

## Therapeutic Communication Gerontology Assignment

### Learning Objectives, Outcomes, Instructions, and Rubric

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

## Therapeutic Communication Gerontology Assignment Instructions

This assignment is designed to help students feel comfortable initiating conversations with older adults and to raise awareness of older person's wishes, expectations, resources, cultural traditions, and strengths. Students will select an older adult to interview. 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. These interviews can be conducted in-person, over the phone, or using video-conferencing technology. Students should record all information within this document and turn this entire document into the Edvance 360 dropbox by the assigned due date.

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

### References

Abdolrahimi, M., Ghiyasvandian, S., Zakerimoghadam, M., & Ebadi, A. (2017). Therapeutic communication in nursing students: A Walker & Avant concept analysis. *Electronic physician, 9*(8), 4968-4977. <https://dx.doi.org/10.19082/4968>

## Step 1: Assessing Your Personal Thoughts Prior To The Interview

Students should answer the following questions to fully understand the quality of life, personal choice of decision making, and self-reflection. Complete this part of the activity prior to conducting the interview.

### Happy Kalavadia

#### 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.

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

I believe that I have complete autonomy for decision-making in my life. My husband and my parents are my backbones. I do take their opinion when I am not confident in making the decision by myself. For example, I wanted to buy a car but could not decide between white and silver colors because both are my favorites. I took my husband's opinion and finally purchased a silver car.

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

I am not comfortable when people make decisions for me. I like to decide by myself, but sometimes in a confusing situation, I consider the opinion of my husband and parents when I am not able to determine independently. In general, I like to make my own decisions. I think myself mature enough to make decisions by myself.

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

The most important things in my life are my family, school, and work. I strive to be a good mother, student, wife, and employee. In the future, taking genuine care of my patients, family, and health will be most important in my life. Nursing is my passion, and I want to provide the best possible care to my patients in every possible.

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

My quality of life has been positively affected by being a full-time student, mother, and employee at Carle in Urbana. I conceived my daughter Aaradhya in my first semester of nursing school. It was a very challenging experience because delivering a baby during my first semester of nursing school was difficult. I remember that I attended the pathophysiology class online just before going to the hospital as my labor pain started. I have learned good time management and have become versatile in finding my priorities when finishing my task. I consider it a risk because I was not confident initially about delivering the baby and attending nursing school simultaneously. Sometimes my quality of life is affected negatively by multitasking. For example, I do not get enough sleep due to my baby and school, sometimes resulting in dizziness and fatigue throughout the day. Despite those difficulties, I like to take challenges in life and learn from my mistakes.

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

My life is changed positively after taking risks of becoming a full-time student, mother, and employee simultaneously. I became good at time management, knowing my priorities, and multitasking. For example, my infant wants continuous attention, so I read my nursing school notes to her. My life has dramatically changed after taking these risks. I have become stronger, more mature, and confident in my life.

**7. What risks do you want to take now?**

I want to take the risk to pursue my Master's in Anesthesia after finishing nursing school. It will be difficult because I might have to relocate and be away from my family. I am passionate about anesthesia and have a great deal of satisfaction after helping patients with their pain management.

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

I do not want to take the risk of affecting the quality of nursing care when serving patients. For example, I would take help from my coworker or charge nurse if I don't know specific procedures or have questions related to medications before caring for the patient. I want to focus on quality care for my patients, and I do not want to take any risk which jeopardizes their health.

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

I want to pursue a Master's in Anesthesia after finishing nursing school and working full time in ICU. I might also have to relocate to another city or state for school. According to Indian culture, after having children, females are expected to focus on their kids and not pursue their dreams. My parents are skeptical about my further education in nursing, and they want me to focus on my daughter. I will convince my parents by explaining to them that I am passionate about CRNA. I want to work hard and set an

example for my daughter so that I am her inspiration. My husband is my backbone in this matter, and we both have tried to explain this to my parents. It is sometimes hard to explain the situation to our loved ones, but I am confident that we can sort it out with the right words, the right time, and the right attitude.

#### **10. What frightens you about taking this risk?**

I am not frightened about taking this risk as long as I am providing quality patient care. I believe that age should not be a factor in pursuing education, and women should have their right to pursue their passion even after having children. I understand that it is a great struggle to balance family and school, but I am confident that dreams can be converted into reality with the right attitude and hard work. Also, I want to be a role model for my daughter, and hence, I will give my 100 percent to be successful in my future endeavors.

