Angelina R. Thomas
N324: Gerontology
Therapeutic Communication Assignment
May 29, 2021

Personal Questionnaire:

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.”
    - Living long does not equate to having a happy and enjoyable life, to me. Having positive experiences, creating long-lasting memories through family functions, traveling and learning about different cultures, sharing intimate moments, experiencing triumphs and learning from them, applying knowledge gained throughout your lifetime, being fully interested and compatible enough with a person to share your life with, living in a passion, and being in constant pursuit of growth without reservation, does. So, if I can fulfill all of these quickly or without living long, then I am okay with that.
2. Do you feel you have complete autonomy for decision-making?
    a. Yes. Since I make my own decisions now as an adult. But I have not had anyone make decisions for me since I was a child. Yet, that depends on the decision that is being made. Living in America, I don’t choose whether I want to pay taxes or not or commit a crime that would involve me having jail time. In that regard, my decisions are made for me, Outside of that. I feel that the decision concerning the direction of my life, what I want to eat, if I want to receive medical care, etc.
3. How do you feel when people make decisions for you?
    a. I feel powerless, chained, I feel restricted in many ways. I’m not too fond of it. No one knows you better than you do. Someone making decisions for you gives them control to govern your life. No one can feel what you feel inside, so what gives them the license or the certification to make decisions on your behalf?
4. What do you see as important in your life?
    a. Family. All-day, every day, my family. I work for my family. I attend school for my family. I live to love and support my family. They are what drives me to go forward in life. They are who gets me going in the morning. I also believe that time is essential. It is something that is not returned. Time is something that should be valued for that reason.
5. What risks have you taken in the past that has affected your quality of life?
    a. I was using credit cards to support my livelihood when I was younger and not paying them when I lost employment. It has affected my credit score, which I am fighting so hard to build until this very day from the mistakes I made financially as a younger girl in my twenties. This spending came from a lack of financial guidance. My parents weren’t

taught about residual income earning, IRAs, debt-to-income ratios, and similar. So, they couldn't teach me what they didn't know. As a young person just leaving home for the first time to pursue college, I didn't listen to the little knowledge they had about financial literacy. Because by the time I made it out of their wing/household, I had been wholly scarred from being told, "no." I want the freedom to buy what I wanted, whenever I wanted. I tried to fit in with my colleagues and peers. At that age, I didn't see why I shouldn't. I mean, I was no different than them. I was hard-working, and I earned outstanding grades. I felt, "Why don't I deserve the very best? Why do they deserve it more than me?". But now, being constantly denied credit opportunities helps me see that the decision I made as a young woman can follow me throughout trying to have a good quality of life.

6. What risks have you taken in the past, and how has this affected you?
    a. I took a risk going off to college without my family. It put me behind because I was not ready to go alone. There were things I needed to be taught that I had not learned yet. As a result, I was forced to leave school early, work, and wait to start the career I wanted.
7. What risks do you want to take now?
    a. Going to school in an accelerated program without working, I am risking my livelihood. If I don't do well in school, I risked not having suitable employment, not caring for my family financially, not having a place to live, food to eat, etc.
8. What risks are you not willing to take?
    a. I am not willing to risk my family's life and safety. I am not willing to risk my career to harm anyone. I am not willing to risk losing my home. I am not willing to lose my peace over an unhappy person(s).
9. How would you explain to the people who love you why you want to take this risk?
    a. There are currently no risks right now I am willing to take outside of finishing my nursing degree. If I had the privilege to take a risk, it would be to start my own business. I would explain that starting my own business would provide generational wealth in my family and provide my family with "options" through wealth. The option to travel, the option to start another business, the option to build residential communities, the option to explore time as it has never been explored, the option to go into a "9-5" or not, options that they have never seen before but will be exceptionally pleased.
10. What frightens you about taking this risk?
    a. Failing frightens me about taking risks. I would not want my business to fail. If it does then, my family's options will be limited.

Interview of grandmother:

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

1. She chose, “I want to preserve a good quality of life even if this means that I may not live too long.”
    1. Granny’s reply:
    “I only want to live as long as I can do what I want to do when I want to do it, and without a lot of pain, medicine, and without a lot of going to the doctors as long as I can get around, fine. When I get to the point where I can’t bathe myself or feed myself, I don’t want to live. It’s time to go, no machines.”
2. How do you feel when people make decisions for you?

