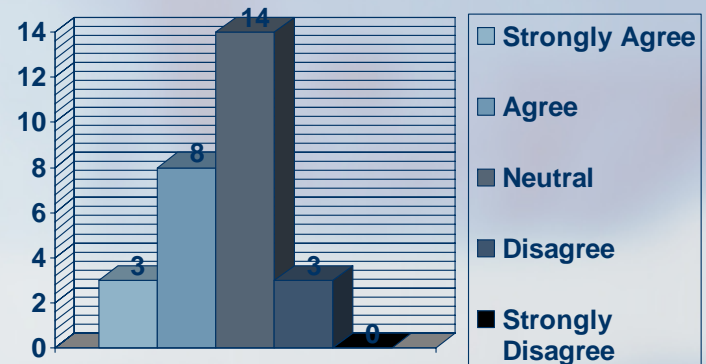


- If young men have any opinions at all about nursing, they are negative

I have a negative opinion of male nurses



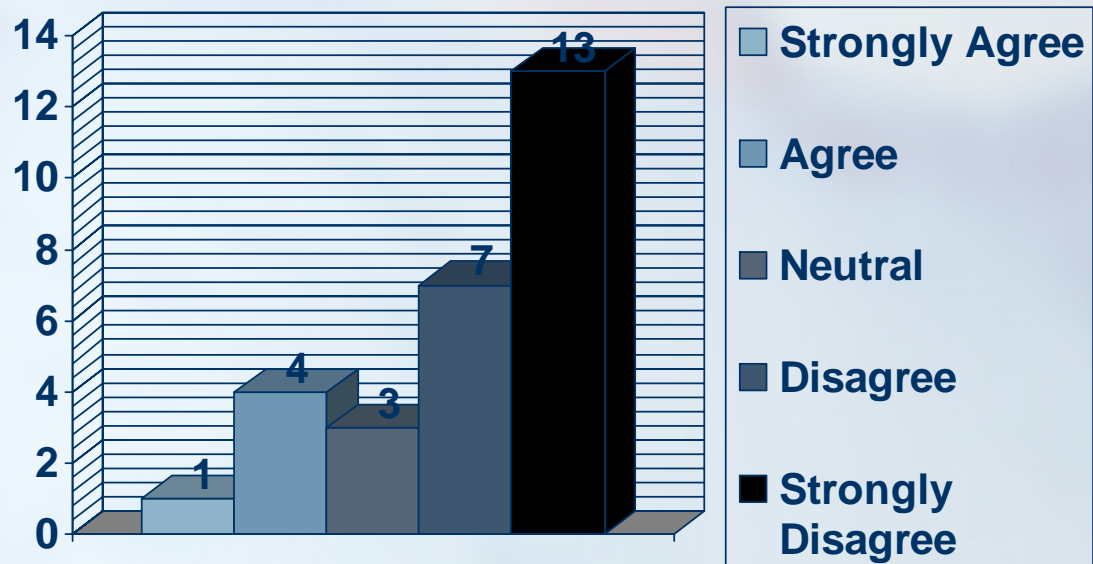
I admire male nurses





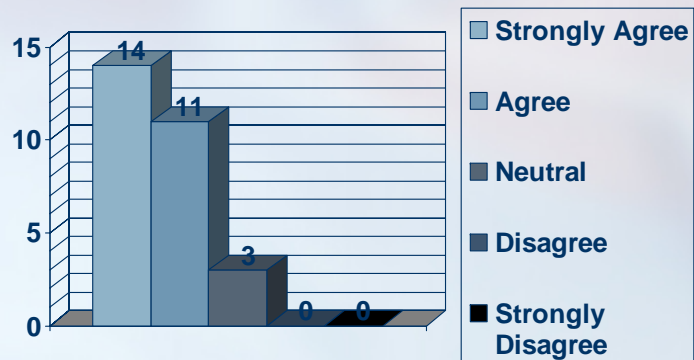
## Men should not be nurses

- Failure to reaffirm males' right to be nurses by 8 (29%).