### Step 2: Conducting Your Interview

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 question listed below. Students can rephrase the questions during the interview to convey a conversational tone. A student may ask a question not listed below but will need to write down additional questions asked in the post-interview evaluation. The interview process is not graded but will assist the student in completing their 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.

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

My interview was of an older woman, age 68, who lives in an assisted living facility near my apartment in Champaign. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. By culture, she is of Hispanic origin, and she lives alone with her dog Emma. Her son lives in Champaign and visits her on weekends. She was a nurse by profession and practiced as a nurse for 20 years of her life. She has chronic diabetes mellitus and has a left prosthetic leg as the leg was amputated ten years ago due to irreversible gangrene. The woman replied, " Yes, I like to make my own decisions all the time, and I am not comfortable if someone decides for me."

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

She mentioned that she is not comfortable when people make decisions for her. " I do not prefer when people make decisions for me." She is a retired nurse who practiced nursing for 20 years of her life. She further stated that she made her own life decisions as she was a single mother who used to work as a nurse and take care of her son independently. So, according to her, she does not like the idea of other people making decisions for her.

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

She mentioned that she loved her son and dog Emma so much. " My son and my dog are my biggest strengths. The most essential things in my life are the health and happiness of body, mind, and soul." She practices Vipassana meditation which focuses on the happiness of the soul and promotes peace in the world. She stated, " I want to have good quality health even if I don't live long, and that is most important to me."

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

She mentioned that she was diagnosed with diabetes before fifteen years of age and her glucose levels are not in control due to her unhealthy lifestyle. " I ate unhealthy foods because I did not have enough money to buy fruits and vegetables. I fought my whole life against diabetes and am suffering from chronic pain due to diabetic neuropathy."

She mentioned in the interview that she lost her leg and has a prosthetic leg for ten years. She further said that she also suffers from diabetic neuropathy and wakes up in the middle of the night due to nerve pain. She had taken the risk of giving quality education to her son, who is now a lawyer by profession, and she worked night shifts as a nurse to support her family. " I have worked hard in my whole life so that my son can have a bright future. I also suffer from chronic back pain, which I got from lifting the patients at work." After this, she became emotional, and I paused a while and addressed her with the empathetic response of words and not touch due to social distancing. In summary, she worked hard as a nurse and single mother to give the best life to her son. Her quality of life is negatively affected because of work, family stress, and her chronic diabetes.

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

She became very emotional when I asked this question. She mentioned that she worked hard in her past life. She worked two jobs while raising her son. " My son was born with cleft lip and palate, and he had 18 major and minor surgeries to save his life". She mentioned that she had financial difficulties as the surgeries for her son were very expensive. " You have no idea how difficult it is for a single mother with very little money. It is very challenging and stressful, which is why I got diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in my late forties." Now she has a prosthetic leg due to gangrene. She also suffers from chronic neuropathy issues, especially during nighttime. She said that she became robust and more mature as she dealt with her difficulties in her life. " I am proud of myself because the situation which I dealt with was very tough."

7. What risks do you want to take now?
  
8. What risks are you not willing to take?
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?

Step 3: Completing A Self-Evaluation After the Interview

After interviewing an older adult, students are to complete a self-reflective evaluation. When completing this portion of the activity, the student should consider the information collected in previous steps, as well as the interview experience. Self-reflection is a powerful tool that nurses in all stages of their career utilize to improve their practice.

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

I used five primary therapeutic communication techniques: making observations, active listening, reflecting, restating, and asking open-ended questions in this interview. When I entered the apartment, I smiled and introduced myself. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not able to shake hands with the older adult. I observed that she had a prosthetic leg, and later I saw a picture of her son hanging on her wall. I started my interview by talking about myself and asking open-ended questions like tell me more about why she thinks that she had past life filled with difficulties. She replied, " Because I was a single mother and suffered from chronic diabetes, my life was full of struggle filled with financial problems. My son had cleft lip and palate when he was born." I also used active listening when she started to share her personal story with me. She became emotional sometimes, but she seemed very happy sharing her story and liked that I was very involved and actively listening.

