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Older adult health

Therapeutic Communication Assignment

1/31/19

Pre-assignment work:

1. Which of these two statements is most important to you?

I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.**

This statement is most important to me because I believe living a life full of memories with happy moments is much more than living a long life.

2. Do you feel you have full autonomy for decision making?

Yes, I believe I have full independence in making my own decisions. I have been doing it for the last three years, and I've done a pretty good job since then. Also, no one tries to make decisions for me anymore which is nice. I know that this changes as you get older. Your kids start to make decisions for you, but for now, I am in charge of my own decisions.

3. How do you feel when people make decisions for you?

I strongly dislike when people make decisions for me. I have made my own decisions since the day I moved out on my own, and it's hard for me to take instructions from others. Especially if it's something that I don't want to do.

4. What do you see as important in your life?

The most important things in my life are my family, my friends, my boyfriend, and my dog Lily. They bring the most joy into my life, and without them, I know my life wouldn't be the same.

5. What risks have been identified to your quality of life that you agree or disagree with?

At this point in my life I don't feel like I do or have anything that risks my life or my well-being.

6. What risks have you taken in the past and how has this affected you?

I moved out of my parent's house the day after my high school graduation after saving for the whole year so that I could afford my apartment.

I moved to a new town to start a new school with only a limited time to prepare.

A quit my full-time job because I wasn't happy and was unemployed for three months while I tried to find something else to make me happy. I eventually did but man was I broke for three months.

I don’t have many risks because I am not much of a risk taker.

7. What is your understanding of the risks you want to take now?

I’ve wanted to quit my job because between work and school I haven’t had much time for myself, but I’m afraid that if I do, I won’t make enough money to live comfortably while I go to school. Also, I have so much going on right now financially that it just doesn’t seem possible. I understand that some risks aren’t meant to be taken.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

I am not willing to take risks that will put my life in danger or the people that I love in danger. I also wouldn't take any money related risks unless I know for sure that I can pay my bills while I am looking for another source of income.

9. How would you explain to the people who love you why you want to take this risk?

I would tell them that they mean more to me than the possible benefit of taking the risk and like I said above, some risks aren’t worth taking.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

Putting my life at risk is frightening to me because there is still so much that I want to do before I die. I know that I said at the beginning of these questions that quality of life is more important to me than the length and that is still true, it’s just that I feel I’ve spent so much of my time since high school preparing for my future instead of living for the moment and making memories.

Interview Process:

1. Which of these two statements is most important to you?

I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.

I’d rather have the quality of life than quantity of life.

2. Do you feel you have full autonomy for decision making?

No, I don’t. I’m not allowed to drive anymore because my kids took my car because they think it is not safe. I don’t choose the time of my baths anymore because I get bathed on the days that my aid comes. I also don’t get to eat what I want because my aids cook my meals with the stuff my kids buy me.

3. How do you feel when people make decisions for you?

At first, it bothered me because I felt like I was losing my independence, but now I have realized that it’s for my safety and out of my control. I would rather do what my kids ask of me because I don’t have much time left with them and I want to make them happy.

4. What do you see as important in your life?

My five kids

My dog penny

My grandchildren and great-grandchildren

My health care workers

My family

5. What risks have been identified to you that you agree or disagree with?

In the beginning, when they took my car keys away, I disagreed. I felt that I still had some time left before I was unsafe to drive.

I also don't need my aide to come as much as she does but my son disagrees, and she comes anyway. I do agree that I need some help with cooking, cleaning and taking care of myself just not as much as I am getting.

6. What risks have you taken in the past and how has this affected you?

I decided once on a really hot day that I was fine to mow the lawn, but I ended up passing out on my lawnmower until my son found me later that day. My son started paying someone to come to mow the lawn for me and took the key so that I couldn't even do it if I wanted to.

Once I drove myself to the store when my legs were bothering me, and I was too weak to drive myself home, so I had to call my son to come to get me. This incident led to my kids thinking that I was no longer safe to drive.

Another time I fell and hit my head and didn't tell my kids because I didn't want them to take me to the hospital. A few days later I was extremely confused and having trouble staying awake, so they called an ambulance. It turns out I had a brain bleed and went into emergency surgery to have a shunt placed. They said I was a very lucky lady.

7. What is your understanding of the risks you want to take now?

At 79 years old the only risks I am taking is eating too many sweets and enjoying my cigarettes. I've made it this far, and I don't think either of those things is going to kill me.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

Driving

Getting up when I feel weak

Cooking on the stove because sometimes I get sleepy and fall asleep at the table.

9. How would you explain to the people who love you why you want to take this risk?

They haven’t killed me yet, and they make me happy. I’ve lived 79 beautiful years, and at this point, I’m not willing to give them up.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

That my family will be disappointed in me and wish that I hadn’t done it so that I could have lived longer, but at this point, I’m in too much paint to want to live a whole lot longer.

Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity

1) What therapeutic communication techniques did you use during the interview? Provide examples. The therapeutic techniques that I used the most during my interview were silence, broad openings and offering self. After I asked a question, I would give her time to answer, and if I felt like she wasn’t done, I stayed silent so that she could keep building on her answer. Also when she told me her story about the lawn mower, I offered a story similar to my grandma about her passing out once when she went to go fishing.

2) What went well? I interviewed a lady in my apartment complex that has known me for a few months, so she is pretty open with me. Her family knows me because I check on her from time to time. I think this experience only brought us closer.

3) What would I do differently next time? I don’t think I couldn’t have done anything differently or better. I’ve worked in both a nursing home and a hospital, and I’ve had a lot of experience communicating with the elderly.

4) What are the major take-home lessons after interviewing an older adult? That they have to make a lot of changes and give up a lot of their freedoms to keep themselves safe. They may not live a fulfilled life anymore because they don’t see their families often and can’t make it out by themselves.

5) How can I adapt my nursing practice to be more responsive to the unique needs of an older adult client? Use therapeutic communication. Be mindful of their wants and needs. Be considerate when communicating with them about losing their independence. Let me make the decisions that they can still make as long as it isn’t putting them in danger.

6) In what way am I building my nursing skills? I am building my nursing skills by using therapeutic communication, learning how to advocate for my clients to other staff members and family, being respectful of their belongings and feelings, assessing them for changes frequently so that I am not only learning but keeping them safe.