

Intervention on socio-emotional competencies: dialogues with nursing academics mediated by digital information and communication technology.

Intervenção sobre competências socioemocionais: diálogos com acadêmicos de enfermagem mediados por tecnologia digital de informação e comunicação.

Intervención sobre competencias socioemocionales: diálogos con estudiantes de enfermería mediados por tecnología digital de información y comunicación.

Hiara Rose Moreno Amaral¹, Joyce Mazza Nunes Aragão², Ricardo Costa Frota³, Thaísa Quixadá Fontenele⁴, Tifanny Andrade Silveira Rodrigues⁵, Maria Beatriz Lima Veras⁶, Rebeca Sales Viana⁷, Maristela Inês Osawa Vasconcelos⁸

ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the experience of an online educational intervention with nursing students on socio-emotional competencies and to evaluate the participants' perception of the course. **Method:** This is a descriptive, experience report-type study of an educational intervention with undergraduate nursing students, carried out with 13 students of both sexes, who were studying from the third to the tenth semester at the State University of Vale do Acaraú (UVA), in the municipality of Sobral-Ce. The educational intervention, carried out in November 2021 with four meetings lasting a total of twenty hours, refers to an online course, entitled 'Understanding my emotions', carried out on the Google Meet platform, Digital Information and Communication Technology (DICT). **Results:** It was noted, through the students' speeches, the relevance of working on socio-emotional skills, highlighting benefits such as developing communication, and understanding emotions, improvements in dealing with challenging situations and mental health care. In addition, the course contributed to social relationships and better performance in the lives of the participants. **Final considerations:** It is important to incorporate socio-emotional skills into the training of nurses to benefit them in ethical, social, professional, and emotional aspects.

Descriptors: Intervention; Social skills; Educational technology; Students, Nursing; Nursing.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Describir la experiencia de una intervención educativa online con estudiantes de enfermería sobre competencias socioemocionales y evaluar la percepción de los participantes sobre el curso. **Método:** Estudio descriptivo, del tipo relato de experiencia, de una intervención educativa con estudiantes universitarios de enfermería, realizado con 13 académicos, de ambos sexos, que cursaban del tercero al décimo semestres en la Universidad Estadual de Vale do Acaraú (UVA), en el municipio de Sobral-Ce. La intervención educativa, realizada en noviembre/2021 con cuatro encuentros con una duración total de veinte horas, se refiere a un curso online, titulado 'Entendiendo mis emociones', realizado por la plataforma Google Meet, una Tecnología Digital de Información y Comunicación (TIDC). **Resultados:** Se constató, a través de las intervenciones de los académicos, la relevancia de trabajar las competencias socioemocionales, destacando beneficios como el desarrollo de la comunicación y la comprensión de las emociones, mejoras en el afrontamiento de situaciones desafiantes y en el cuidado de la salud mental. Además, el curso contribuyó a las relaciones sociales y a un mejor desempeño en la vida de los participantes. **Consideraciones finales:** Es importante incorporar las competencias socioemocionales en la formación de las enfermeras para beneficiarlas en los aspectos éticos, sociales, profesionales y emocionales. **Descriptor:** Intervención; Habilidades Sociales; Tecnología Educativa; Estudiantes de Enfermería; Enfermería.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Descrever a experiência de uma intervenção educacional *online* com acadêmicos de enfermagem acerca das competências socioemocionais e avaliar a percepção dos participantes sobre o curso. **Método:** Estudo descritivo, do tipo relato de experiência, de uma intervenção educativa com estudantes universitários do curso de enfermagem, realizada com 13 acadêmicos, de ambos os sexos, que cursavam do terceiro ao décimo semestre na Universidade Estadual do Vale do Acaraú (UVA), no Município de Sobral-Ce. A intervenção educativa, realizada em novembro/2021 com quatro encontros com duração total de vinte horas, refere-se a um curso *online*, intitulado ‘Entendendo minhas emoções’, realizado pela plataforma *Google Meet*, uma Tecnologia Digital de Informação e Comunicação (TDIC). **Resultados:** Notou-se, por meio das falas dos acadêmicos, a relevância de se trabalhar as competências socioemocionais, destacando benefícios como desenvolvimento da comunicação e compreensão das emoções, melhorias no lidar com situações desafiadoras e cuidado da saúde mental. Ademais, o curso contribuiu para uma relação social e melhor rendimento na vida dos participantes. **Considerações finais:** É relevante incorporar competências socioemocionais na formação de enfermeiros, para beneficiá-los com aspectos éticos, sociais, profissionais e emocionais. **Descritores:** Intervenção; Habilidades sociais; Tecnologia educacional; Estudantes de Enfermagem; Enfermagem.

