

Therapeutic Communication Gerontology Assignment

Learning Objectives and Outcomes		
Area	Objective	Course Student Learning Outcome (CSLO's), Baccalaureate Essential's & QSEN
Knowledge	<p>Apply therapeutic communication nursing concepts in the delivery of nursing care to gerontology patients.</p> <p>Examine the influence of age on nursing care decisions and actions for patients.</p>	CSLO #1 & 2 Baccalaureate Essential VIII QSEN Patient-Centered Care
Skills	<p>Apply therapeutic communication principles, concepts such as active listening, silence, focusing, open ended questions, clarification, exploring, paraphrasing, reflecting, restating, providing leads, acknowledgement, and offer of self.</p> <p>Increase their own self-awareness of judgments and pre-conceived notions that may affect their advocacy for older adults.</p> <p>Evaluate effectiveness individual performance.</p>	CSLO #1 & 4 Baccalaureate Essential VIII QSEN Patient-Centered Care
Attitudes	<p>Values the role of therapeutic communication in nursing care decisions and actions.</p> <p>Recognize personally held attitudes about working with patients from different age, ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds.</p>	CSLO #1 & 4 Baccalaureate Essential VIII QSEN Patient-Centered Care

Instructions:

This assignment is designed to help students feel comfortable initiating conversations with older adults and raising awareness of older persons' wishes, expectations, resources, cultural traditions, and strengths. Students will select an older adult to interview. Interviews can be completed virtually or by phone. Students will utilize therapeutic communication to explore the quality-of-life perceptions, risk the person is willing to take or has taken to preserve the quality of life.

Therapeutic communication is a fundamental component of nursing and is a complex concept. Ensuring positive encounters between nurses and patients is essential for improving the quality of nursing interactions, the performance of various nursing duties, and meet patients' diverse needs (Abdolrahimi, et al., 2017).

Reference

Abdolrahimi, M., et al., (2017). Therapeutic communication in nursing students: A Walker & Avant concept analysis. *Electronic Physician*, 9(8), 4968-4977. doi:10.19082/4968

National League of Nursing (NLN). Retrieved from <http://www.nln.org/professional-development-programs/teaching-resources/ace-s/teaching-strategies/aces-knowledge-domains/individualized-aging/examining-risks-and-benefits-to-enhance-quality-of-life>

Pre-assignment work-

Students should answer the following questions to fully understand the quality of life, personal choice of decision making, and self-reflection.

1. Which of these two statements is most important to you?
 - a. I want to live as long as possible regardless of the quality of life that I experience.
 - b. I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.

I want to preserve a good quality of life even if I may not live too long is the most important statement to me. If I am young and get sick, I would certainly fight to get better, but once I get older and have less strength, I believe the quality of life would become most important. My family has experienced firsthand four relatives battle cancer, and sadly three are no longer with us. Looking back, I wonder if they would have changed their care plan to sustain quality instead of fighting.

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

I do believe I have full autonomy for decision making. As we get older, we can lose the right to process and understand the choices given. It is essential to discuss our feelings with our children and spouse so that those closest know and understand what we would prefer if we become unable to make decisions.

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

I would say I do not like when people make decisions for me, which isn't heard or taken under consideration. I think it is important to remember this when working with older adults. It can be easy to decide what the older adult should do; however, it can become an issue to their independence and make them feel like they aren't allowed to voice their opinions.

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

My son is the most important person in my life. Ensuring he is safe and has everything he needs, plus some of his wants is what I strive for in life. Second, the rest of my family is essential to him as well, and when put in challenging situations, I'm not able to answer how I would feel. It is tough to put yourself in an older adult's shoes and understand that quality vs. quantity is different for everyone.

5. What risks have you taken in the past that has affected your quality of life?

I am not a huge risk-taker when it comes to life but deciding to give up my career in an office to return to school has probably been the most significant risk. I had a steady income, great benefits, and travel across the U.S. training employees. Deciding to cut my salary to less than half of before to transfer to a hospital and start at the ground level inspires me to work harder to achieve my dream of becoming a nurse.

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

Emotionally I think this was the best decision I have ever made, but the struggles of ensuring we have everything we need isn't ideal. I know I will be a nurse, and I will achieve my dreams. It just will be a more challenging path than if I had chosen this road right out of high school.

7. What risks do you want to take now?

Currently, I am taking the risk of giving up the safety and comfort of an office job to start back at the ground level and build a life with a career I love.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

I will not risk anything that could harm my son. He has had to date fourteen surgeries, and all came with pros and cons; however, they have asked for him to have additional ones that I didn't feel comfortable pursuing. I always research to ensure if we do need the procedure, it is for the right reasons.

