

## 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>	<p>CSLO #1 &amp; 2 Baccalaureate Essential VIII QSEN Patient-Centered Care</p>
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>CSLO #1 &amp; 4 Baccalaureate Essential VIII QSEN Patient-Centered Care</p>

	Evaluate effectiveness individual performance.	
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>	<p>CSLO #1 &amp; 4          Baccalaureate Essential VIII          QSEN Patient-Centered Care</p>

## 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?

- 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.
- Out of these two statements, I choose: ‘I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.’ Even if it is shorter, preserving a good quality of life is most important to me. When I am an older adult, around 65 years old and up, I do not want to be on a ventilator due to respiratory issues or have a foley catheter regularly in because of incontinence. It may be morbid, but I would rather live a short, healthy life than a long life filled with pain, confusion, and various health issues such as arthritis and congestive heart failure.

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

- For the most part, I do believe that I have full autonomy in decision making. The only aspect that I do not have complete independence is money as I am unemployed and on scholarship, but my parents help me a lot with college and tuition. Due to finances, my parents and I decided on EIU and then Lakeview as these were the best options for me financially. At first, I was against going to EIU and Lakeview when I was eighteen, but now I see that even though I did not have full autonomy in this situation, it worked for the best.

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

- It is frustrating for me when people make critical decisions such as what occupation I should become. For example, my family was pushing me to major in biological or medical sciences in college. My family urging me to be a biological or medical sciences major made me feel like I had no say in my life and career path. When my family pushed biological sciences and

medical sciences before I even began at Eastern Illinois, I felt hurt and like my family did not care about what I wanted. In addition to being frustrated and hurt, I felt resentful and angry because these are decisions for me and my life, not anyone else.

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

- Currently, graduating from Lakeview College of Nursing with a Bachelor's in Nursing and passing the NCLEX exam in 2022 is most important in my life. All my life, I have been motivated to exceed educational expectations, and I strive to do that no matter what is going on in life. It has been a life goal of mine to create the best life for myself, and that is why graduating from Lakeview and passing the NCLEX in 2022 is crucial to me and my future. Another important aspect in my life is finding a nursing position in the emergency department or intensive care unit quickly to help as many people as possible and improve the quality of client's lives through being a nurse. Lastly, one other important aspect is starting a family of my own in the future. Since I was a little girl, it has been my dream to have children of my own and support and love them just as my family has done for me.

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

- I risked my health and my right knee to play sports since I was a young girl, and I ended up having to get ACL surgery due to a partial tear that took three months to recover fully. Today, my right knee aches a lot, especially when it is cold outside, and sometimes it gives out when I have to do strenuous work like moving big times such as my bed or refrigerator around. Another risk that I took last semester was coming home to visit my family before Thanksgiving, which ended in getting COVID due to my dad's work exposure. Since I had COVID, exercise has been harder on my lungs, and I need to utilize my inhaler more than I ever have before.

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

- The most significant risk I took was coming to Eastern Illinois for my prerequisites and then Lakeview for nursing. Honestly, I am a huge homebody, so moving from Chicago to Charleston, which is three hours away, was huge for me. I used to come home a lot because I missed my family, but it has been my favorite risk I have ever taken. Lakeview is going very well for me, and I can still spend quality time with my boyfriend and friends by balancing my academic and social responsibilities equally. Another risk I took in the past was moving to my dad's house during my junior year of high school. At first, my mom took it very hard, and our relationship has been somewhat rocky ever since. However, it has been another top risk I have taken because I have found who I am, how to be responsible, and how to begin my path to growing up and becoming the woman and nurse I want to be. I gained a lot of independence and confidence from living with and learning from my father.

