

PROGRAMME REPORT

Experience from a BigSib Induction Course

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Context

A major part of the Student Personal and Professional Development Programme is the BigSib Programme. It is an instructional method designed to enhance and strengthen medical students training in personal and professional development. This programme acts as a platform for interaction between the school, the seniors and the first-year medical students, and helps the latter in the adjustment to new campus life as well as promoting personal development. The BigSibs are a group of second year medical students, selected based on academic performance and attitude. We described in this article a training programme for the BigSibs known as the 'BigSib Induction Course' in our medical school.

Reason for the idea

The roles of BigSibs are to act as Siblings, Eyes and Ears for the school, Counselor, Role-model and Trainer. The importance of this programme was to train the students with relevant skills to enable them to function as BigSibs. This programme was developed to enhance students' self-awareness of their roles as BigSibs, and to assist them in developing certain skills required as BigSibs such as leadership, counseling, stress management and facilitating skills. It offers a unique opportunity to develop students' skills in such areas.

Methods

The programme was run over three days. It involved twenty BigSibs. The programme was run by academic staff from the school. The objectives of this programme were to enable students to explore the roles of a BigSib, to understand the importance of leadership, counseling, stress management and facilitating skills, and to apply the skills in the future. Participants were given some input regarding the importance of each skill related to BigSibs' roles as well as medical career. Role-play, discussion and reflection sessions were held to explore each skill further. After the sessions, they should be able to recognize their own strengths and

weaknesses, and develop their own self-improvement strategies to foster the skills development in the future.

Evaluation

At the end of the programme, evaluation questionnaires were distributed to participants. Apart from basic biographic data, the questionnaire solicited participants' ratings regarding, the usefulness of input given, facilitators and the discussion sessions. Participants were also asked to rate the success of the workshop in achieving the objectives and its overall usefulness. In an open-ended section participants were asked to describe the most important thing they learned from the workshop as well as the most important thing that can be improved. Data analysis was done using SPSS. The evaluation showed that the participants rated the overall workshop as highly useful (87.1%) and as having achieved the objectives (85%). All sessions were rated as highly useful. Among the comments written in the open-ended section regarding the most important thing participants learned from the workshop, 50% wrote comments related to improved self-awareness regarding the skills. The importance of leadership, counseling, stress management and facilitating skills in the future was commented by 26.4% of them. Another 23.6% appreciated the usefulness of increased knowledge such as leadership and counseling skills.

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