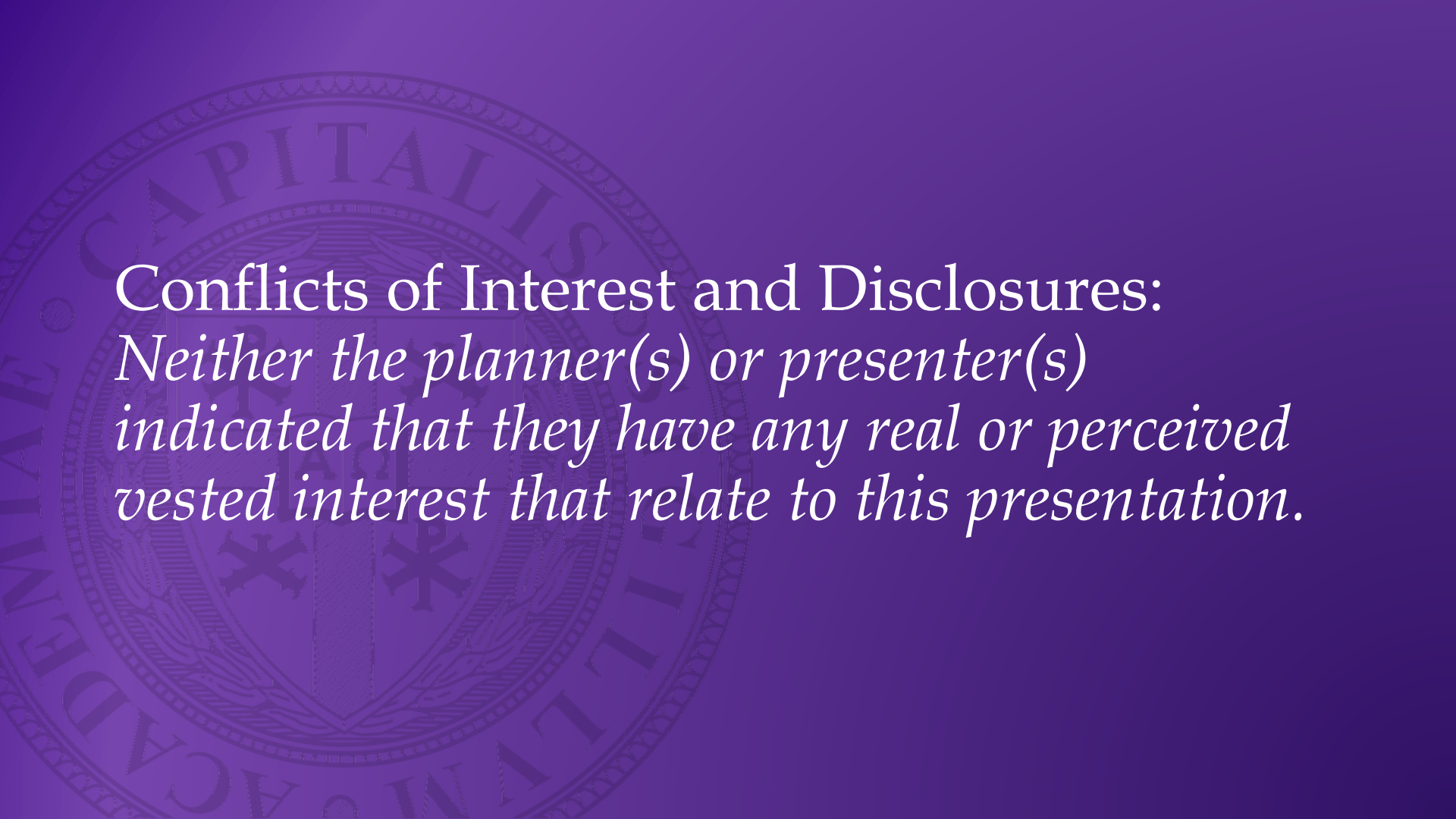




# A Qualitative Exploration of Nursing Student Lived Experience of Belonging

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*Neither the planner(s) or presenter(s)  
indicated that they have any real or perceived  
vested interest that relate to this presentation.*

# Background

Underrepresented groups experience the highest disparities in healthcare delivery (National Center for Health Statistics [NCHS], 2020; Chandran & Schulman, 2022; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS], 2017)

- There is a strong correlation between a diverse nursing workforce and quality patient care to improve health equity.

Belonging is a key factor in developing an identity as a professional nurse during prelicensure nursing education (Keshmiri & Bahramnezhad, 2022)

- Enculturation part of hidden curriculum (Raso et al., 2019)
- Associated with mental health (Allen, 2022; Parr et al., 2020), academic retention and graduation rates (Brannon & Lin, 2021) and retention within the profession (Moreland et al., 2015; Reinhardt et al., 2020).

