Life Review Project
- Integrating Experiential Learning into the Curriculum

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Outline of presentation

What is life review?

Guiding the students

Role of teachers, collaborators, students
What is life review?

- It focuses systematically on all the major life events, decisions and turning points in one’s life, both positive and negative.

- Participants are actively encouraged to evaluate the significance and impact of these events and to resolve conflicts from their past.

- After reviewing the different life events separately the focus is on synthesizing the positive and negative experiences into a coherent life story with themes.
What is life review?

- ...recasting of the past in the context of the present... (Sadavoy & Lazarus, 2000)
- ...reexamine one’s life and solve old problems... (Lewis & Butler, 1974)
- The chance to make amends and restore harmony (Lewis & Butler, 1974)
- “…find new meaning in the face of impeding death…” (Wallace, 1992)
Theories used in life review

Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development
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(Jenko et al., 2010)

Ego integrity
- Acceptance of the course of one's life
- Acceptance of one's place in history
- Absence of death-anxiety
- Satisfaction with life

Ego despair
- Nothing to look backward to with pride
- Nothing to look forward to with hope
Life Review

Process:

- Review and reappraise important life events in the past
- Reminisce on sweet memory, happiness and sadness, gives and takes in life
- Articulate personal success and achievements, as well as unfinished business, loss and regrets

Memorable Events

Successes & Achievements

Past Regrets

Integration and development of a positive self concept

Life review
Why do we conduct “life review’ with older adults?

- highly beneficial to older adults (Sorrell & Butler, 2009)
- To foster helpful communication (Sorrell & Butler, 2009)
- To investigate the primary concerns of terminally ill cancer patients (Ando et al., 2009)
- To improve the spiritual and psychosocial well-being of terminally ill cancer patient (Ando et al., 2008)
- To help stroke patients to reduce the feeling of powerlessness (Liao et al., 2008)
Older adults’ perception of life review (Binder et al., 2009)

- Someone was there to listen to my story
- It was a special time
- A valued interaction with the home care worker developed
- Remembering was meaningful and pleasurable
- Integration with one's lived experiences was healing
Techniques

- Explore and articulate virtues, uniqueness, strengths, meaning of life
- Appreciate and affirm on what one has achieved and what one has contributed
- Express and share lessons learnt and life wisdoms that can pass on to others
- Involve participation of family members and supportive network
Life story books
Express love and gratitude
Briefing workshop
Role play in communication
Tutorials: Psychological support; progress monitoring
On-site observation by Project Coordinator
Summing up

GUIDE STUDENTS’ LEARNING
Guidelines

Know your client
Prepare some probing questions
Attitude and skills
Division of labor
The last visit

WORKSHEET FOR MONITORING PROGRESS
ROLE OF TEACHERS, COLLABORATORS AND STUDENTS
Closing remarks

- The life review experience increased students' understanding of how psychosocial, cultural, spiritual, and life-changing events affect health and health behaviors (McFarland et al., 2006).