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Community Health Nursing Service Learning

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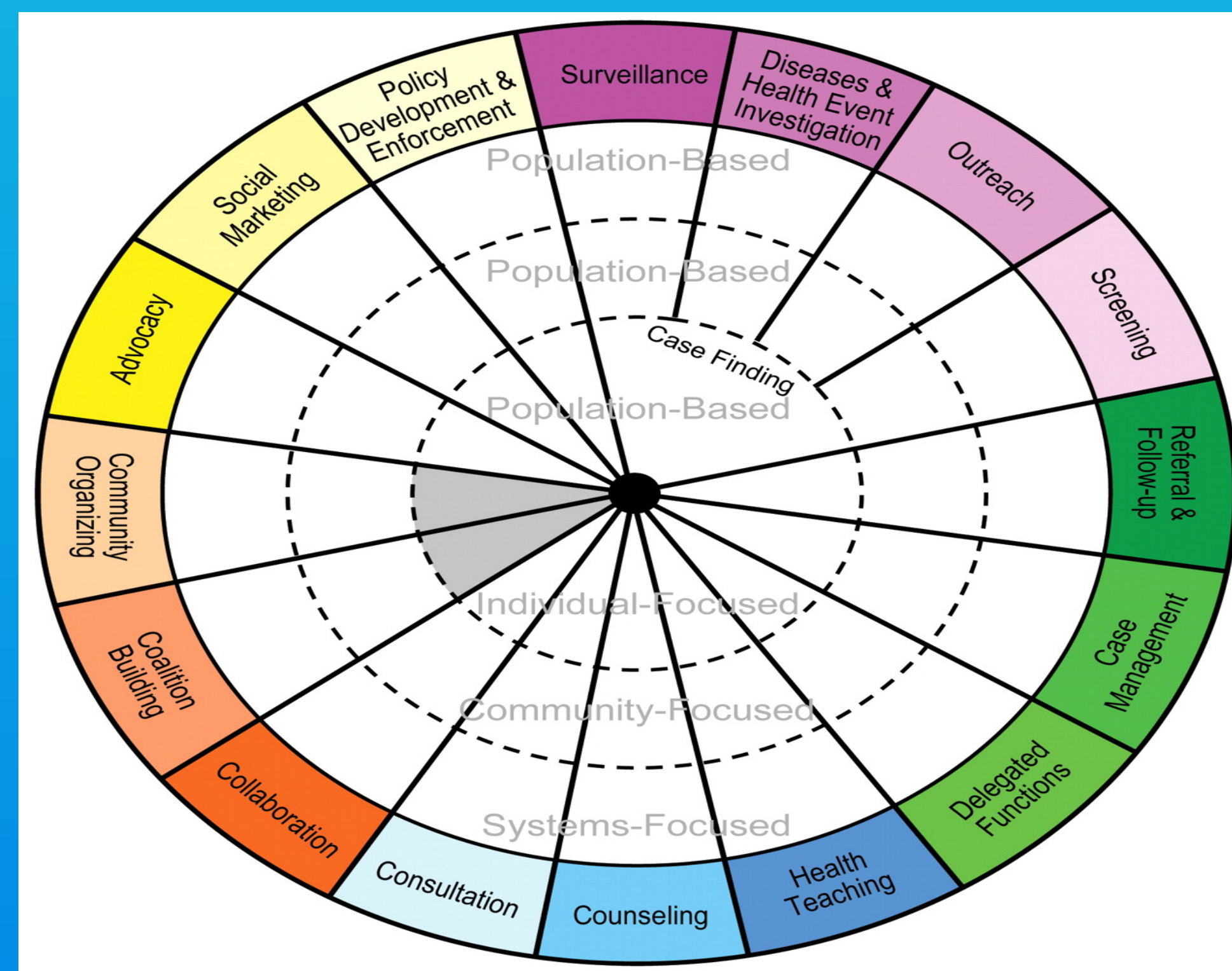
“What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing” - Aristotle, Greek Philosopher

Background

- **Service Learning Course**
College of Nursing and Health Sciences, RN-BS **Online** Program, Senior Level Course, Community Health for RN’s, NU 461, 6 credits
- **Student Body**
Registered Nurses (70-105 each semester) throughout the state seeking to obtain a Bachelor in Science of Nursing. **The Institute of Medicine, Future of Nursing Report** recommends increasing the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80% by 2020.
- **Instructional Aim**
Students obtain a better understanding of **public health and nursing theory and practice** as they further develop their **professional and civic identities** through meaningful **service to their communities**.
- **Service Learning Requirement**
Develop a service learning portfolio including a **sustained service experience** (60 hours), two **short-term community activities**, three **journal reflections**, and a written report based on a **service project** conducted within the context of the sustained experience

Partners

- A range of **community-based** health and social service organizations throughout the Boston metro area and state
- Chelsea Board of Health
 - Arlington Council of Aging
 - Boston Public School District
 - Lowell House
 - Ester R. Sanger Center for Compassion
 - Bridge Over Troubled Waters



Projects and Populations

- Partners and students jointly develop a range of **population-based health** projects linked to **Healthy People 2020** national objectives
- Fall Prevention in Community Dwelling Elders
 - Surveillance of Latent TB Cases
 - Mental Health Service Access for Homeless
 - Medication Compliance in Diabetics
 - Safe Needle Disposal Policy for Visiting Nurses
 - Screening & Referral (BMI) in School Aged Children

Community Impact

- “She provided professional expertise so we could survey our clients on healthcare [access and quality]”*
- “ [Provided] assistance with patient assessments, which include evaluation of health care coverage and alternative methods of payment”*
- “Assisted in hearing, vision and growth screenings to help accomplish our goal of having screening done by December”*
- “Patient safety is an organization focus right now. [Name] project helped provide our patients with safety information that will be useful to them in the future.”*

Student Impact

- **Improved Practice**
Particularly in immunizations, communicable disease prevention, and group health education techniques.
- **Increased Awareness**
“Eye-opening” experiences about scope of public health essential services and the governmental role in protecting and promoting health
- **Professional Development**
Expanded network of professional contacts and future employment opportunities
- **Civic Participation**
Continuation of service to community after course requirements completed

Ongoing Development

- Implement web-based survey to systematically assess community impact
- Develop course blog for journal reflections
- Maintain and mature relationships with community partners
- Promote evidence-based student projects

Challenges

- Integration of service learning in discipline where education is traditionally based on clinical instruction
- Oversight and quality assurance with variation in sites, locations, projects, and populations in a online instructional environment

Reference and Contact

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Image Credit: Public Health Interventions–Applications for Public Health Nursing Practice. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Health, 2001.