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

My close family knows and possibly understands that my dream to become a nurse is a priority. They say they know but haven't experienced life with a medically complex child. They babysit and have helped me a great deal over the years, but living with it day in and out is different from babysitting for 3 hours and still doing anything they want.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

I am afraid of failing and not achieving my dream. I knew this program would be intense, but I don't think I expected quite this much time put towards school. I am still finding a balance between school and home; however, he is older and enjoys his video games.

Interview process:

Find an older adult to interview. The interviewee may be a family member and does not have to be a patient. Each interview should be a minimum of 20 minutes. Students should use therapeutic communication techniques to build therapeutic relationships within the community. Students should ask a minimum of 5 questions listed below. Students can phrase the questions in their conversational tone. A student may ask a question not listed below but will need to write down additional questions in the post-interview evaluation. The interview process notes are not graded but assist the student in the reflection process.

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

- I want to live as long as possible regardless of the quality of life that I experience.
- I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.

My grandmother's most important statement is to live as long as possible regardless of the quality of life that she experiences. She wants to see her family grow up and achieve significant milestones in life.

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

Family is the most important thing in her life. She plans a family Christmas with her eight siblings every year to include the sibling's children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. This year we were unable to meet due to Covid-19, and she states, "that was the hardest decision to make as we couldn't see everyone."

5. What risks have you taken in the past that has affected your quality of life?

In August 2019, she was diagnosed with bone cancer in her jaw. She decided to fight for her life and have an intense nine-hour surgery to have a piece of her leg bone removed and grafted into a

jaw bone. She says this was by far the most significant risk she has ever taken, and although some days she regrets it, it has given her more time with her family.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

If the most recent follow-up surgery doesn't work, she isn't sure she will move forward with the next option. She explained how the next surgery would be six to seven hours and require a tracheotomy again. She feels as if she was given more time and has gotten to see things she may not have been able to see.

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

Grandma explains that it was an easy choice to be able to spend more time with her family. When speaking about if she would do this again, she isn't sure since it has taken a lot more than she ever thought. She is starting to feel more like her old self and will continue to fight to get stronger.

Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity

After interviewing an older adult, students are to complete a self-reflective evaluation.

- 1) What therapeutic communication techniques did you use during the interview?
Provide examples.

During the interview, I used many therapeutic communication techniques, with the most important being active listening and silence. We want to give the older adult time to compile their thoughts and voice their opinions. I also used giving of self as we spent time together without distractions.

- 2) What went well?

I think the interview went well overall as I was able to see what is truly important to my grandma and her beliefs on what we do from here.

- 3) What would I do differently next time?

I wouldn't do anything differently, as it was a great conversation that opened my eyes to what she is thinking and how she wants to spend the rest of her life.

- 4) What are the major take-home lessons after interviewing an older adult?

It will take more time to interview an older adult versus a younger person. Most older adults will process questions at a slower pace and need additional time to offer answers. We spent close to an hour going over these questions and then circled back again even a little later in the day.

- 5) How can I adapt my nursing practice to be more responsive to the unique needs of an older adult client?

It is important to remember that with older adult clients, the most significant thing a nurse can do is be available. We tend to run at a fast pace in life, but with older adults, we need to slow down and make time to ensure we are listening to their wants and needs.

- 6) In what way am I building my nursing skills?

I think of nursing as wearing a tool belt with dozens of tools, each unique to the patient in front of you. Older adults need to offer themselves as available to talk or spend time with them. Nursing includes dealing with people of all different cultures and ages; we need to adapt to any patient with tools fit for them.

STUDENT NAME _____

RUBRIC FOR THERAPUTIC COMMUNICATION GERONTOLOGY ASSIGNMENT
Pre-Assessment

Objective	Unsatisfactory 0 points	Satisfactory 5 point	Grade
Increase own self-awareness of judgments and pre-conceived notions that may affect their advocacy for older adults.	Description adequate with superficial thought and preparation; does not address all aspects of the task	Description well developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.	
Content Contribution	Information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Factually correct, reflective, and substantive contribution.	
Clarity & Mechanics	Communicates in manner with some 2-3 errors clarity, spelling, grammatical, or mechanics errors.	Contributes valuable information with minor 1 clarity, spelling, grammatical, or mechanics errors.	

Comments:

Pre-Assessment POINTS: _____/15

Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity

Objective	Unsatisfactory 0 points	Satisfactory 10 point	Grade
Evaluation therapeutic communication process with older adult	Description adequate with superficial thought and preparation; does not address all aspects of the task	Description well developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.	
Content Contribution	Information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Factually correct, reflective, and substantive contribution.	
Clarity & Mechanics	Communicates in manner with some 2-3 errors clarity, spelling, grammatical, or mechanics errors.	Contributes valuable information with minor 1 clarity, spelling, grammatical, or mechanics errors.	

Reflective POINTS: _____/30

Total Points: _____/45

Instructor Signature: _____

Date: _____