

Head Running: THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNICATION

The Therapeutic Communication

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## 1. Pre-assignment work-

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. Life quality is the most important factor in my life, and I certainly do not want to live in vegetate state under life support. It is a horrifying and terrible condition to live in such a state. Moreover, in my opinion, it lacks the meaning of living.

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

In my current status, I do feel I have the full autonomy for decision making. I am healthy, active, and able to attend school to learn, to think, and to explore. Therefore, I do have full autonomy for decision making at this point.

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

I would not prefer anybody to decide anything for me even they are my parents. I am a well-developed adult woman, and I have opinions and preferred lifestyle that I want to live. I can not compromise myself to accommodate someone else's opinion.

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

Health is the most important thing in my life. My point of view of health includes: breathing my own, no pain, no constipation, good appetite, can fall asleep without medication, clear-minded, and passionate for daily life. For this reason, I do pay attention to the well-balanced diet, physical activities, and mental health as well.

5. What risks have been identified to your quality of life that you agree or disagree with?

The risk I willing to take are transportation and surgeries. I love to travel all over the world; therefore, I have to take the risk in transportation because I have to take the flight, local bus, old cars in different situations. However, travel makes me feel alive and enrich my life experiences, thus increase the quality of life. Surgery, for therapeutic purposes, is necessary to cure or improve the quality of life in some conditions. .

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

I quit my job back in Japan and came to the United States by myself. It was a big risk because I gave up everything I had in Japan, and I had known nobody in the States. However, I knew I wanted something different in life. I wanted something other than just doing a job, getting married, having kids, and buying a house. I wanted my life is full of surprises and passion.

7. What is your understanding of the risks you want to take now?

I would like to take the risk to go to Europe after nursing school. I want to learn French and Spanish. I am hoping I can still be a nurse in an Army base hospital located in Italy. I will probably have to give up the things I earned here in the States, but I am willing to take it.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

The risks I am not willing to take is chemotherapy, radiation therapy to sustain the life span. Not only chemotherapy and radiation therapy would decrease my quality of life, but also the success rate of current cancer treatment is not great. If I am in the terminal ill states, and if there is less chance to survive, I would like to live the way I want but not to spend my last six month of life in the hospital.

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

I will explain to my family first, of course. I believe they know how much I love to travel, how much I am enjoying my life. I will make an apology to my parents, as a daughter, I will tell them that I lived the way I wanted, and I have no regret in life at all. I will thank them for bringing me an experience to enjoy and chance to explore. This is the quality of life I want to keep, and I do not want to die in the hospital bed.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

I am afraid that my family will beg me to get the treatment I don't want. They will probably try to convince me that I should listen to the doctors and stick to conventional treatment. Moreover, they will probably say that I am too selfish and unable to understand people's feeling.

II. Interview process:

Questions Asked

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?
  3. How do you feel when people make decisions for you?
  4. What risks are you not willing to take?
  5. How would you explain to the people who love you why you want to take this risk?
  6. What do you see as important in your life?

### III. Interview Evaluation-Reflective Activity:

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

I have used several therapeutic techniques during the interview. The person I interviewed is my co-worker, who is a 65 years old woman, a widow, lives alone in the town. I have used Reassurance many times. For example, regarding the question of how she feels about having full autonomy for decision making, it was originally about her decision-making process; however, she starts to mention other things that makes her feel insecure, so I brought the topic back by saying something like "so what you saying is that you feel like you have autonomy as long as your health allows, is it right?" Then she replies, "yeah, I think so." There are several times I touched about her husband's death, and then I sensed that she became emotional. So I kept Silence for a few seconds waiting she comes back. Then I made an apology, and restart the interview again. Another technique I used was Exploring, that is when she said she was not sure about life support, I tried to obtain more information from her by saying "what is exactly you feel about life support? Is it about the cost is too expensive, or it would decrease the life quality? Tell me more about it?"

- 2) What went well?

The things went well is first, I and she knew each other for a long time; therefore, I knew the background of her, and it helped me to obtain more detailed information from her. Second, I appreciated that she was very cooperative and answered all of my questions, I felt those questions are sometimes very personal, and not everyone likes to answer.

- 3) What would I do differently next time?

My interview skill needs to be improved, as well as my English. I need to be more confident to ask questions and make sure to obtain the right information.

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

The major take-home lesson is that it made me realize older adult sometimes very sensitive and insecure due to their life experiences, especially when they have lost their spouses, children, or even pet.

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

Being aware of the uniqueness of each older adult with their history and experience, they deserve to be respected and well treated. A nurse can utilize various therapeutic communication skills to provide quality care.

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

To provide quality care involves to provide security and comfort, respect their autonomy, understanding their needs, and provide support when necessary. This interview process made me think about what is really I can do to help my patients. To care, to pay attention, and to be patient about what old adults are thinking, worrying, fearing, and concerning. It takes time for people to trust me and open to me.