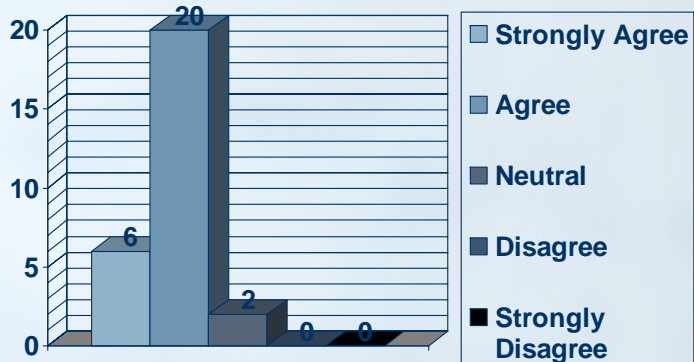




### Men can provide nursing care as well as females



### Male nurses can be compassionate



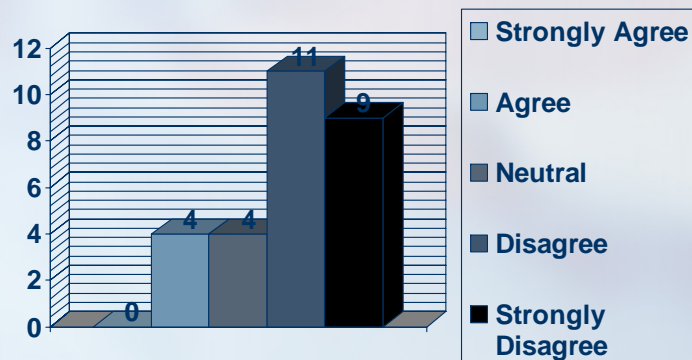
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### ■ Greatest support to male nurses

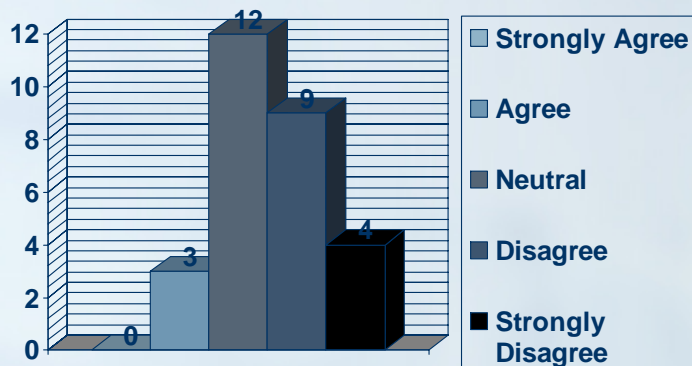
- 25 (89%) felt men could give care as well as females
  - Contradict Okrainec (1994)
- Almost all thought male nurses are compassionate
- Why do they not admire/condemn male nurses, yet believe they can provide care as well as females?
  - Only question relative to females (camaraderie)
    - Exploit this during intervention?



### I would question a male nurses sexual orientation



### Male nurses are effeminate

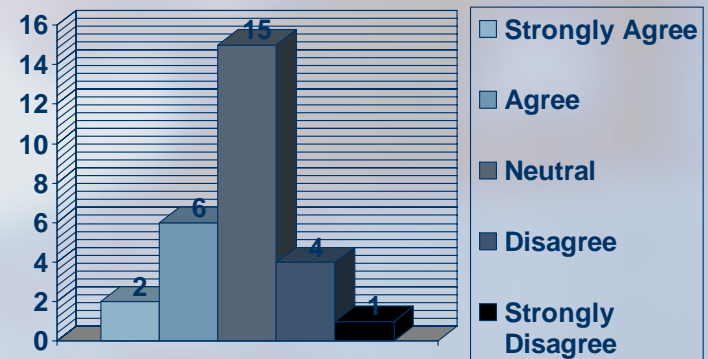


- Most would not question sexual orientation or consider them effeminate
  - Contradict Kelly, Shoemaker, Steele (1996)
  - ?Misconception by male nurses, not indicative of public perception
  - Not to be addressed during intervention