¹ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ¹<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4272-3357>
² State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ²<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2865-579X>
³ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ³<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1632-964X>
⁴ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ⁴<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6589-3864>
⁵ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ⁵<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6932-3743>
⁶ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ⁶<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2190-9972>
⁷ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ⁷<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1452-852X>
⁸ State University of Vale do Acaraú/UEVA. Sobral (CE), Brazil. ⁸<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1937-8850>

* Article extracted from Undergraduate Course Conclusion Work Academic training in nursing in times of the COVID-19 pandemic: an intervention on socio-emotional competencies, State University Vale do Acaraú, 2022.

How to cite this article

Amaral, HRM, Aragão, JMN, Frota, RC, et al. Intervention on socio-emotional competencies: Dialogues with nursing students mediated by DICTs. Nurse Review UFPE online. 2023;17:e258351 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5205/1981-8963.2023.258351>

INTRODUCTION

Socio-emotional competencies comprise a set of terms for a wide range of skills involving Emotional Intelligence (EI), social competence and self-regulation, covering areas related to emotional processes, interpersonal skills and cognitive regulation.¹

For nurses to perform their duties with excellence, it is important that socio-emotional aspects be worked on during their academic training, developing skills to deal with adverse situations, conflicts, critical thinking, curiosity and communication.²

Research into emotions in education is indeed a challenge, as it involves not only the theoretical aspect, but also the practice and existential implication of those involved. It is necessary to consider not only what is taught, but how it is taught and how students' emotions are affected during this process.³

It should be noted that since the 19th century, when educational systems were created, they have already followed the concept of school, which from the outset had an anti-emotional conceptualization whose rational dimension was predominant. Educational

institutions at that time were geared towards teaching the rational being, thus excluding emotional education.⁴

In academic nursing training, it is important to address students' emotions, as dealing with challenges, anxieties and fears is an essential part of practice. Working on these emotions allows nurses to show sensitivity and understanding, while dealing with their own emotions, ensuring the quality-of-care provided.⁵

Considering this, university students stand out as a group that faces obstacles and challenges when entering the academic environment, especially regarding the difficulty of staying at university and psychological demands. To ensure good academic performance, they face constant demands that can lead to health dysfunctions, such as neuropsychological pathological processes.⁶

Neuropsychological pathological processes can include alterations in memory, attention, language, perception, reasoning, and other cognitive functions, which can lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. These alterations can be caused by various factors, such as stress and lack of sleep, and can negatively affect academic performance. It is therefore important for university students to adopt self-care strategies to prevent these dysfunctions.⁶

In the light of these issues, considering the role of universities as spaces for scientific production that can modify the social, political, economic, and cultural systems of individuals and societies, it is essential that these institutions adapt and re-adapt to new teaching methods, in line with technological advances and modern challenges, with the objective of playing an innovative role in the training of new professionals, taking both personal and emotional perspectives into account.⁷

It is recommended to invest in the development of emotional intelligence during undergraduate nursing studies and to do so horizontally, based on the course content. This highlights the need to use strategies that can enhance this subject, which is still little explored in nursing.⁸

