

Therapeutic Communication

Pre-Assignment:

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.

The statement that is most important to me is the importance of preserving quality of life, regardless of the time spent alive. If the time spent alive is not enjoyable then I see no reason to continue.

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

I do feel that I have full autonomy for decision making because I am able to comprehend and think critically about any situation that is presented to me.

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

When people make decisions for me, I feel as though my voice is not heard and my feelings and ideas are not being taken into consideration.

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

The things that I believe that are important in my life include my family, my friends, and the opportunities that are presented to me that can provide me with memories that I can look back on for the rest of my life and enjoy.

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

Throughout my teenage years I never visited the doctor to check on my health. At my current age, I am on medications to lower my cholesterol. I am also on medication for a heart arrhythmia. If I had gone to the doctor sooner to check on my health, I might not need to be on these medications.

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

Previously, I have risked my education and ability to live independently to enjoy more free time. This has caused me to be behind the point where I want to be in life and has required me to be in school longer than expected.

7. What risks do you want to take now?

I want to take more risks towards my career. I want to push myself to my limit to become the best nurse I can be and go as far in nursing as I can. I also would like to take some time after I graduate from Lakeview to travel and see places outside of the United States.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

When I was younger, I was more likely to risk my health and well-being. This included jumping off of bridges into creeks and sky diving and bungee jumping. Now that I am older, I no longer want to take risks that can put my life in danger.

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

I would explain to them that I want to take these risks because I feel like I will have a greater sense of accomplishment if I see how far I can successfully push myself without failing.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

I am afraid that I could end up without an income and unable to provide for myself or my future family.

Interview

This interview was conducted with my grandmother, Judy Kegley. She has not been married for over 20 years; my grandfather died of colon cancer in 1996.

Me: “Grandma, I would like to ask you a few questions about your perception on life and what your quality of life means to you. Out of these two statements, which of them do you feel most connected to and best describes you, ‘I want to live as long as possible regardless of the quality of life that I experience,’ or ‘I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.’”

Grandma: “I would have to say I agree with the preserving a good quality of life. After what I saw your grandfather go through with his chemotherapy, I’m not sure I would want to endure that pain for a couple extra months or years of life.”

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Me: "So grandpa's experiences towards the end of his life has shaped your idea of how you would want to live if anything like that happened to you? I know from the stories that I have heard that the last few weeks of his life were really hard to see."

Grandma: "Yes, I wouldn't want to struggle like he did."

Me: "How do you feel when people make decisions for you?"

Grandma: "I can't say I enjoy it. I think that everyone assumes that because I'm older I can't make decisions for myself."

Me: "What things in life are important to you? What do you cherish on a day-to-day basis?"

Grandma: "I enjoy the time I get to spend with my family and my neighbors. The pandemic has really caused me to not want to leave to house due to my age, so I really appreciate the time I get to spend with my loved ones."

Me: "Have you always felt that family was the most important thing in your life?"

Grandma: "Not so much when I was younger. When I was younger I appreciated my free time more and my friends. Now that I am older, all I have is free time by myself so I have started to appreciate my family more."

Me: "What risks do you want to take now? Is there anything you want to do before you quality of life might diminish?"

Grandma: "Well, since I am getting older, I would like to spend more time with my family outside of the house. I understand that this pandemic is serious but at my age I am not sure how much time I have left. Since your grandfather passed, I have been afraid to take risks. I didn't want your mother to lose both of her parents too early, but now I can see that I may not be here for another 5 years. I can be gone at any point, so I want to make the most of it."

Matthew Catlett

Me: “Okay, I understand. So you feel like that since Grandpa has passed, you find yourself more timid to take chances and risks?”

Grandma: “Exactly. But now I want to enjoy and cherish this time I have with you and the rest of the family.”

Me: “If you were asked, how would you explain this risk to me and the family?”

Grandma: “I would just tell you guys that I am old and want to spend as much time with all of you as possible.”

Me: “I appreciate the honesty. What frightens you about taking this risk?”

Grandma: “Nothing frightens me about this risk. If anything, it excites me. I don’t want this pandemic to ruin the rest of my time on this Earth. I know that God will take me when He wants me, so I will not let anything stop me from enjoying my time in this life. I really appreciate being able to talk with you and Lindsay and Amy (cousins) when you all come over.

Me: “It is really important to you to see the family and take advantage of the time left for you here on Earth?”

Grandma: “Yes.”

Me: “Well, you know I am always here to talk with you and always available to hang out whenever you want.”

End of Interview

Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity

1) What therapeutic techniques did you use during the interview?

Restating- So you feel like that since Grandpa has passed, you find yourself more timid to take chances and risks?

Offering self- I am always here to talk with you and always available to hang out whenever you want.

Accepting- Okay, I understand.

2) What went well?

I believe that my grandmother really had the opportunity to reflect on what is important to her and see what things were important to her. I also believe that her ability to recognize her wants and her ability to have autonomy are important.

3) What would I do differently next time?

If I had the opportunity to do this again, I would offer more opportunities to reflect on the importance of autonomy and the importance of the in the older adult years for someone like my grandmother.

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

I now understand that quality of life does not diminish just because someone grows old. While certain aspects of life might not be the same as they were in earlier years, different things can change someone's perception as they age.

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

The most important thing to do when caring for the older adult population is to listen. Listening can improve the care that you can provide to the older adult population.

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

Through this interview, I am able to work on my communication skills with a generation that I have not been able to connect with in my earlier years. I can also use this time to practice my therapeutic communication techniques.