Underrepresented students are at an increased risk for experiencing a lack of belonging (Pesonen et al., 2023; Fernández, Ryan, & Begeny, 2022)

The background of the slide features a large, faded purple seal of the University of Cambridge. The seal is circular and contains a central shield with a cross and an open book. The text "UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE" is visible around the perimeter of the seal, though it is partially obscured by the text box.

# Pre-Intervention Qualitative Study

# Methodology/Design

Research Question:

What are prelicensure nursing students from underrepresented groups experience of belonging?

Critical ethnography qualitative approach

Theory of Intersectionality

- 1) Researcher Personal Reflexivity
  - 2) Description of the culture-sharing group
  - 3) Theme analysis of patterns or topics demonstrating commonalities
- 1) Shared unwritten rules
  - 2) Cultural Portrait



# Personal Reflexivity

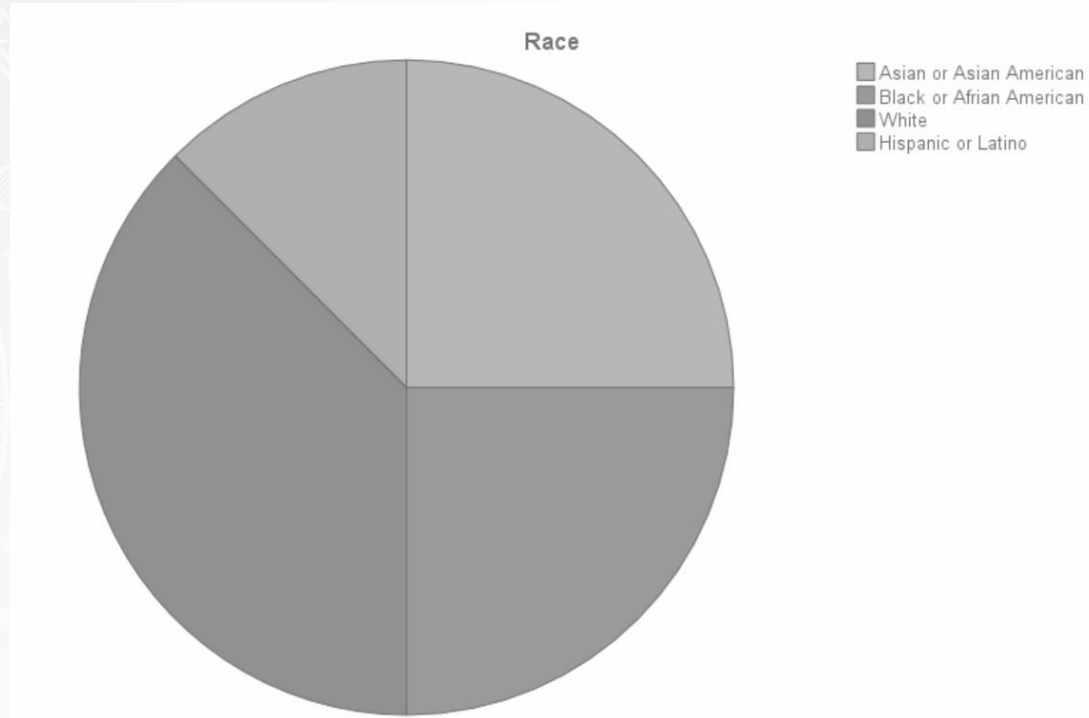
## Researchers:

- All white females, 2 PhD and 2 DNP prepared
- 2 identified as neurodivergent
- 2 are in interracial marriages raising multicultural children
- All nurses, 2 currently in practice settings
- Interest in belonging, identity and DEIJ



# Pre-Intervention Findings

- Sample: N60 n8
  - 38% did not identify as underrepresented
    - 1 identified as gay
    - 1 identified as neurodivergent
    - 2 were 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students
    - 3 identified as 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants
    - 2 were bilingual/multilingual
    - 1 was non-native English speaking
    - 3 were economically disadvantaged



# Findings: Underrepresented Identity

"It's hard not seeing people that look like me in the nursing program"

"I wanted to geek out on the content but the pace and sometimes the quite honestly the disrespect for our time. I didn't. It does not allow for that sense of belongingness."

"Being southeast Asian a lot of our community would prefer us to be doctors so me being a nurse has always felt a little strange, a little more difficult"

"I had never been in a predominantly white space like that. In my entire life I had never been to a predominantly white school in my whole life. Every school I've been to has been mixed."