It should be noted that the curricular guidelines for undergraduate nursing courses should train nurses to be generalist, humanist, critical and reflective professionals who are qualified in nursing practice, based on scientific and intellectual rigor, and guided by moral principles. In addition, they define that nurses should exercise and develop some fundamental General Competencies and Skills, such as Health Care, Decision-Making, Communication, Leadership and Administration and Continuing Education.⁹

It is important to use strategies that promote reflection and the sharing of knowledge on this subject, taking advantage of current technological resources, such as Digital Information and Communication Technologies ("DICT"), which facilitate communication and can be accessed anywhere, at any time, via the Internet.¹⁰ The development of skills, therefore, through DICT systems serves as an instructional resource to support specific concepts in areas of knowledge.¹¹

OBJECTIVE

To describe an online educational intervention with nursing students on socio-emotional competencies.

METHOD

This is a descriptive study, reporting on the experience of an educational intervention with university nursing students, which is the second stage of a larger study. The first stage involved a survey of the participants' characterization, knowledge and perception of social-emotional competences using a structured questionnaire. Of the 41 participants in the first stage, 13 agreed to take part in the online educational intervention, an online course entitled 'Understanding my emotions', which provided a reflection on socio-emotional competences, enhanced reflections on this subject and assessed the participants' perception of the course.

The study was carried out at the Health Sciences Center (CCS, in Portuguese) of the State University of Vale do Acaraú (UVA), located in the municipality of Sobral-Ce, with an estimated population of 197,633 inhabitants.¹²

To carry out the course, which was planned and organized by a team (teachers and nursing students from UVA), three psychologists were invited - masters or master's students - who are members of the Laboratory of Social Research, Transformative Education and Collective Health (LABSUS, in Portuguese). A remote meeting was then held to align the facilitators/researchers, explain the objectives of the study, and select the content for the course, which was done through a bibliographic search, including articles and books. The course was designed to provide a formative assessment of both the content and the teaching method.

To guarantee access to the largest number of students, the course was held on the Google Meet platform. Another digital information and communication technology (DICT) was also used, Google Jamboard.

This generation's fascination with DICTs is healthy and facilitates the search for knowledge in digital media, and should be considered in the construction of knowledge¹³, making technologies something that goes beyond the informative and allows interaction and re-thinking between them.

The course 'Understanding my emotions', registered and certified by UVA's Pro-Rectory of Extension – PROEX (in Portuguese), took place over four weeks in November/2021, with one meeting a week and a total duration of twenty hours.

The themes planned and developed during the meetings were: Awareness and regulation of emotions; Working on social relationships; Emotional intelligence and assertiveness; Self-realization and empathy; Social responsibility and interpersonal relationships. These themes were chosen to be worked on with future nursing professionals because they deal with emotionally challenging situations daily, requiring emotional regulation skills, interpersonal relationships, and empathy to offer quality care to patients.

To approach the moments, some resources were used, such as slides, images, videos, and the mindfulness technique. In addition, to publicize the course and attract participants, strategies were used such as advertising on the social networks of the university's nursing academic center, WhatsApp groups of nursing classes and active nursing academic leagues.

Participants regularly enrolled in the nursing course at the university participating in the study, of both sexes, were included. The criteria for discontinuation were dropping out of the course during data collection and transferring universities or dropping out due to illness.

We opted for a non-probabilistic convenience sample, making it possible to choose the participants and not having to select them using statistical criteria.¹⁴

Before the start of the course, a WhatsApp group was created with the participants, to facilitate coordination and dialog, explain the aim of the course, also to go over the schedule for the meetings and send out the teaching materials used in the course, such as images, video links and slides.

For data collection, screenshots were taken from Google Meet and Google Jamboard during the course meetings, to reliably capture the participants' speech in the technology chat or on the wall, as well as through a Link on Google forms, in which they could evaluate the course content.

The discourse analysis followed the Content Analysis Method proposed by Bar-din, with pre-analysis, treatment of the results and exploration of the material to build final categories.¹⁵ The analysis was based on emotional and social competencies, divided into intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood.¹⁶ The participants were identified with the letter "P", followed by an Arabic numeral, according to the order in which they took part.