I listened to her narrative story with full enthusiasm and with a nonjudgmental attitude. During the middle half of the interview, which took about 15 minutes, I used the therapeutic principle of reflecting by asking her what she would differently and whether she had any regrets and viewpoints on her past life. She replied, " The only regret I have is that my son does not spend enough time with me. It is in our Hispanic culture that children take care of their parents when they get older. But I guess things have changed now. Although he comes to visit me, my son doesn't get to spend much time with him. Sometimes I feel lonely, and I wish he would spend more time with me." I used the therapeutic communication technique of

active listening as she was describing her emotional story. I used the therapeutic communication technique of restating her own statements. For example, when she mentioned that she had amputation ten years ago, I restated the information by saying that I am sorry to hear that she had amputation ten years ago while taking notes of important points during the interview. The entire interview was about 30 minutes. I used five primary therapeutic techniques. Overall, it was a positive experience considering it was my first time doing an in-person interview with an older adult.

## **2. What went well?**

The entire interview was a positive experience for both of us because she mentioned that she liked my personality and liked to talk with me. She gets bored sometimes, and she said today she is having a good time with me. Although it was a formal interview, I tried to ask questions by reframing them in a friendly manner and asking broad and open-ended questions. One good thing about the interview was that she had an excellent memory and remembered all her past life events, which became easier for me to understand her life more clearly. As mentioned earlier, she was of Hispanic origin, and after few minutes of the interview, I noticed that she made less eye contact while talking to me, from which I derived that it might be due to their culture. In this situation, I used assessment to conclude this information which is very important as a nursing student and future nurse.

Another positive aspect of her was that she was cognitive and hearing competent, making my interview an exciting and smooth experience. I used the therapeutic technique of acknowledgment by stating that she had a great memory. Another coincidence was that she was a nurse and practiced for 20 years. She also offered me some tips on practicing nursing, which would be beneficial when caring for patients. She stated, "I loved to take care of my patients and loved my job as a nurse." She mentioned that she felt lonely, especially during this COVID crisis, and it was nice that she can talk with me and got an opportunity to remember her past life. I also used therapeutic communication to make observations and derived that she was honest, loved her son a lot, and was very positive and hard working. Overall, the interview went well, considering my first formal interview with an older adult using therapeutic communication techniques.

**3. What would I do differently next time?**

When reflecting on my pre-interview questions and comparing post-interview experiences, I concluded that many things could be done differently, although it was a positive experience. For example, during my interview, I did not take much time to introduce myself. I tried to keep it short because I thought I would run out of time. But now, when I am reflecting on how the interview went, I think that I should have told some background information a little bit more just to build trust in the nurse-patient relationship. It was easy for me to answer self-reflection questions, but I had little difficulty initiating the conversation with open-ended statements due to anxiety during the interview. In addition, I wanted to offer myself after listening to her emotional story by spending some time, but due to the COVID crisis, I was unable to do that.

I forgot to mention that I worked in Carle, where she worked as a nurse for few years before retiring. She was Hispanic by culture and could have asked some culture-specific questions, but I could not ask it due to time restraint. I want to be honest that I was anxious to interview an older adult. Also, there were many additional questions like what lessons you have learned from your life and many others, but I could not ask such questions due to the time-sensitive interview. I would also ask about her childhood memories and the difference she feels when she sees younger generations now and before 20 years when she was young. Honestly, there are many factors I would do differently in my second interview. I felt that I need to practice my therapeutic communication skills more in-depth, which I will learn during my nursing school and clinical. But considering it was my first formal interview, I believe I did my best and gave my 100 percent.

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

There are three main things when interviewing an older adult: patience, good listening skills, and empathy. In addition, one must also consider the unique needs of an older adult. For example, a person suffering from a debilitating disease might be tired and need rest, so the interview might be time sensitive. Good listening skills with a nonjudgmental attitude are critical in a successful interview. Patience is another thing one should consider. For example, sometimes, older adults repeat things because they forget

that they already have talked about the topic. This is because, in older age, cognitive function slows down. In addition, older adults are not spontaneous, or in other words, they are slow in delivering a speech or take more time to remember past events. A nurse should give enough time when interviewing an older adult. In my opinion, older adults are like babies who need tender love and care from others.

Emotional support is also an essential factor because emotions are spiked up in older age, and they seek emotional support like offering themselves and showing empathy from their caregivers. Giving hope and adding humor in the interview also makes the conversation more exciting and easier for older adults. Here is an example, I asked her what she does in her free time during my interview. She laughed and said, in her old age, one has no hobbies. I replied by adding humor that age is just a number and nothing else. One significant factor for conversation is using terms that are easy to understand and common ground. It is not difficult to interview and understand older clients if one uses the right attitude and communication skills, as mentioned above in real-life practice.