"I am one of the few males in our cohort. It doesn't really affect anything. I am gay as well..."

"So, my experience was very lonely. It's lonely, it's very lonely. It's extremely lonely. I'm very open to befriending, and you know, talking to people and forming relationships with people who don't look like me." [...] "not everyone was comfortable doing that. [...] a lot of the girls admitted they were from small towns, so they also did not see a lot of people who looked like me. they didn't know how to interact with someone who looked like me or someone with my background."

# Findings: Nursing Identity

“My definition is to care for the entire person, to listen with an open heart and an open mind, to treat them like an individual with great dignity. To me a nurse is the patient advocate. They work within the means of the resources made available and do not speak down to the patient, but with the patient in a respectful dialogue. To understand that, you know, health looks differently for everyone.”

“My understanding of nursing identity is identified by the people I work with.”

**“...treating people like the whole person, not just their health and being very empathetic, being able to really put myself into someone's shoes.”**

“Being able to provide culturally competent safe care for those that may be different or similar to you.”  
[nurses] we are known as the superheroes and taking care of people and that is very true.”

“I’ve known a lot of doctors, especially in my community, so I have a stronger definition of a doctor than definition of a nurse.”

"I'm compassionate. I'm detail oriented. [...] My identity as a nurse , I would say, would be more a compassionate caring person [...] who's interested in the well-being of others."

# Findings: Sense of Belonging

“I have never felt like I've been excluded over anything just because I'm like who I am.”

**“I do feel I belong, most of the time.”**

“There's not a lot of us [male students], but it feels like we're acknowledged like we're part of this cohort.”

[...] with the nursing program, I do have a stronger sense of belonging. I've definitely made a lot of connections with the other students. I mean, I feel like the professors really want us to succeed. I feel like they are very open to communication, so with the nursing program, I do feel a stronger sense of connection.”

[sense of belonging] "been a little bit of challenge for me. I feel like a lot of people already have friends." "I came in like a semester later." "But I would say that like it's kind of hard not seeing people that look like me in the nursing program. [...] in all full transparency, a lot of people in the nursing program are white and there's nothing wrong with that, but sometimes I would like to see people that look like me."

"I mean, like the whole time I was here. I don't think that I felt a sense of belonging. I don't think I yeah, no, I never felt a sense of belonging."

**“I have found that it's been very isolating and lonely.”**

# Findings: Theme Analysis

“Women around me had to choose between purchasing the required programs so they could do their assignments or paying their bills. Like, do I pay my cell phone bill?”-

Socioeconomic challenges

“The concept of bruising this semester was kind of like awe to me, because for me, I don't bruise the way that probably you would bruise.... I knew I was minority, but I realized, like, how much I am so in the medical field. I'm not gonna see someone with my skin tone in the book examples.”- Structural racism

”...feeling marginalized has ... always been there.. but it doesn't really affect anything”- Internalized Racism

“In my household, we don't speak English, and so like a lot of the medical jargon and all that stuff wasn't common knowledge to me.”-Nation of Origin Disadvantage

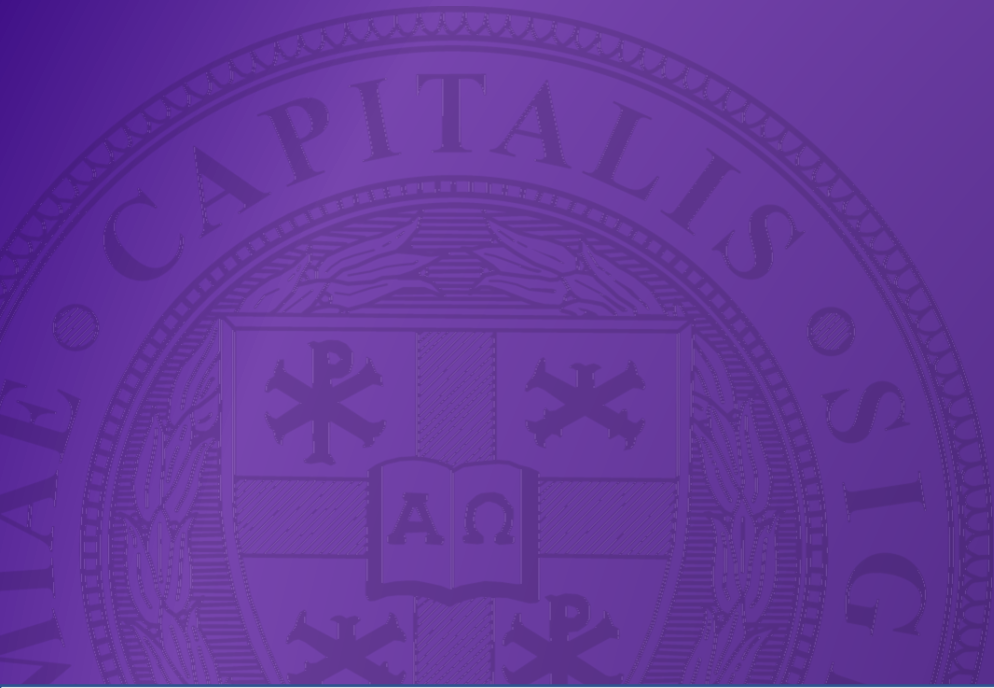
“I don't know how to swim upstream against this system that I've already witnessed is just producing burnout.”- Power/Privilege