7. What risks do you want to take now?

- A risk I want to take now is becoming a CNA despite COVID still being a significant concern. I decided to sign up for the CNA exam on February 26, which is coming up soon. It was a spur of the moment to try becoming a CNA, but I need as much experience as I can get before, I am a full-fledged registered nurse in the future. Another risk I want to take now that also has to do with COVID is taking a road trip to Michigan with my family to ski. Since the beginning of the COVID outbreak, I have been extremely cautious about avoiding it and not going to significant social events or bars when I turned 21 years old this October. My immunity to COVID is still not up yet, and I know that it is a substantial risk coming into contact with lots of strangers, but I will most likely be going to ski in Michigan with my family next weekend.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

- I am not willing to take the risk of going to bars now that I am 21 years old and potentially exposing myself and others to COVID. Too many of my peers and young adults my age are taking this risk and spreading the virus, and I do not want to be another young adult to give others COVID. Another risk I am unwilling to make is taking any drugs outside of the ones that my drug addiction to cocaine and other “hard” drugs is a prevalent issue in my family, and it is not a risk I will ever be willing to take.

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

- Taking the risk of becoming a CNA despite COVID going on is essential for my future of being a nurse, and I do not think it would be overly challenging to explain this to my loved ones. I believe that my family would support me in signing up for the CNA exam and applying to be a CNA once I pass. Regarding skiing, I will be doing that with my family, and they are also aware of the risks especially concerning COVID.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

- What frightens me about becoming a CNA is not passing the exam or potentially not being hired by any facility or hospital. Another thing that scares me about becoming a CNA is going through burnout, which may discourage me from becoming a nurse. Nothing truly frightens me about skiing other than possibly being a carrier of COVID and spreading it.

**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.**
- **I'm old enough now to see how people in my life who aged like my mother go through dementia, and how unhappy my old neighbors in nursing homes are now. People who have had bad mental and health conditions seem so miserable and it is not something that I want to do. That is why now I exercise thirty minutes a day, eat a decently balanced meal, to fuel my body and stay as mobile and healthy as possible.**

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

**“Yes, I handle the finances for my marriage, we have equal input on purchasing decisions, and all-important decisions that we make together, but I am the lead person when it comes to finances. I do a lot of research before making decisions and I feel like that makes me autonomous and independent.”**

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

**“I feel unhappy, defensive, resentful, and I feel cheated that I am still capable of doing things. My entire life I have always depended on myself, and it really bothers me when people take over things that I do. I know my family loves me, but they have been overly defensive over me shoveling the snow, driving, etc. I feel like they don't trust me. At the same time, I know that I am not the same person that I was 10 or 20 years ago. I can realize my limitations. I am 75 years old and I only have a few more years to live. I am not totally unhappy with realizing that I can't do what I used to. I am appreciative of all that is done for me now as I am accepting the aging process, but it bothers me when people overly worry or bug me about things, I know I can still do without issue.”**

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

**“The most important thing to me is my family- my children, my wife, my grandchildren. My life is defined by my family. I spend so much of my time devoted to my family over the years. I worked so that we did not have to worry about finances. I was very adamant about making it to sports games and being involved with my children and grandchildren’s academics if they needed help. The way I see it my life is intertwined with theirs.”**

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

**“Not eating healthy foods for a large portion of my life. Having the open-heart surgery and having clogged arteries due to my unhealthy habits in the past is the worst risk that I have taken in my life. I did play semi-pro baseball and football until I was forty years old, but that was a positive risk in my life and maybe has helped me with some of my mobility as I can still get around pretty easily.”**

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

7. What risks do you want to take now?

**8. What risks are you not willing to take?**

**“Well right now I refuse to walk outside when it is icy and slippery because I don’t ever want to fall again. I don’t want to foolishly spend my retirement money, so we can live comfortably. I have been a saver my whole life, and I do not want to waste money or resources. I always find sales when going to the grocery store, but I still buy good quality products that will last for a long time.”**

