

School of Nursing
University Of Maryland
655 West Lombard Street Baltimore. Maryland 21201

June 23, 1981

Daniel Sheridan, R.N.

56U3 S. Spaulding, Apt. 2 Chicago, Illinois 60629

Dear Daniel,

I have enjoyed talking with you about the role of nursing in a shelter for battered women. As I mentioned to you on the phone I have personally worked as a volunteer at the House of Ruth in Baltimore since 1977. Additionally, I have supervised Registered Nurse Students, working on their baccalaureate degree at the University of Maryland for the past two years.

I am enclosing the job description for the nursing students and several other handouts that you might find useful. I can also briefly describe what the nursing students are doing in this clinical experience. You can share these ideas with others, however I am in the process of writing an article on this experience and am therefore requesting that these not be distributed to others or published in any format.

The curriculum at the University of Maryland is integrated and the objectives of clinical experiences are to apply the nursing process to individuals and families experiencing a variety of stress states. The experience at the shelter allows students to meet these objectives in a variety of ways. Students choose two women, usually with children with whom they work for the entire semester. This involves home visits after the women have left the shelter.

2. Students answer the crisis hotline phone for about two hours a week.

3. The students hold informal and formal classes for the residents weekly. The content is decided based on current identified needs but has included:

- a. first aid and the choking maneuver
- b. normal growth and development of children i.e. toilet training, sensory stimulation of infants, care of diaper rash, common colds>safety in the home (toddlers).
- c. parenting skills - especially communication with children and non violent discipline
- d. self breast examination
- e. sexuality, birth control
- f. pregnancy (it is not unusual to have 1-2 pregnant women at any time)
- g. nutrition

I believe, and the students validate this, that the experience is excellent. It gives the students a variety of experiences and provides them with the unique experience of being the only health care provider in an agency, (the staff at the shelter are counselors and social workers). However because of this I carefully screen for students who can make decisions, function relatively independently, and have a variety of recent clinical experiences - especially pediatrics and obstetrics. They are often called upon to make decisions regarding the need for medical evaluation and treatments and need to decide if the problem needs to be taken care of immediately (involving a visit to an emergency room) or can wait for an appointment in a clinic. As you know, this decision is often very difficult especially in working with a family undergoing several simultaneous crises. For these reasons, I would not recommend a shelter for battered women as a clinical experience for generic undergraduate students. I think it only appropriate for Registered Nurse students or graduate students.

I hope these thoughts are helpful, and I need to remind you again of my intentions to publish an article based on many of these thoughts and am therefore requesting that this not be reproduced. Please feel free to contact me again if I can answer anything further.

Sincerely,

Barbara Parker, R.N., M.S Assistant Professor
House Of Ruth
Baltimore, Maryland

Nursing Student Nature of Work

Under the supervision of the Services Coordinator, the nursing student(s) will provide health counseling and advocacy services to the residents and their children.

Specific Job Duties

- To provide education concerning child development both in terms of health care and emotional development.
- To provide education to the residents in the area of pregnancy of parenting and nutrition,
- To be available to residents for education around women's health issues.
- To act as an advocate for residents as they attempt to secure needed services.
- To teach residents and staff First Aid and Choking Maneuver
- To inform staff as well as residents in the area of safety in the home.
- To assist with the children's fantasy group.
- To provide technical nursing skills as needed (dressing changes; cast care etc.).
- To provide crisis counseling for hot-line service as needed.
- To provide Follow up Services for selected former residents.
- Other duties as assigned by the supervisor.

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