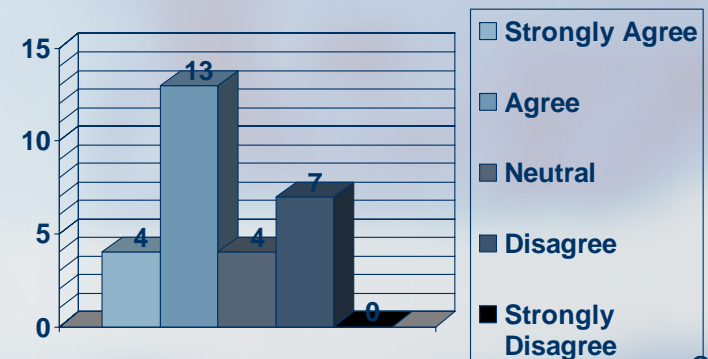


- No formed opinions on nursing salaries, 15 (54%) neutral
- Many felt there room for advancement in nursing, yet many answered neutrally

Nurses make high salaries



There is room for career advancement in nursing





# Discussion

- **Limitations:**
  - “Neutral” option
  - Sample size
    - ?effects of online survey
  - Survey not tested for validity and reliability
  - Didn’t overtly ask question “Is nursing a feminine profession”





# Plan

- Keeping in mind purpose:
  - Alleviate nursing shortage by recruiting more men into nursing
- Themes identified by assessment:
  - Young men are indifferent towards nursing
  - Young men feel they are not actively recruited by nursing schools
  - However, they believe men can be just as good as females in nursing
  - Young men are unaware of the potential for high salaries and rapid advancement in nursing



# Plan

- **Consideration #1**
  - In-service with on campus undecided undergrads
    - Advantages:
      - Can address all identified themes:
        - Male role model to identify with
        - Able to communicate that nursing is a viable profession
        - Instill a sense of belonging/being wanted
        - Communicate the fiscal benefits
    - Disadvantages:
      - Difficulty in assembling a “captive” audience
      - Perceptions are difficult to change at this age



# Plan

## ■ Consideration #2

- Attend a career fair day at local middle school or high school

- Advantages:

- Would be able to address all identified themes:
  - Male role model to identify with
  - Able to communicate that nursing is a viable profession
  - Instill a sense of belonging/being wanted
  - Communicate the fiscal benefits
- Would be easier to ensure attendance
- More likely to influence beliefs at younger age

- Disadvantages:

- All potential career fairs: Students choose which careers they want to learn about: “Captive” audience?
- Still may be difficult to change young men’s attitudes



# Plan

- **Consideration #3**
  - Give presentation/lesson to PreK/Grade school
  - Advantages:
    - Children are younger, may not have formed opinions/beliefs on subject yet (and if they have, may be more easily influenced)
    - Easier to reach and engage interested young males
  - Disadvantages:
    - Difficult to evaluate intervention
    - Unable to use fiscal benefits as persuasion
    - Not immediate! These kids won't be in the workforce for AT LEAST 15 years!



# Intervention

- Decision made to conduct intervention at Pre-school level
- Conducted at Center School of the Ellington (CT) Public Schools on 4/11/2006



# Intervention

- **Town of Ellington**
  - 18 miles northeast of Hartford, CT
  
- Traditionally agricultural town with recent increase in business, residential



# Ellington Demographics

Population: 14,830

	Town	State
Med. HH Inc.	\$69,059	\$59,761
Poverty Rate	3.6%	7.9%
White	95%	73%
Black	1%	9%
Asian Pacific	1.5%	0.5%
Native Amer	0.2%	0.3%
Other/Multi	1%	6%
Hispanic	1.5%	10%

5/11/06

Source: Town of Ellington Profile, Connecticut Economic Resource Center, <http://www.cerc.com/home.html> (November, 2005)



# Ellington Education

## Connecticut Mastery Test % Above Goal

	Grade 4		Grade 6		Grade 8	
	Town	CT	Town	CT	Town	CT
Reading	75	58	78	64	83	66
Math	76	61	69	61	71	55
Writing	69	61	85	60	71	59

## Average SAT Score

	Town	CT
Verbal	528	502
Math	524	503





# Intervention

- **Class composition**
  - Pre-K (Ages 3-6)
  - Integrated classroom
  - 4 classes (conducted individually)
    - Sizes: 11,11,10,13
  - Roughly equal gender (24 Boys, 21 Girls)
  - (One of those boys).....