**“In one of my classes, race was brought up. The professor asked, like, have you ever like experience being stopped by the police? And like, what were you taught to do? Put your hands up and stuff like that. And like I was taught to do that just because of like police brutality and stuff like that is what my parents have taught me, but like in the moment in class me myself, I did not raise my hand because I was like, I'm too uncomfortable to admit that that's what I've been taught when everybody around me seemed like they never heard of that.”- Power/Privilege**

“It felt as though our time wasn't being considered, or respected.”-Ageism

# Qualitative Research Summary

- Not all students who do not fit the mold consider themselves to be underrepresented.
- Nursing identity revolves around not only caring but also respecting differences.
- Sense of belonging is not automatic, and nursing education needs to look at our system to see how we can address the barriers.
  - Examine our processes to see where underrepresented students might be disadvantaged due to the power/privilege dynamic.
  - Reflect on ways we as educators can reduce structural racism in our classrooms.
  - Provide opportunities for support for individuals who may be economically or nation of origin disadvantaged.
  - Self-reflect, becoming more aware of personal bias, both conscious and unconscious and how these bias may negatively impact our students.



Nourished

# Nourished 2024-2025



# Art Therapy

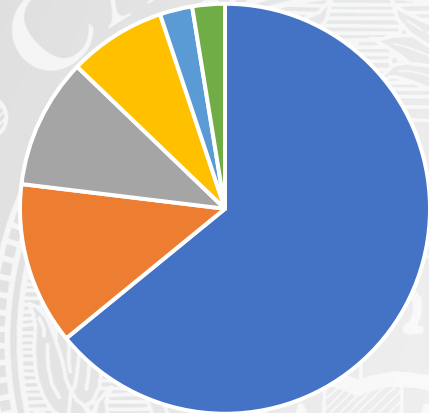




# Quantitative Intervention Study Results

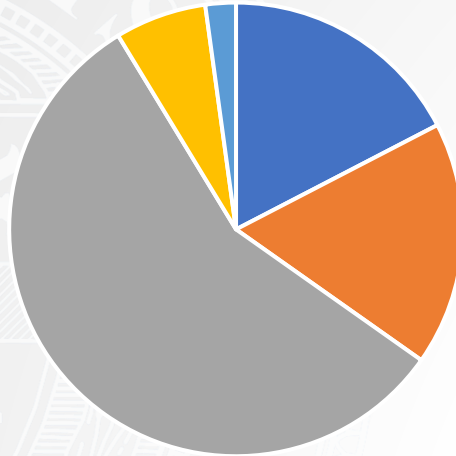
# Pre-Intervention Participant Group

## Religious Affiliation



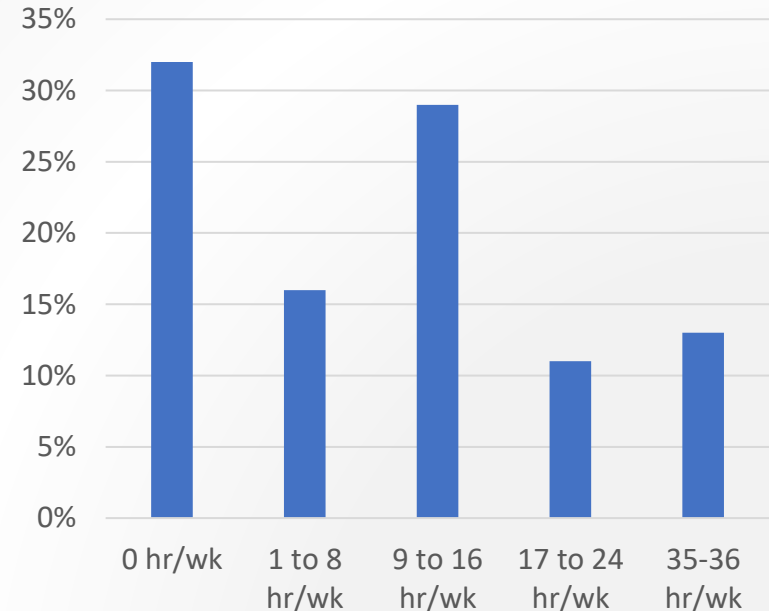
- Christian
- Muslim
- Other
- Spiritual/No Religious Affiliation
- Atheist/Agnostic
- Hindu