Granny’s reply:
“I don’t know. I make my own decisions. That’s just my answer. I make my own decisions.”

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

0. Granny’s reply:

1. “I used to smoke. I cut it out, but I used to smoke. How often? I never did a pack a day. So, I wasn’t a heavy smoker. But I used to smoke years ago. When I was smoking, I’m pretty sure I didn’t have the energy I do now. When I stopped smoking, my sense of taste and smell was better. Smoking didn’t affect my relationships either since I had five husbands and five boyfriends. I got rid of them. They didn’t get rid of me. Smoking did affect my employment relationship. Because that’s what started me to stop smoking when they said if you’d don’t stop smoking on the premises, they would take a day’s pay. Ain’t no smoking worth a day’s pay. Yes, that’s what they did. People were sneaking in the bathroom, smoking, sneaking in the hallway. So, they note that if we were caught smoking, it would be a day’s pay. Heck, you know what I made in one day? I left my cigarettes in the car, and by me working nights, sometimes I didn’t get to smoke a cigarette until 5 or 6 p.m., then it’s time to go to bed. That’s what started me to quit, that note. I didn’t have COPD, asthma, cancer, anything. But that short day’s pay taken away, that was the motivation.”

d. What risks do you want to take now?

0. Granny’s reply:

1. “None. But, if I were going to take a risk, it would be to swim. I went to Olive Harvey college three semesters in a row because everyone said they had the best instructors. I never learned how to swim. My sister taught me how to float. Last summer I went to visit her years ago. But I haven’t done that in so long. I forgot how to float. But I would love to call the YMCA and get in their water.”

e. What do you see as important now?

0. Granny’s reply:

1. “Finding a good man, losing some weight, and traveling. I love meeting different people and experiencing different foods. I love going out of the country. When I go to Jamaica, I don’t just go to tourist places. I get up and go to the people, especially those who live in cardboard boxes. I want to see how they live and what I can do to help. I love cruise ships. I had an 8-day cruise planned before COVID-19 hit. I want someone to have a companion and share my life. I never had a bad relationship. When I got tired of them, I left them. But I never had a bad relationship. Since I had my first husband at 17, I have always had someone to share my life with. I miss that. I do. I am looking forward to meeting someone to share different things. When you have someone there to share experiences with, it makes those experiences better.”

1. What therapeutic communication techniques did you use during the interview? Provide examples
    1. I used eye contact to show her that I was paying attention to her. I used active listening by asking follow-up questions. For example, I asked, “How often did you use to smoke, and did it affect your relationships?” I leaned in to let her know that I am engaging in what she was telling me. I also validated what she said by repeating back what she said to me for clarity and understanding.
2. What went well?
    1. I was allowing her to express herself about desiring a companion. It allowed her to open up to me in a way that I had never seen before. It also allowed her to feel like what she said is essential to me because it was.
3. What would I do differently next time?
    1. Next time, I would ask more questions to get deeper into her thoughts and mind. I value wisdom from older adults. It was interesting to hear about some of the things that affected her in her lifetime. So, I would ask more questions next time.
4. What are the major take-home lessons after interviewing an older adult?
    1. Life can go in any direction. It’s all about perspective and what. You make of your life. But the important thing is to live for you and not for regret. Life passes us by very swiftly. It’s essential to live a life of purpose and fulfillment. Because once those years are gone, you can’t get them back. Once the time has passed, that’s it.
5. How can I adapt my nursing practice to be more responsive to the unique needs of an older adult client?
    1. I could first examine what that means to me. Which means being open to abnormality and what I consider normality of an older adult. What I think may not reflect who they are or what their needs may be. Beyond responsive to their individual needs, I can find resources for them where I lack, be attentive, show concern, and show a willingness to be supportive. Often, they don’t want to ask for help or feel burdened for doing so. So, if they see you as the nurse sighing or being irritated, they aren’t going to be inclined to ask for support. This aspect is crucial.
6. In what way am I building my nursing skills?
    1. I am learning to be empathetic and have compassion and understanding for the elderly. I never disrespected my elders. However, completing this assignment has given me a newfound respect and admiration for the elderly population. I am building character, and I am also developing patience for the elderly population.