# Intervention



5/11/06



# Intervention

- Lesson plan developed
- Duration of program decided
  - 20-30 minutes
- Purpose identified
- Objectives defined
- Materials defined
- Evaluation defined



# Purpose

- Alleviate the nursing shortage by recruiting men into nursing
- Accomplished by exposing children to nursing and men in nursing at a young age



# Objectives

- Objectives
  - Present a positive and enthusiastic male nurse role model
  - Challenge children's preconceived notions on gender roles and limitations
  - Encourage children not to feel defined by gender alone
  - Present nursing as a fun and exciting vocation
  - Present the nurse as an important part of community



# Intervention

- Materials:
- Dress up materials:
  - Labcoat or scrubs
- Real life nursing tools:
  - Stethoscope(2): Adult/neonatal
  - Sphygmomanometer
  - Surgical masks/caps
  - Thermometers
  - Various bandages/splints
- Evaluation tool (and crayons)



# Evaluation

- How to evaluate?
  - Difficult to do a “post-test”
  - Can’t follow their vocational choices 15 years from now!
  
- Evaluation done 2 ways.....



# Evaluation

- 1.) Utilizing a PECS based post-test/activity
  - PECS: Picture Exchange Communication System
    - Picture based communication system used to teach language/communication to autistic children
    - Uses a picture to ask a question





# Evaluation

- 1.) PECS
  - Children given a sheet of paper 2 “questions”
    - 1.) Picture of sad face, picture of “thumbs up”
      - Circle which one the presentation made you feel
    - 2.) Pictures of: Cop/Fireman/Nurse
      - Color which one you want to be when you grow up (or draw your own answer).



# Evaluation

- 2.) Indirect.....ask the teachers!
  - Each teacher was asked to discuss the presentation with the class at a later date
    - Hope to assess:
      - Their recollection of the presentation
      - To what degree they internalized the message
      - How many want to be nurses!!
    - Also serve as a follow-up to reinforce content



# Intervention

- 1.) Introduction
  - Duration: 5-10 minutes
    - A.) Introduce self and why I am here
      - Here to talk about what I do for a living
  
- 2.) Dress up Activity
  - Duration: 5 minutes
  - I then pick one volunteer from the class
  - We both dressed in labcoat with stethoscope around our necks
  - Children then had to guess what we were

# Intervention



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# Intervention



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# Intervention



5/11/06

45



# Intervention

- 3.) Discussion
  - Duration: 5-10 minutes
  - Allowed them all to guess what we were
  - Told them we were nurses!
    - .....awkward pause
  - Attempted to get them to say why we couldn't be nurses
  - Discussed gender roles in professions
    - Ex. Can boys be dancers? Can girls be pilots?
  - Then I explained what nurses do
    - Transition to next section.....

# Intervention



5/11/06

47





# Intervention

- 4.) Hands on activity
  - Duration: 10-15 minutes
  - Play with real life nursing tools!
    - Children volunteer to come up and play with my nursing tools
    - Used stethoscopes to listen to each others chest
    - Took their blood pressure
    - Put on finger splints
    - Dressed in surgical masks and caps
    - Wrapped them in bandages

# Intervention



5/11/06

49

# Intervention



5/11/06

# Intervention



5/11/06

51

# Intervention



5/11/06

52

# Intervention



5/11/06

53

# Intervention



5/11/06

54



# Intervention

- 5.) Evaluation
  - Duration: 5-10 minutes
  - Children given PECS evaluation tool and crayons
  - Asked to circle how the activity made them feel
  - Asked to circle what they want to be when they grow up or draw it themselves
    - Not done in one class due to time constraints



# Intervention



5/11/06

56



# Intervention

- PECS evaluation results (31 collected):

Did you enjoy the activity?		
	# of responses	
“Good job”	22	(71%)
“Not so good”	3	(10%)
Both	5	(16%)
Not discernable	1	(3%)