## Race



- Black/African American
- Asian/Asian American
- White
- Multiracial
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

## Student Employment



# Pre-Intervention Participant Group

## Additional Identities

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LGBTQ+ (n=3)

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First Generation College Student (n=3)

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Bilingual/Multilingual (n=8)

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Neurodivergent (Autism, ADHD, etc.; n=3)

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1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Generation Immigrant (n=4)



# Pre-Intervention Participant Group

## Additional Responsibilities



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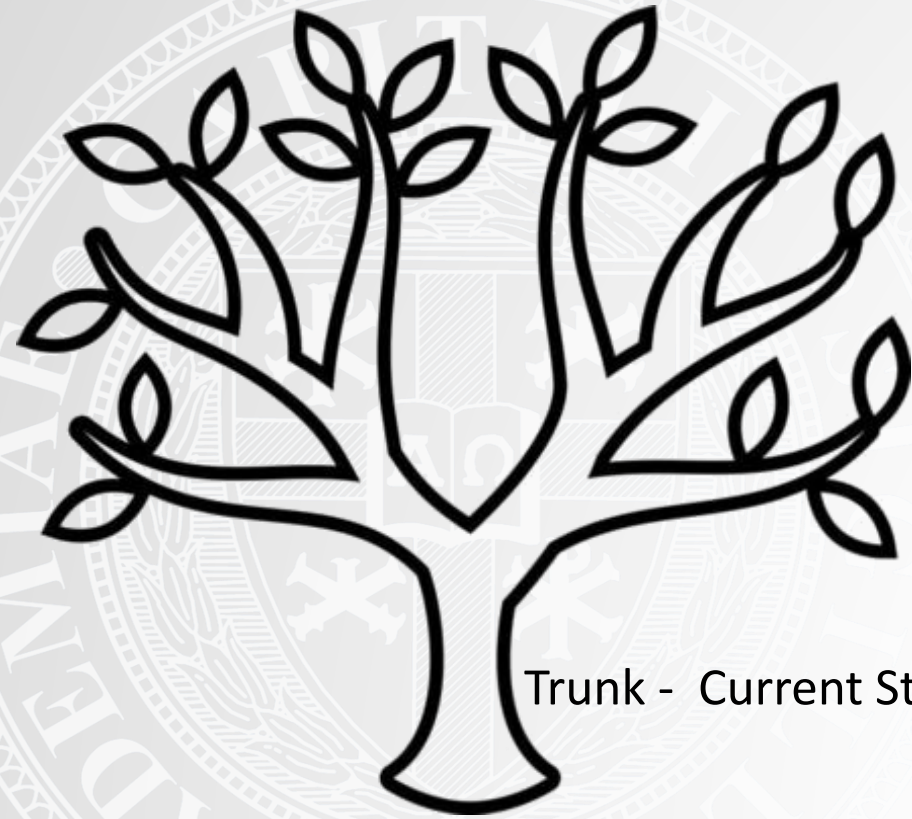
- Student leadership (n=6)
- Required extracurriculars (n=5)
- Student athlete (n=1)
- Parenting (n=3)
- Assisting family with advanced activities of daily living (n=5)
- Personal health concerns that require frequent healthcare visits, testing, or travel (n=6)
- Financially contributing to household budget (n=6) and family outside of the US (n=3)

# Pre-Intervention Participant Group

## Notable Findings

- Lack of financial resources
  - Food insecurity– 4 students reported missing a meal in the past month
  - Basic needs – since enrolling in college, 5 students went without food/household requirements, healthcare/medication, tuition or other school necessities
- Positives: Strong nursing identity & sense of belonging \*preliminary
  - Majority of students agreed/strongly agreed to positive indicators of professional nursing identity at baseline and follow-up
  - Participants agreed that Nourished impacted their sense of belonging (n=5), even if they couldn't attend (n=1)

# Belonging Tree



Leaves/Fruit – Nursing Staff, Outcomes

Branches – Different Departments or Groups

Trunk - Current Structures that Foster Belonging

Roots – Foundational Organizational Values

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