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| 2022-2023 CFE Faculty Development Grant | Graphical user interface  Description automatically generated with medium confidence |

# Undergraduate Perceptions of Poverty Experience

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# Abstract:

Poverty effects roughly 37 million individuals in the U.S., with long-term health related impacts (PovertyUSA (2021a). In the 2022 Spring semester, the College of Nursing will implement a pilot clinical activity using the evidence-based Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) tool (Missouri Community Action Network (MCAN), 2021). The goal is for students to walk a month in the shoes of someone who is facing poverty and realize how complex and interconnected issues of poverty really are (MCAN, 2017). This project provides a structure to measure effectiveness of the teaching strategies, and, more importantly, student outcomes - before, during, and after the simulation. Empathy among participants will be measured before and after the event using the Undergraduate Perceptions of Poverty Tracking Survey (UPPTS). Student perceptions following intersections with community members who regularly work with persons experiencing pove1ty will be captured during standardized debrief process and individual reflection during the event. Reflection assignment following the event will link lessons learned during the simulation to future professional practice. Post event focus groups with faculty, volunteers and community members will provide additional insight into processes for the next event. Collectively, findings supply benchmark data for future CAPS events, giving more students an opportunity to engage in an immersion experience and learn about the complex issue of poverty.