# Intervention

- PECS eval results (31 collected):

What do you want to be when you grow up?	
	# of responses
Police officer	3 (10%)
Firefighter	4 (13%)
Nurse	3 (10%)
Multiple selected	11 (35%)
Blank	1 (3%)
Don't know	2 (6%)
Drew their own	7 (23%)



# Intervention

- Evaluation
  - Each teacher was asked to discuss the presentation with the class sometime afterwards and to also give their opinion on the success of the activity
    - Hope to assess:
      - Their recollection of the presentation
      - To what degree they internalized the message
      - How many want to be nurses!!
    - Also serve as a follow-up to reinforce content



# Evaluation, Class # 1

Nick,

- Thank you sooo much for your informative and interactive presentation of the nursing profession for males. It was adorable seeing the children dressed up in a lab coat and exploring the medical materials you brought along. Your presentation was very-well prepared and kept the preschoolers, even those with special needs, attentive and interested. It was just the right amount of time and information for the little ones. After you left, we discussed your presentation further. About 1/2 the class, including 4 boys, decided that they, too, want to be nurses when they grow up. One of the little girls actually said she wanted to be a "boy nurse" when she grew up!! Imagine that!!!! Good luck in your continuing education and nursing profession. Thank you again!



# Evaluation, class #2

Hi Mr. Markey,

- I think the presentation about nurses went very well. The props and materials made it very meaningful and easy to understand for the children. I think that their good attention and questions and comments during the presentation indicate that they understood that both men and women could be nurses. Thanks very much for the presentation. I hope this is helpful.



# Evaluation, class #3

Hi,

- We discussed your presentation the other day at morning circle and I am actually sending you a thank you from the class. What perfect timing. The children were so good which is a compliment to you for having a discussion at their level of comprehension. Jay was very interested and now has added nurse to his potential job opportunities. What more could you ask for! I do think that we constantly make the effort to provide gender neutral portrayals in the classroom. Dress up is a perfect example as all of the children don any of the attire. If you find good books, let us know for our library. It is one of our ongoing curriculum development which also ties into our NAEYC accreditation. Thanks for coming into the class and we would love a repeat performance next year.



# Evaluation, class #4

- I was very pleased with the presentation, as I am always looking for ways to open up my students' minds to all of the possibilities open to each of them, regardless of gender, race, or family background. I believe that every time we expose children to men or women who are engaged in non-traditional gender roles, it gives them additional background knowledge about what kinds of people can do what kinds of jobs, and counteracts some of the stereo-typical images that they see every day in the media, and even in children's toys. A couple of weeks after the presentation, an issue came up during our "Surprise Box Show and Tell", where one of the children had a tractor in the box, and everyone else was trying to guess what it was. We had already figured out that it was something that drives, and to help move the process along, I asked the child what kind of person would drive it, if it was real. He responded "A man". When I asked him to elaborate, he added "A farmer". Later, when we saw what the object was, I asked the student to think back to the question I had asked, and I asked him if he thought a woman could drive a tractor and be a farmer. He and the rest of the class all replied that yes, of course she could. I asked them to remember your visit, and how you showed us that boys and girls could be anything they wanted to be. It was a perfect way to talk about the subject, since they all had the common background of having seen your presentation. I don't think that minds can be changed with one visit, but each time that we open a child's mind a little further, it is less of a stretch the next time to get it to open it up again. Thank you again for the wonderful experience!!





# Evaluation

- Themes identified in teachers' evaluations:
  - Presentation was performed at an appropriate developmental level
  - Many children were interested in becoming nurses
  - Concept was still fresh weeks later in one class, where children demonstrated an open mind towards traditional gender roles



# Discussion

- Based on evaluation, intervention was successful:
  - Evidence was seen that intervention made a difference in shaping young children's (boys') attitudes towards nursing and gender roles
  - Evidence was seen that some of these children (boys) were excited about nursing and may grow up admiring nurses



# Summary

- Men needed to combat nursing shortage
- That will only happen if the image of nurses as feminine profession is changed
- By starting young, we can influence children before they develop gender stereotypes
- Changing attitudes



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