



# Life Review Project - Integrating Experiential Learning into the Curriculum

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# Outline of presentation

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What is life review?

Guiding the students

Role of teachers, collaborators, students



# What is life review?

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- 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?

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- ...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 impending death..." (Wallace, 1992)



# Theories used in life review

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Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial  
Development

# Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development

(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

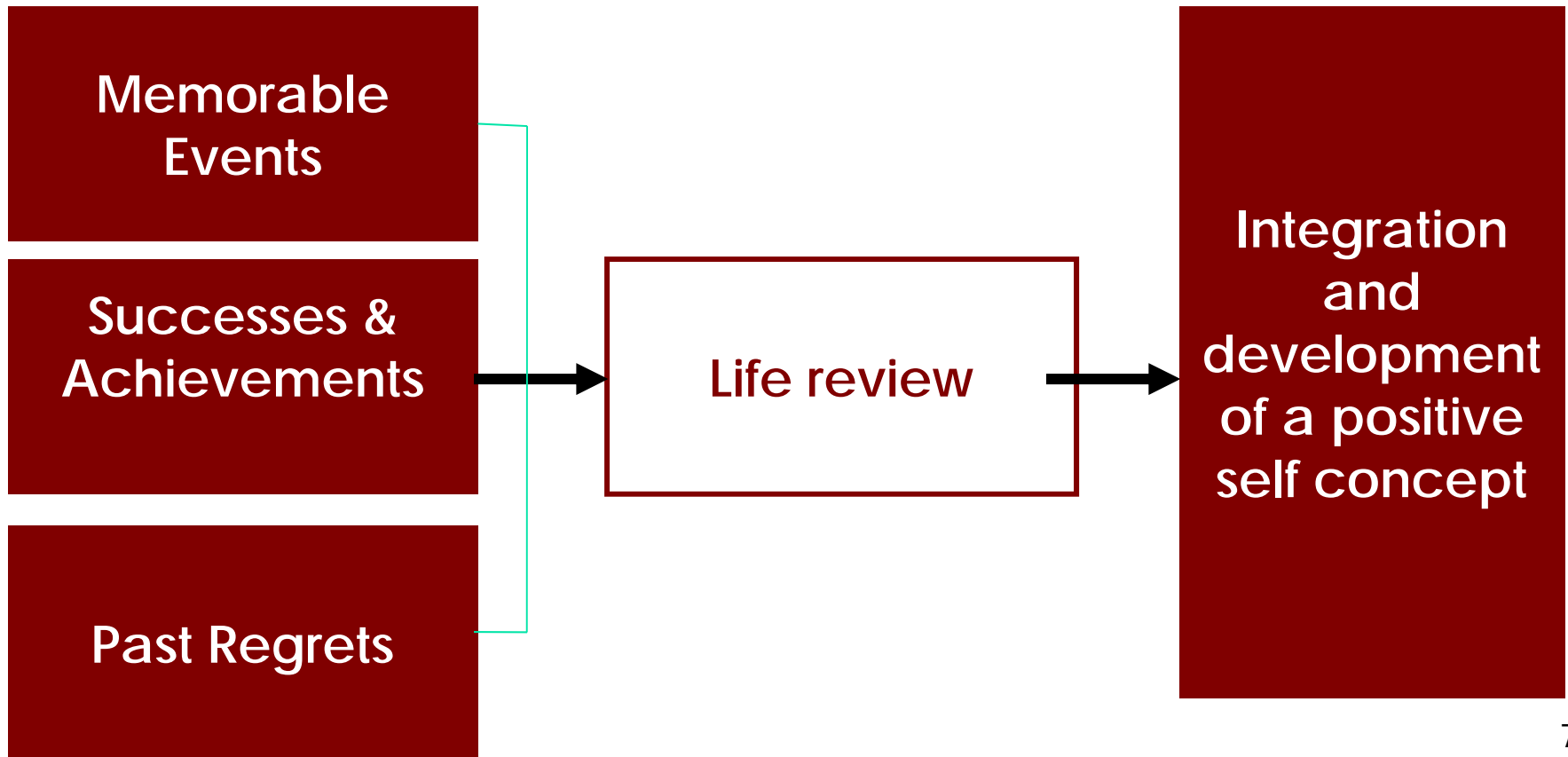
## Ego despair

- **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**





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

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- 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)

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- 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

