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Urgent need to improve the integration of behavioral health care services into primary care

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Background: Behavioral health disorders (psychiatric illness and substance abuse disorders) represent a significant burden across the nation's health care system. About one half of the problems that present in primary health care settings are behavioral in nature. There is urgent need to improve the integration of behavioral health care services into primary care.

Methods: The purpose of this presentation is to describe how an asynchronous online graduate nurse practitioner program utilized a constructivist paradigm to creatively combine online problem based learning cases and on campus learning intensives to scaffold student learning.

Results: Student E-value scores were high and comments reflected improved knowledge, skill and comfort managing behavioral health problems in a primary care setting.

Conclusion: This innovative model can serve as a template for other educational programs and improve student's ability to identify, manage and treat common behavioral health care problems that present in primary care settings.

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