Gerontological Nursing Learning Activity

TOPIC	Environmental Assessment of the Older Adult
Description	Introduces the students to: • Assessing the environment of the older adult • Reflecting upon how the environment affects the older adult's ability to fully function in everyday life in that setting
When is it introduced?	Beginning students, nursing fundamentals or health assessment. Modifiable for advanced students for use in a community health course. Students are assigned a resident at an assisted living facility for 3-6 clinical days (one or two days per week for 3 weeks depending upon the curriculum). The assignment can be implemented in the following ways: 1. As part of the orientation experience for nursing students the first day at the clinical site OR 2. At the mid to latter part of a clinical rotation when the students are oriented to the site, are comfortable with their therapeutic and professional communication skills and have more knowledge and experience with their resident. (NOTE: The 2nd way is recommended to provide more in-depth experience; there is more in-depth learning because the students are better able to step back and examine the contextual aspects of care for their resident at the site.)
Preparation	Faculty: Assure that clinical instructors and the clinical site staff (nurses and direct care providers) understand that students will not be providing direct care of their assigned resident. Clinical time is devoted to the assessment of the resident and understanding of the resident's daily living experience and functioning within their community setting. Obtain reading materials and make available to students via your school's mechanism for sharing copyrighted materials.
Content/Assignments 1. Sensory Changes	If you or your students are not familiar with age-related sensory changes, consider using these resources or educational activities: • Check out the AJN series "A New Look at the Old," Articles can be downloaded as PDF files by going to http://www.nursingcenter.com/ajnolderadults. Scroll down and click on:

	Sensory Impairment in Older Adults: Part 1: Hearing Loss
	Sensory Impairment in Older Adults: Part 2: Vision Loss
	
	• Enhance student empathy for the experience of age-related sensory changes by utilizing:
	
	   ✓ "Sensory Kit" found in the Awareness module on (Felver, L. & Van Son, C., 2005). *A Focus on Older Adults*-CD-ROM.
	
	   ✓ "Unfair" Hearing Test (free, interactive, 5 minute audio clip that illustrates hearing losses with aging) http://odeo.com/audio/9052683/view

2. Person-centered Care	• Invite an audiologist and a low vision specialist (optometrist) to lecture in an accompanying theory course about sensory issues. Before the environmental assessment is introduced, the concept of **person-centered care** is addressed with the assigned reading (Talerico, et al.,2003) [Focus on the box on p.14, Key Components of Person-Centered Care.] and with discussion in post-conference concerning how this pertains to their specific resident. Students are encouraged to give examples in post-conference. The <u>Functional Assessment Data Form</u> includes assessing the personal strengths and preferences of their assigned resident helps the students learn of the person's sense of self and quality of life.

3. Environmental Assessment Checklist (EA)	**Faculty:**
	• Introduces the EA Checklist explaining how the checklist items correspond with the topic headings in the assigned chapter.
	• Ask students to :
	   ✓ Read the chapter,
	   ✓ Review the forms
	   ✓ Practice using the EA Checklist in their own personal living environment.
	   ✓ Reflect on this question: *Given the date that you collect on your own home environment, why or why not would it be a good place to live when you are an older adult?* (Students are asked to come with their questions about conducting the assessment at home for the next clinical day's pre-conference.)
	Students:
	• Read & review information about Environmental Assessment:
	   ✓ Rader (1995) chapter (make chapter available via student

	course reserves at the library). ✓ [Environmental Assessment (EA) Checklist](#) ✓ [Reflection Question form](#)
Clinical application:	• During clinical, students can work individually or in pairs to conduct the EA Checklist. (When students work in pairs, they process more content as a result of comparing and discussing their observations with one another.) • Clinical instructors check in with students and inquires about issues and concerns while conducting the environmental assessment.
Post-clinical Conference	Discussion: • Students to share their observations • Students are asked to consider their resident's specific functional needs, preferences, and routines to begin to analyze the "fit" for this particular person with the environmental aspects addressed in the EA Checklist. (*Students begin to share their thinking about their individual resident, and sometimes their student colleagues offer their own observations of the same resident. This sharing provides some examples about what could be considered when responding to the Reflection Questions which is assigned as a solo writing activity for each student.*)

Student Evaluation	1) Students submit their [EA Checklist](#) and [Reflection Questions](#) in electronic format or as hard copy. (Note: Electronic submission provides opportunity for expansion of content and legible work for faculty.)
	2) Competency demonstration is met when the:
	 a) A checklist
	  (i) Complete: each checklist item is addressed and
	  (ii) Specific: adequate detail is provided in the notation of informed observations. A vague remark such as "The lighting I good" could be made by uninformed layperson and, therefore, would not be an acceptable assessment
	 b) Reflection questions: identify specific supports and challenges for this particular resident' full functioning at that site. (This means that the student can consider the physical, cognitive, social , emotional, or spiritual considerations needed to enhance the resident's sense of self and quality of life at his/her own home. The student can learn to make visible a person-centered [or person-directed] approach to care.)
	3) If the student's submission is not complete, specific or does not reflect a person-centered approach, then the instructor gives appropriate feedback identifying what is missing or needs expanding and the student is given another opportunity for resubmitting their work

Strengths:	Promotes active engagement by the student in the learning process by: • Observing and asking questions to learn information about

	the environment • Working as a team, yet be responsible for their individual learning product • Opportunities to apply their health assessment skills, refine their micro-observations, and begin to see the intentionality (or lack thereof) in the environmental design and desired milieu. What appeared to be background and not exerting an influence upon the resident is becoming foreground and worth noting as potentially affecting the resident's behavior.
Activity Feedback:	Student & faculty feedback has been positive. Students: • Develop an awareness of the role of the environment and the nurse's responsibility to assess and intervene • Express increased appreciation and awareness of the effect of the obvious (such as staffing, availability of bathroom, etc.) as well as the not so obvious (bed position of someone with hearing loss on one side only, etc.) • Identify environmental factors in maximizing function as well as maintaining the autonomy of older adults in a long-term care setting. Faculty and students have presented their observations along with suggestions for improving an older adult's environment to the long-term care center administrators and staff and suggested changes have been made.
Resources:	• Rader, J. (1995) *Individualized dementia care: Creative compassionate approaches.* New York, NY: Spring Publishing Co., Ch 5, pp 47-82. • Talerico, K.A., O'Brien, J.A. & Swafford,K.L. (2003). Person Centered Care. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing,* 41 (11), 12-16. [Focus on the box on p.14, Key Components of Person-Centered Care.] • Felver, L. & Van Son C., (2007) *A Focus on Older Adults: Competency Development and Evaluation for Health Professionals and Others who Work with Older Adults.* (CD-ROM) http://www.geronursinged.org/gerocd.html
Developed by:	Jane Hagan, MN, RN, CNS haganj@ohsu.edu Carla Pentecost, MS, RN pentecoc@ohsu.edu Oregon Health & Science University, School of Nursing, Portland, OR
Revised:	January, 2008

Teaching Resources: Nursing Care of Older Adults

A SERIES PROVIDED BY

The Northwest Coalition for Geriatric Nursing Education   Website: www.geronursinged.org

The John A. Hartford Center of Geriatric Nursing Excellence at Oregon Health & Science University

Website: www.ohsu.edu/hartfordcgne