

Therapeutic Communication Gerontology Assignment

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Assessing Your Personal Thoughts Prior To the Interview

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

a. I want to preserve a good quality of life even if it means I may not live too long.

I believe preserving a good quality of life is essential, even if it means that I may not live too long. I believe prevention of illness is key to living a healthy life because it can promote healthy behaviors and protect one's current state of health. Although my life may be cut short, it is my responsibility to make sure I manage my stress levels, have a properly balanced diet and incorporate physical activity in my daily routine. I want to be the best version of myself because I believe that if I continue to take care of myself, I will not regret my future well-being.

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

I believe I have full autonomy for decision making in my life because I know I have the choice to live happily and comfortably in a way that I think is necessary for myself. I am responsible for the choices I make, and I know the decisions I choose will correspond with what I believe is right. My motives and reasoning are what make me comfortable with myself, and it enables me to feel like I am my person without the influence of others around me.

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

When people make decisions for me, I feel like my opinion does not matter and that whatever I say is irrelevant to them. Feeling unimportant and unappreciated makes me feel invaluable in the decision-making process. Finalized decisions without my consent make me feel disrespected and unhappy because I feel like I am not in control of my life.

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

I believe health, happiness, friends, and family are important aspects of my life. Health is an essential concept to me because, without good health, my life can be at risk for diseases and complications in the future. Happiness is necessary because I want to make sure that I am happy with myself and feel a sense of contentment in the choices I make. I feel joyful and motivated to achieve my personal goals and feel more positive about life outlooks when I am happy with myself. Friends and family are other huge factors in my life because they challenge me and encourage me to be the best version of myself. They provide me with love, support, and help me to achieve my goals. Without these elements in my life, I would feel incomplete and lose motivation to grow as an individual.

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

A risk I took in the past that has affected my quality of life is not taking precautions of my health and eating habits. My family has a history of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and stroke, but I never took into account how

this can affect me. I continued to eat a lot of food that contains high sugar and fat and never incorporated physical activity into my daily routine when I was younger. My healthcare provider recently informed me that I am prediabetic and have a high chance of getting high blood pressure if I do not change my lifestyle to preserve my quality of life. This information has affected my outlook on life because now I know that I can face similar health complications like my other family members in the future. I am more likely to incorporate healthier lifestyle habits and be more cautious about the food I intake. This lifestyle change also forces me to exercise regularly to prevent being diagnosed with other health issues.

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

A risk I have taken in the past is learning how to cook for myself. I have never had the opportunity to prepare food for myself because I lived at home with my parents, and my mom cooked every meal. Learning how to cook has affected my life positively because I am more cautious about what I eat and track how many calories I intake every day. I now find myself cooking more often and preparing meals for my whole family.

7. What risks do you want to take now?

A risk I want to take is leaving my home to see my family and friends without feeling like a threat to the community. I want to be able to enjoy my summer vacation in California and live a healthy life surrounded by my friends and family. Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the governor of California issued the "Stay at Home" order to prevent transmission of the virus. With this order active in California and positive cases of the infection increases, I understand it is best to stay home to protect myself and my family.

8. What risks are you not willing to take?

A risk I am not willing to take is jeopardizing my family's health due to my desire to see my friends and extended family. My family means the world to me, and I want to do everything possible to protect my loved ones from getting sick. Since it is a requirement to wear masks in public, maintain a 6ft distance, and frequently wash one's hands- I have handsewn face masks for all of my family members to protect them from the droplet transmission of the virus. I am not willing to go out into the public without protecting myself first because the stakes of contracting the virus are still high.

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

I would explain to my loved ones why I want to take this risk by letting them know that I am only in California for a few more months, and I want to see my friends and family before I go back to school in Illinois. I would reassure them that I will take proper precautions to protect myself from

contracting the virus and contact local facilities for COVID-19 testing shortly afterward if I feel any symptoms.

10. What frightens you about taking this risk?

What frightens me the most about taking this risk is disappointing my family. I do not want to be the reason my family members contracted COVID-19 symptoms. My siblings and I have done a great job thus far on limiting our interactions with the public and ensuring others' safety. Since both of my parents are immunocompromised, it frightens me that virus could potentially end their life. I understand the importance of social distancing and will do my part in protecting my family until the infection is no longer a threat to those around me.

Conducting Your Interview:

Participant: Grandpa John

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

John feels like he has full autonomy for decision making because he feels like he can make his own decisions without getting the approval of someone else. He believes that he knows himself better than anyone else and can make decisions based on what he thinks is necessary. John is confident that making decisions for himself would make him feel happy because this gives him control of his life. He also mentioned that when it comes to big decisions like undergoing an invasive procedure, he enjoys listening to others' opinions because it helps him decide what to do.