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

Before I answer this question, I would like to thank my instructor, Professor Lawson, who allowed me to conduct an interview that was a positive and eye-opening experience. A nurse should use her critical thinking skills when analyzing the needs of older adults. For example, if an older adult has a hearing impairment, a nurse should use loud and clear speech, lower the TV volume, and use more gestures in her conversation. Assessment and critical thinking skills are essential tools that I will always incorporate into my nursing practice. For example, if an older adult has an amputated leg, a nurse should put him on the fall prevention list. Every older adult is unique, and they have different needs depending upon their physical and mental capacities. In addition, maintaining eye contact is also an essential factor to consider for a nurse when having a conversation.

The nurse should address the patient's cultural needs. For example, patient care should be performed by the same-sex preferred by patients in some cultures. A nurse should ensure comfort, respect, and simple terms instead of medical jargon when caring for

older adults. A simple act of caring like offering a blanket and asking how today's meal was can significantly impact older adults' emotions. It is imperative to care for an older adult by offering self, acknowledgment, and offering hope. I will incorporate all the points mentioned above into my future nursing practice.

#### **6. In what way am I building my nursing skills?**

A nurse builds her skills gradually, and the initiation of it starts in nursing school. Since I started nursing school, I have begun a journey of learning new skills almost every day. Every day is a new day, whether I have to find a peer-reviewed journal, understand the pathophysiology of heart failure, and attend clinical to physically apply those skills. In my first semester of nursing school, I learned about the nursing process and Preplau's Theory, which are my pillars of nursing. I will lay my foundation on these pillars. A nurse is a unique profession where she can be a teacher, advocate, caregiver, and counselor. This project has been an eye-opener for me because although I learned about therapeutic communication in mental health class, I did not get an opportunity to apply it. I firmly believe that therapeutic communication is essential because it helps develop rapport in the nurse-patient relationship, which is crucial. So here is an analogy that I created by myself. Nursing care is based on these four steps and is in the form of a pyramid. The base of the pyramid starts with therapeutic communication, the nursing process, and Peplau's theory. Above the base in the pyramid is safety because it is the top priority. The second last step of the pyramid is critical thinking skills. The top of the pyramid is patient-focused care with evidence-based practice. Hence, slowly and gradually, I have started to build my nursing pyramid, and I strive to provide the best patient care possible because nursing comes from my heart.

Step 4: Submission

Students should record all information in this document. Utilize Grammarly to check your grammar, spelling, clarity, and mechanics. Review the rubric to ensure all components are addressed. This document should be submitted to the Edvance360 drop box per the due dates listed in the course syllabus.

**Therapeutic Communication Gerontology Assignment Rubric**

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**Assessing Your Personal Thoughts Prior To The Interview**

Objective	Unsatisfactory 0 points	Satisfactory 5 point	Grade Received
<b>Increase own self-awareness of judgments and pre-conceived notions that may affect their advocacy for older adults.</b>	The student's answer is inadequate with superficial thought and preparation. The student does not address all aspects of the task	The student's answer is well developed. The student fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.	
<b>Content Contribution</b>	The information provided is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	The information provided is factually correct, reflective, and substantial.	
<b>Clarity &amp; Mechanics</b>	The student's answer included 2 or more errors in clarity, spelling, grammar, or mechanics.	The student's answer includes 1 or less errors in clarity, spelling, grammar, or mechanics.	

**Conducting Your Interview & Completing A Self-Evaluation After The Interview**

Objective	Unsatisfactory 0 points	Satisfactory 10 point	Grade
<b>Evaluation therapeutic communication process with older adult</b>	The student's answer is inadequate with superficial thought and preparation. The student does not address all aspects of the task	The student's answer is well developed. The student fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task.	
<b>Content Contribution</b>	The information provided is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion.	The information provided is factually correct, reflective, and substantial.	
<b>Clarity &amp; Mechanics</b>	The student's answer included 2 or more errors in clarity, spelling, grammar, or mechanics.	The student's answer includes 1 or less errors in clarity, spelling, grammar, or mechanics.	
<b>TOTAL POINTS FOR BOTH ASSESSMENT AREAS</b>			_____/45

**Instructor Comments:**