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

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

### **Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity**

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

- During the interview, I utilized active listening, silence, and clarification the most. Throughout the entire interview, I utilized active listening in each of the six questions that I asked. Specifically, I used active listening when I asked my interviewee, “how do you feel when people make decisions for you?” He had a lot to say about this topic as it was something that agitates him as he stated: “I feel like my family does not trust me. It truly bothers me when my family will not allow me to do things like shoveling that I have done since I could pick a shovel up.” Using intermittent silence while my interviewee was thinking about each question, I asked helped him believe and give the best possible responses. Lastly, I used clarification on the first question I asked, which was: “which of these two statements is most important to you?” He responded by choosing the second option, which is: “I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.” Then to clarify, I asked, “can you elaborate on that and what made you choose the option to preserve a good quality of life even if it is shorter over living for a long time regardless of your quality of life?” This clarification led to an excellent response from my interviewee: “I’m old enough now to see how people in my life who aged like my mother go through dementia, and how unhappy my old neighbors in nursing homes are now. People who have had bad mental and health conditions seem so miserable, and it is not something that I want to do. That is why now I exercise thirty minutes a day, eat a decently balanced meal, to fuel my body and stay as mobile and healthy as possible.”

#### 2) What went well?

- Since I interviewed a family member who is 75 years old, the conversation and questions flowed smoothly. I was not hesitant about asking the questions, and I learned a lot more about this individual and other older adults through the information. The question that stuck out to me the most was: “how do you feel when people make decisions for you?” This question and the interviewee’s response were powerful because it was a relevant and sensitive topic for the interviewee and most older adults. Another aspect that went well was how willing and open the interviewee was to answer the questions to his best ability and truthfulness.

#### 3) What would I do differently next time?

- Next time, I would like to interview an older adult client at clinical or an older adult outside of the family to simulate using therapeutic communication as a nurse one day. It was easy to talk to my interviewee as he is my grandpa, and I feel comfortable asking him anything, especially about his status as an older adult. Also, I would like to ask more questions to get more responses and a better generalization of older adults. In addition to that, I would have wanted to interview multiple older adults and compare and contrast their answers.

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

- After interviewing an older adult, one major take-home lesson is not to violate their autonomy because it is very offensive and bothersome to older adults. More likely than not, older adults are still capable of many activities such as driving their vehicle, mowing the lawn, and cleaning their homes unless they have a physical or mental impairment. After interviewing an older

adult, another take-home lesson is to soak up the information that an older adult offers because it is valuable not only because they know other older adults but just about life and their health.

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

- I can adapt my nursing practice to be more responsive to the older adult client's unique needs by focusing on their autonomy and what that older adult client knows their capabilities and limitations. Also, I can focus more on common health issues in older adults, such as arthritis, respiratory problems, cardiac issues, and mental changes or impairments like dementia.

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

- The most obvious way that this interview improved my nursing skills is through therapeutic communication. I utilized active listening, silence, and clarification the most, which is just the beginning of my utilization of this nursing skill. Communication with clients is imperative to that specific client's quality of health and the overall care the nurse will provide through good communication. Respecting older adults, their autonomy, and their needs are essential for professionalism, which is another crucial aspect of nursing skills. It would not be easy to maintain professionalism if a nurse could not communicate with an older adult properly due to various factors like dismissing their autonomy or their needs.

STUDENT NAME: Kathleen Serrano

**RUBRIC FOR THERAPUTIC COMMUNICATION GERONTOLOGY ASSIGNMENT**

**Pre-Assessment**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory 0 points</b>	<b>Satisfactory 5 point</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Increase own self-awareness of judgments and pre-conceived notions that may affect their advocacy for older adults.</b>	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.	
<b>Content Contribution</b>	Information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Factually correct, reflective, and substantive contribution.	
<b>Clarity &amp; Mechanics</b>	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**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory 0 points</b>	<b>Satisfactory 10 point</b>	<b>Grade</b>
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<b>Evaluation therapeutic communication process with older adult</b>	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.	
<b>Content Contribution</b>	Information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	Factually correct, reflective, and substantive contribution.	
<b>Clarity &amp; Mechanics</b>	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:** \_\_\_\_\_