The study respected the ethical principles of National Health Council Resolution (CNS, in Portuguese) No. 466 of 2012.¹⁷

RESULTS

Nursing students of both sexes from the third to tenth semesters took part, as there were no students enrolled in the first and second semesters due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 13 participants attended the first meeting; ten attended the second, seven attended the third, and nine attended the fourth.

The results on socio-emotional competences are presented below, according to each meeting.

1st Meeting - Awareness and regulation of emoticons

At the start of the course, the 13 participants were welcomed, and a discussion began on the importance of emotions, highlighting how they provide meaning, texture, richness, contentment, and connection with other people. The process of self-knowledge and the importance of social and interpersonal relationships were also discussed. Soon after, the psychologist welcomed the members with the following question: "How are you getting on today?"

After the explanation, the students were divided into small groups and answered questions about themselves: "who am I?" and "what characteristics of yours are you proud of?". There was time for discussion and subsequent sharing with the other participants, with a

view to self-perception and the connection between emotions and the surrounding variables to promote self-control and self-observation.

Subsequently, Mindfulness was used, a method that allows us to feel the present moment, realize mindfulness and acceptance. Its benefits are: reduced rumination and stress, increased working memory and focus, less emotional reactivity, greater cognitive flexibility and greater satisfaction with relationships.¹⁸

To elucidate the theme, a video entitled "Inner peace - kung fu panda" was shown, which tells the story of the protagonist who defeated his enemy, unraveled his story, relived his memories, and found his inner peace.¹⁹

Next, a second activity was carried out, which consisted of training Mindfulness, with the aim of developing the ability to be less reactive to everyday events. The facilitator asked the students to close their eyes and get into a comfortable position, if possible, without their limbs crossed. Afterward, they were asked to try focusing their attention on inhaling and exhaling, feeling their breath, the body sensations that occurred at that moment, muscle tension and pain, without modifying them, just taking note of their sensations.

2nd Meeting - Working on Social Relationships

Ten students took part in the 2nd meeting, eight of whom had attended the first meeting. The meeting in question, given by a psychologist, began with a welcome through the video "Emicida - Passarinhos by Vanessa Da Mata" and the song "Empatia by Priscilla Alcântara", which were about empathy, since the aim was to provoke reflection on social relationships and empathy.

Next came a presentation describing the topic and explaining the proposed methodology. This was followed by the presentation of the slides "Why talk about empathy?" with a theoretical framework on empathy. In addition, during the explanation of the subject, the role of the leader was elaborated, aspects of leadership, teamwork, and the human being as a being of possibilities.

So that the participants could put in guiding words that described the characteristics of teamwork, a link to the Google Jamboard® tool was sent. This moment thus captured prior knowledge on the subject and encouraged the construction of critical thinking, as well as generating a group conversation.

To stimulate reflection on solving social problems, slides and an explanatory video were used with the teachings of a leader and principles from Carnegie's book "How to Make Friends and Influence People". This information would help participants to relate better to people and develop skills of influence and friendship.

Google Jamboard® was used again to provide feedback on the activity, by describing a word that the person would take away from the meeting. The evaluations were positive regarding the methodology of the moment.

3rd Meeting - Emotional Intelligence and Assertiveness

Seven students took part in the second meeting, and five also took part in the first meeting. Initially, the psychologist introduced herself and welcomed the participants. The approach dealt with the five pillars of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, the development of self-motivation, the development of empathy and the development of interpersonal relationships.

There were also moments of reflection on how to deal with emotions and tips on how to develop emotional intelligence, such as slowing down and paying attention to emotions, developing strategies for coping with stress, expressing emotions to trustworthy people and professionals, observing relationships with others, and trusting yourself. Another topic covered at the meeting was assertiveness. An introductory video was shown on the three types of communication: aggressive, passive, and assertive.