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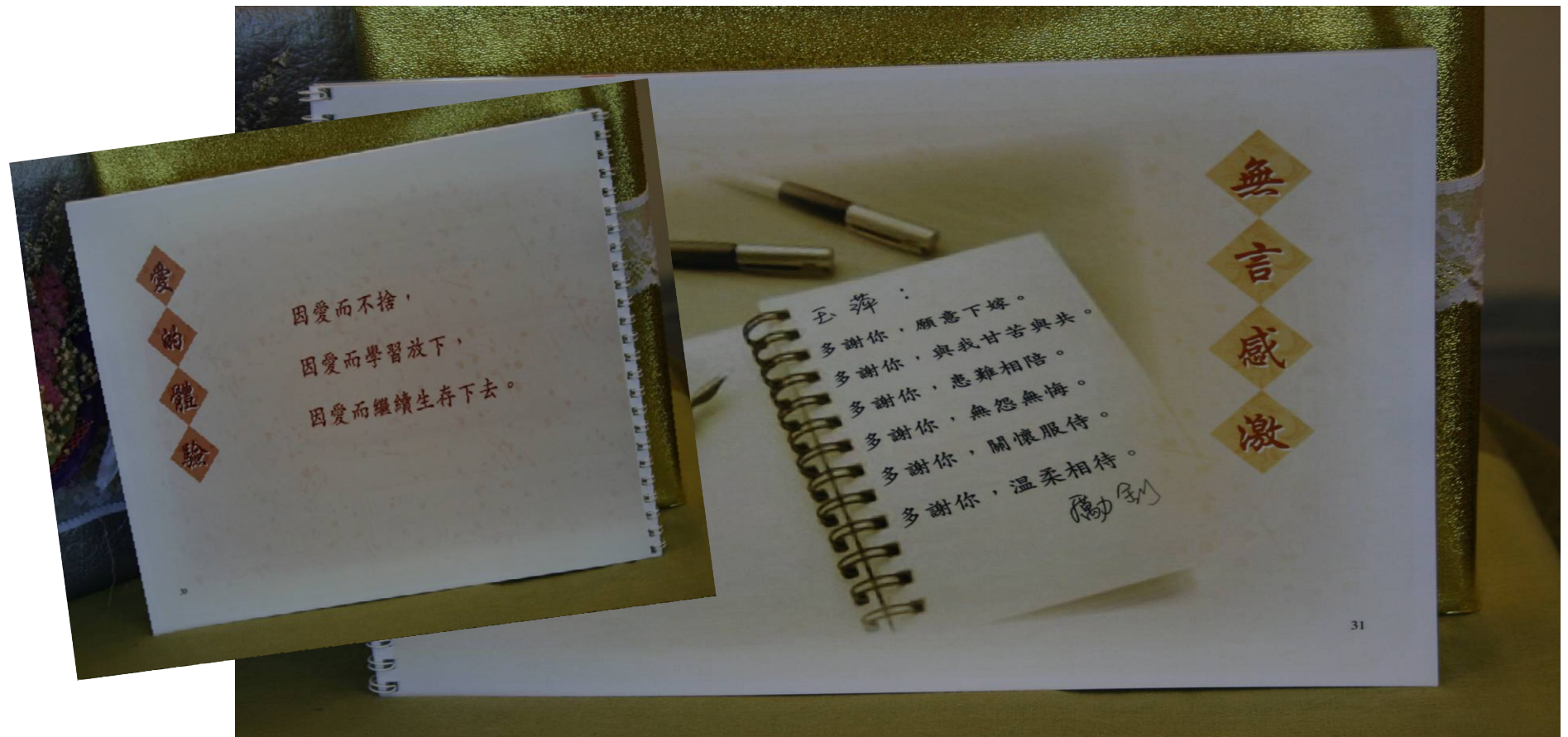
- Explore and articulate **virtues, uniqueness, strengths, meaning of life**
- Appreciate and affirm on what **one has achieved** and what **one has contributed**
- Express and share **lessons learnt** and **life wisdoms** that can pass on to others
- Involve **participation of family members** and **supportive network**

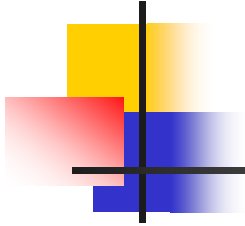
# Life story books





# 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*

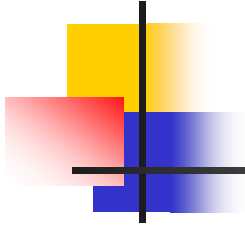
*The last visit*

Extracted from Jenko et al. (2010).  
Life review in critical care:  
possibilities at the end of life.  
*Critical care nurse*, 30, 17-27

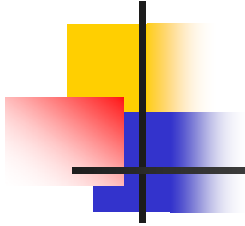
**Table 1** Prompts for beginning a life review<sup>a</sup>

- Tell me about a tranquil time or place experienced or visited.
- Tell me about a chaotic time.
- What was the childhood like?
- What about the teenage/young adult years?
- Tell me about family members/close relationships.
- What about best friends? What do you have in common?
- Tell me about an obstacle overcome in life and about the skills used in overcoming it.
- What have been the most important things in life? What is important today?
- Do you have any thoughts about death and loss?
- What are life's achievements?
- What are some of the most satisfying things in life?
- Has someone important ever gone away?
- Who have you admired, and why?
- Describe the kind of person you have been.
- What things have been most enjoyed in life?
- Tell me about your life's work.
- What were the happiest moments of life?
- What would you like to leave your family?
- How would you like to be remembered by your family and friends?
- What was the deepest regret or disappointment as a child or young adult?  
As a middle-aged or older adult?

<sup>a</sup> Based on Garland and Garland<sup>8</sup> and Black and Haight.<sup>16</sup>



# **WORKSHEET FOR MONITORING PROGRESS**



# **ROLE OF TEACHERS, COLLABORATORS AND STUDENTS**





# Closing remarks

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- 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).