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## School of Nursing News

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# Nursing Students Experience Simulated Dementia

September 25, 2018

The first semester junior students in the Pre-licensure Nursing program on Georgia Southern University Statesboro Campus had the opportunity to participate in an experiential simulation called the Virtual Dementia Tour (VDT®). The VDT uses patented sensory tools and instruction based on research conducted by P.K. Beville, M.S., for healthcare professionals and families to build a greater understanding of dementia.

For the past five years, each semester, Christy Dubert, Ph.D., RN, Rose Mary Gee, Ph.D., RN, and DaNell Moore, MSN, Med, SANE, have facilitated the VDT to give students the opportunity to experience simulated dementia, sensory deficits and cognitive impairments. "The simulation prepares them on how to better care for patients with dementia, cognitive problems and sensory impairments," noted Dubert, assistant professor and director of simulation and experiential learning. While participating in VDT, students are taken from the beginning to late stages of dementia and experience the realities of living with dementia while being faced with the effects of attempting to perform daily living activities.



Upon beginning the simulation, students complete a pre-test/reflection and are assigned either the color blue or red, which dictates what activities the student will be completing upon entering the simulated home environment. The student is garbed with different items such as popcorn being placed inside their shoes, gloves being placed on their hands, and special glasses and headphones being placed on their head, all which simulate different forms of sensory impairments. Before entering the simulation environment, students are read a set of instructions and given a list of activities to complete once they enter the simulation environment. Each student is given ten minutes to complete their tasks in an environment that has been manipulated with dimmed lights and flashing lights. Once the student's time is up the student is then escorted out of the simulation environment, and allowed to remove the garb and asked to complete a post-test/reflection. Students are asked not to discuss their experience with other students until they debrief as a group.

During the debriefing, students verbally reflect on the experience and share with their classmates what it feels like to have sensory and cognitive impairments. Students commented on how this is a positive learning experience and how they will apply this experience to their clinical practice as nurses. To learn more about the Virtual Dementia Tour®, please go to [www.secondwind.org](http://www.secondwind.org).

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