During the explanation, the students were very participative and asked questions about the topic. This exchange of knowledge made it possible to strengthen the main points of proper dialogue, which are: focusing on positive thoughts, believing completely in what you feel and what you say, actively listening to the other person, paying attention to emotions to live in the present moment, waiting five seconds to analyze before responding, being specific in your answers, concentrating on facts, not judgments, and transmitting positivity and peace.

4th Meeting - Self-realization and empathy; Social responsibility and interpersonal relationships.

Nine students took part in the first meeting, seven in the second and four in the third. Initially, a teaching nurse welcomed the participants with relaxing music and introduced the facilitators. Afterward, a link to the Google Jamboard® application was sent to the chat so that the students could speak keywords that correlated with the socio-emotional competences mentioned.

Seven problem situations were used to guide the meeting, one for each socio-emotional competence. The aim was to clarify the importance of practicing these skills and developing them as a person and as a professional, with discussions of cases as examples.

Based on the participants' expressions in the chat or on the wall of the technologies used during the four meetings, the following categories were formed:

Personal reflection

Reflecting on emotions and thoughts, seeking positive changes in personal and professional life, is of the utmost importance for nursing students. These skills can be developed through individual reflection, dialogue, and challenging situations.

"I felt a bit reflective, too." (P10)

"Well, but a bit reflective about some situations in the present." (P7)

"With various thoughts of change." (P8)

"With a mixture of feelings and emotions about the present moment." (P11)

Organizing and planning activities

Planning, organization, a positive disposition, persistence, and determination are crucial skills for nursing students, necessary to face challenges, achieve goals and stay focused on professional objectives in the field of nursing.

"I thought I had to wake up and get organized to attend the course." (P3)

"I thought about planning my weekly activities." (P2)

"I woke up in a good mood to carry out my activities." (P1)

"Because I'm a persistent person, I'm able to achieve most of my goals." (P2)

Thoughts on family and commitments

Balancing personal and academic life is a vital skill for nursing academics, managing time and academic demands while maintaining personal and family connections. In this way, finding a healthy balance is fundamental to well-being and academic success.

"I thought about my parents, I didn't get to see them this weekend." (P5)

"I remembered the exams I have this week." (P9)

Physical sensations and preferences

Mindfulness and body awareness is a vital skill for nursing students, involving being present in the present moment and perceiving bodily sensations and emotions. Developed through practices such as meditation, it contributes to physical and emotional well-being, as well as empathy and sensitivity when caring for patients.

"I tasted coffee." (P6)

"I like eating fruit better in the morning." (P12)

"I haven't had a snack yet; I wake up later on Saturdays." (P13)

"I can't remember which foot I put down first." (P4)

"I'm not used to paying attention to which foot I put down first." (P1)

"I always try to put my right foot down first; I believe in that saying that waking up with your right foot attracts luck." (P8)

Self-confidence and self-esteem

Self-knowledge and self-acceptance are crucial skills for nursing students, involving the recognition and acceptance of one's own qualities, limitations, and achievements. Developing them strengthens self-confidence, promotes self-care, and maintains a humble and resilient posture in the nursing profession.

"I like my humility." (P9)

"I'm proud of the struggles I've made to get here." (P12)

Experience of relaxation during the breathing and focus activity

Emotional self-control and stress management are essential skills for nursing academics, involving the ability to recognize, control and deal with one's own emotions in stressful situations. Developing them is key to coping with academic and professional pressures, maintaining mental and emotional health, and promoting an empathetic and patient-sensitive nursing practice. In addition, relaxation is important for dealing with tension in nursing, promoting emotional well-being in academic and professional life.

"I felt quite relaxed, at first, I breathed more deeply because I focused on breathing." (P3)

"After the exercise, I relaxed more." (P10)

"I felt a bit tense, after the exercise I relaxed more." (P6)

Interruption of attention due to noise

Clear communication is essential in nursing, establishing relationships of trust and effectively transmitting information to patients, family members and other health professionals. Mindfulness is also important for maintaining focus and concentration on health care, paying attention to the details of the present moment.

