

## Background

- Achieving psychotherapy core competencies is essential for all PMHNPs.
- According to the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, advanced practice psychiatric nursing programs must incorporate NONPF competencies into their curriculum for accreditation.
- While developing novice nurse psychotherapist's competencies is challenging in the current environment, innovations in training approaches can be effective.
- The goal of this study is to explore how the implementation of a 17-week virtual psychotherapy course impacts PMHNP students' level of competence.

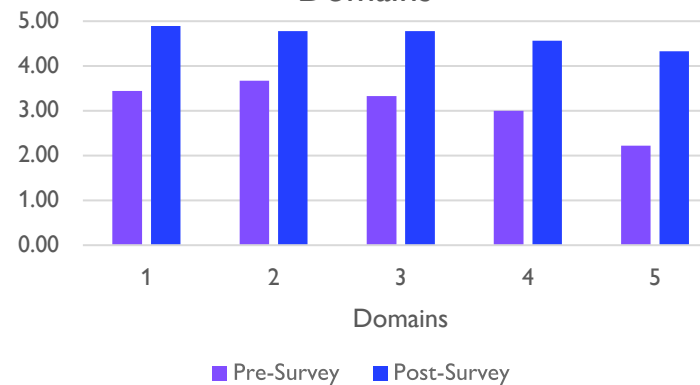
## Methods

- A mixed-methods study followed a cohort of PMHNP students (n = 10) enrolled in an online psychotherapy course taught virtually, to measure their perspectives of learning psychotherapy in five major domains.
- The professor used a 23-item questionnaire to explore perceived learned levels of five major domains.
- Self-assessment in the application of knowledge and skills domain included interviewing, psychometrics, assessment methods, diagnosis, conceptualization, communication, intervention implementation, basic helping skills, management of barriers to progress, progress evaluation, and consultation.
- Data were collected from the cohort of PMHNP students at the beginning and end of the psychotherapy course.
- The numerical data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and the narrative comments were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

## Five Major Domains

1. Professionalism
2. Cultural diversity
3. Ethical and legal standards of care
4. Reflective practice/self-assessment and self-care
5. Application of knowledge and skills.

### Pre/Post Survey Changes in Five Major Domains



## Quantitative Results

Using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

- Students' *pre-survey* self-evaluation of competence in the five domains ranged from a high of 3.9 to a low of 2.3 with an average score of 3.1
- Students' *post-survey* self-evaluation of competence in the five domains ranged from a high of 5.0 to a low of 3.9 with an average score of 4.7.

## Qualitative Results

Overall high satisfaction level with course content and group interaction:

- Four (4) of the 10 students wanted more case studies, mock individual, and group therapy sessions.
- Their preference was for the professor to guide the initial sessions.
- One student asked for more motivational interviewing training and application to "resistant" populations
- Two students asked for more discussions about evidence-based practices from assigned readings and more guest lecturers.

## Conclusions

- Integrating virtual psychotherapy courses in PMHNP education and bringing students together to learn and apply psychotherapeutic modalities and techniques while recognizing cultural diversity and ethical-legal standards of care is challenging but achievable.
- Opportunities exist to develop models for best-practice psychotherapy PMHNP education.
- Although this training course proved to be effective in imparting essential competencies, there is a need to develop sophisticated methods to evaluate student's mastery of complex psychotherapy skills.

## References

- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties. (2012). *Nurse Practitioner Core Competencies*. NONPF. <https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nonpf.org/resource/resmgr/competencies/npcorecompetenciesfinal2012.pdf>
- Wheeler, K. (2014). *Psychotherapy for the Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurse*. Mosby Elsevier.