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

In John's life, he believes happiness and family are important to him. He strongly believes satisfaction is the key to having a healthy life because contentment is about feeling pleased with one's well-being. He stated that one could achieve true happiness when they are stress-free and satisfied with their lives. He also mentioned that his family is an essential factor in his life because they make him happy and care for him genuinely. John informed me that he likes to surround himself with people who make him happy because he wants to be in a positive environment where he feels loved and appreciated.

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

John says moving from Vietnam to America has been the most significant risk he has taken in the past. This move was crucial because he believed America presented more opportunities for himself and his family. John shared with me that his mother passed away due to a stroke. Due to the lack of financial support for health care services in Vietnam, he mentioned that he and his siblings never had proper health care growing up. Since John knows

his family has a history of strokes, taking appropriate precautions in America will prevent strokes. He shared that the move from Vietnam to America has affected him positively. Now, he has the opportunity to receive preventative care and knowledge on how to live a healthy lifestyle. John is thankful to be living in America due to the easy access to health care facilities and advanced technology. He says that he goes to his health care provider regularly for a check-up to see if there are any potential health issues, and mentions taking preventative measures will help him take care of himself actively.

4. What risks do you want to take now?

John says the risk he wants to take now is to leave his house and enjoy spending time with his family again. John stated that due to the COVID-19, it was recommended by the government that older adults stay home to protect themselves from the virus. He shared that he has not seen his family in months and would risk contracting the virus to see his family again. John admitted that the health care provider diagnosed him with asthma and other health complications causing him to be immunocompromised. John mentioned that he understands staying home and protecting himself from the virus is in his best interest. Still, the thought of having to social distance himself for more extended periods makes him feel upset. He acknowledges the limitations he is faced with and hopes that he gets to spend time with his family soon.

5. What frightens you about taking this risk?

John states that he is immunocompromised, and his life could be jeopardy if he decides to leave his house and begin to interact with others. He is frightened that once he begins to socialize again, he might test positive for COVID-19 and do not know if his body is strong enough to fight off the infection. He is also scared that his family members would be angry at him for wanting to leave his house and exposing himself to the virus, knowing he is a high risk older adult.

Completing a Self-Evaluation After the Interview

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

While interviewing John, a couple of therapeutic communication techniques I used during the interview were asking open-ended questions, seeking more evidence in the responses he gave me, and summarizing the information to make sure I understood his replies. For example, John stated, "Immigrating to America from Vietnam was the biggest risk I took when I was younger. I had no money, no family, and nowhere to go once I came to America." I wanted to reflect on what he said by restating his main points to reassure him that I was actively listening to what he was sharing. I stated, "How did coming to America make you feel?" He replied, "Hopeful because I knew America was going to provide opportunities for my family, and I knew I had to find a way to get them the proper care they needed." I admire the honesty and the positivity that John shared and respect him for taking the risk of coming to a new country alone. Recognizing that he put in a lot of work to build his life in America, I expressed my gratitude by sharing with him how thankful I am for his perseverance.

2. What went well?

Talking to my John helped me understand his perspective on the different healthcare services in Vietnam compared to America. I was able to ask him to elaborate on his responses so that I could better understand the challenges he faced. I believe silence, active listening, and asking open-ended questions helped engage him in our conversation because this

changed the way he responded to me. He was able to provide me with genuine responses and additionally advised me on how to live a better lifestyle.

3. What would I do differently next time?

Next time, I would choose a better method to interview my grandfather. I decided to interview my grandpa over Facetime to maintain social distancing due to COVID-19. John seemed distracted during our interview, and I feel like our interview could have made a more significant impact if we conducted the meeting in person. I would also choose a better time to interview my grandfather. I did my interview a few hours before bedtime, and I could tell he was getting tired. Next time, I would talk to him during the day so that he feels more awake and ready to answer all my questions thoroughly.

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

The major take-home lesson after interviewing an older adult is that they are very knowledgeable and wise regarding life experiences. After talking to my grandfather, I realized that there are a lot of things I did not know he had to sacrifice for me to have the life that I live today. I recognized that silence and asking close-ended questions limited my grandfather from sharing his perspective. I acknowledged that asking questions and being engaged in the conversation allowed my grandfather to be more open with me and allowed him to explore other relatable topics in our discussion.

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 unique needs of an older adult client by being more understanding and open-minded about the situations they face. I can practice mindful communication skills as well as focus on providing customized care for each individual. As a nurse, I will make sure to advocate for my clients and reassure them that they have full autonomy in their decision-making to help older adults feel respected and in control of their lives.

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

I am building my nursing skills by being more compassionate towards my clients and encouraging them to communicate with me on how I can better assist them. By allowing them to express themselves freely, I am building my skills in careful listening and critical thinking on how I can address their concerns. As a nurse, I need to pay attention to detail and observe non-verbal cues to identify unspoken problems a client might have. Staying organized and practicing effective communication with my clients and the interprofessional team are skills that will help me become a professional nurse in the future.