"The noise of the television made me stop paying attention to your speech." (P1)

"Then I started [paying attention] again." (P5)

Evaluation of the moments

Google Forms® were used, with two questions: "What did you like best?" and "Did you learn anything new?". The following is a summary of the students' evaluation of the meetings, showing what they liked best, and the main lessons learned at the end of the course, which have been divided into the following subcategories:

Importance of empathy and ethics

Socio-emotional competencies such as self-concept, empathy and ethics are fundamental for nursing students to become effective leaders and provide quality care to patients, preparing them for complex situations and ethical decisions.

"The way subjects are discussed, the approach to self-concept, empathy and acting ethically." (P12)

"It's essential to know how to be a leader and the breadth of empathy." (P2)

Teamwork

Socio-emotional skills related to teamwork and social interaction are important for nursing students, promoting harmonious professional practice, a healthy working environment and better quality of care for patients.

"The importance of how to act in teamwork made me think that I can always develop more to improve my social interaction." (P3)

"I've enhanced my learning about methodology and tools and about group work and the necessary habits." (P4)

Practical cases

Nursing students learn to develop their social-emotional competencies through real-life case examples, practicing empathy, ethics, and teamwork, as well as communication and conflict resolution skills. These skills are crucial for effective and compassionate professional practice.

"The cases presented are very close to our reality, albeit in different contexts. The course allowed me to gain a greater understanding of my emotions and to resolve situations that, at first, were difficult to understand and solve." (P6)

"It was very good; the discussions of case examples were very common in our experiences." (P8)

Communication

Nursing students develop socio-emotional skills related to communication, learning strategies for expressing themselves effectively and understanding different types of communication, which is essential for establishing clear and empathetic communication with patients, families, and healthcare staff. This contributes to emotional well-being and a healthy working environment.

"I've learned to communicate better, strategies to increase my communication skills, to express my emotions better." (P10)

"It was interesting to learn about the three types of communication, which I didn't know about." (P4)

Personal development

A healthy social relationship promotes a harmonious working environment and improves performance in nursing, recognizing the importance of socio-emotional skills for professional and personal training, including communication, teamwork, empathy, and ethics.

"The importance of having a healthy social relationship to perform better in any field." (P10)

"I felt quite relaxed." (P1)

"I found it very useful, very relevant to work on this subject during my degree." (P9)

DISCUSSION

It is understandable that the development and improvement of emotional intelligence through assertive social interactions is crucial for future professionals in care areas, especially nursing, to guarantee satisfactory professional experiences. A study indicates that a lack of training in emotional skills negatively affects cognitive skills, reflecting on the communication of nursing professionals on permanent contracts.²⁰

By focusing the issue of socio-emotional skills, it is possible to promote reflection on beliefs, ideologies, and self-knowledge, as these skills involve emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills, which are fundamental for personal and professional development. They thus contribute to a curriculum of excellence by enabling individuals to create new knowledge to promote their own development and transform the world in which they live.²¹

DICTs are crucial for the relationship between development and socio-emotional skills, and that using them to carry out interventions is innovative. However, despite the relevance of this subject, findings from a systematic review show few correlations between these themes.²²

The course showed that the use of playful and remote methods can help learning by working with content lightly and didactically. In this way, it helped the nursing students to integrate during the meetings and facilitated the exchange of experiences through the technologies that were differentiated in each approach, which is in line with a finding about the notability of playful educational practices as a tool that contributes to the knowledge process.²³

Furthermore, it was noted that the Mindfulness practice carried out during the course was well accepted by the students, as they reported feeling more relaxed after the exercises, which may be related to the importance of stress tolerance in emotional intelligence. Overall, an intervention based on mindfulness can help reduce the suffering associated with psychotic symptoms by supporting the perception of emotions and openness to inner experiences.²⁴

