Social isolation is a prevalent problem in older adults that was significantly exacerbated in 2020. Pre-clinical nursing students receive instruction on the importance of therapeutic communication, but historically without the opportunity to apply these skills. Therapeutic communication skills are a nursing competency, are essential to effective nursing practice, and can be learned. Therapeutic relationships are meaningful and healing.

Methods (continued):

- Semester-long communication-focused clinical imbedded in Sophomore-level, pre-clinical nursing course.
- Sophomore-level pre-clinical nursing students were paired with older adult volunteer/mentors.
- Communication occurred via telephone, FaceTime, or Zoom, 6 times (approximately every 2 weeks) over the 15-week semester.
- Students kept reflective journals, summarized conversations and compiled their mentor’s “story” using question guide focused on dimensions of wellness.
- Compilation of “story” was shared with mentor.
- Both students and mentors were surveyed to assess satisfaction and impact.

Results (continued):

- 148 pre-clinical nursing students paired with 124 older adult mentors (2 students/1 mentor in some cases)
- Students and mentors responded to optional survey following program completion.

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