Planning and organization are important tools for nursing students, involving efficient skills in academic and personal activities. Reflection on routines, priorities and healthy study and work habits stand out as strategies for developing planning and organization.²⁵

Involving nursing students in discussions of practical cases is an effective method for awakening some of the necessary attributes that enhance acting, such as criticality, effective communication, assertiveness, qualified listening, and a holistic view. In this sense, reflective practice training can have a positive impact on the development of these skills, facilitating a more profound understanding of the emotions and skills needed to deal with complex and common situations in professional practice.²⁶

Understanding the different types of communication, teamwork, empathy and ethics is key to promoting a harmonious working environment and improving performance in nursing. The personal benefits, such as relaxation and appreciation of the subject during graduation, are widely recognized.²⁷

It is worth noting that social relationships were worked on, with fundamental techniques for dealing with people, showing them the advantages of not criticizing and making constructive criticisms, thus enhancing lasting changes. The importance of developing socio-emotional skills, such as self-concept, empathy, and ethics, for nursing students is highlighted, as these skills enable students to become effective leaders and provide quality care, preparing them to deal with complex situations and make ethical decisions in the healthcare environment. Empathy and ethics are essential components of compassionate, patient-centered care.²⁶

The practice of mindfulness and body awareness has been widely studied and recognized as beneficial for physical and emotional well-being, as well as promoting empathy and sensitivity in patient care. It is important to be present today and to perceive bodily sensations and emotions for a more effective nursing practice.²⁸

Self-knowledge, self-acceptance, persistence, and determination are other relevant skills for nursing students, as they help to strengthen self-confidence, promote self-care and maintain a humble and resilient posture in the profession, making them fundamental for overcoming challenges and achieving goals in a nursing career.²⁹

The participants' lack of adherence may have been due to factors such as their schedules, overload of academic activities, difficulties in accessing the internet, handling applications, balancing studies, and other nursing course activities. In addition, affected personal motivation, lack of personal interaction, considering the need to meet new student demands or the emergence of other priorities, may be common among nursing students³⁰, contributing to the low adherence to the course reported here.

CONCLUSION

The academics present at the course had a good interaction through the tools available on Google Meet®, such as chat and audio, which allowed them to reflect, get closer and learn about socio-emotional competencies.

It is therefore necessary to address socio-emotional competencies in nurse training to cover the multidimensionality of the subject's needs, including ethical, social, professional, and emotional aspects. There also needs to be an increase, especially in educational actions with learning resources, overcoming traditional models, encouraging reflection and the practice of working on socio-emotional competencies, with a view to performing them in the best way as professionals.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Hiara Rose Moreno Amaral

Conception, study planning, data analysis and interpretation, writing and critical review.

Joyce Mazza Nunes Aragão

Conception, study planning, data analysis and interpretation, writing and critical review.

Ricardo Costa Frota

Writing and critical review.

Tháísa Quixadá Fontenele

Writing and critical review.

Rebeca Sales Viana

Data analysis and interpretation, writing and critical review.

Maristela Inês Osawa Vasconcelos

Data analysis and interpretation, writing and critical review.

Tiffany Andrade Silveira Rodrigues

Study planning, data analysis and interpretation.

Maria Beatriz Lima Veras

Study planning, data analysis and interpretation.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

Nothing to declare.

FINANCING

Supporting Agency: Funcap.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the Nursing Course Coordination of the State University of Vale do Acaraú and the PIC-PBPU (Notice No. 02/2021 - PRPPG) of the State University of Vale do Acaraú, for the scientific initiation scholarship granted, which contributed to the development of this project.

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Correspondence:

Hiara Rose Moreno Amaral.
hiararose9@gmail.com

Submitted: 04/26/2023

Accepted: 11/01/2023

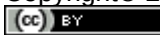
Published: 12/28/2023

Section Editor: Thaís Araújo da Silva

Scientific Editor: Tatiane Gomes Guedes

Editor-in-Chief: Maria Wanderleya de Lavor Coriolano Marinus

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