



# Intergenerational Learning as Nursing Intervention: Social Isolation in Older Adults during COVID-19

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## Background

- 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

- 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.

## Methods (continued):

### Sample Interview Guide Questions

#### Session 1: Establish Therapeutic Relationship

- What does a typical day look like for you?
- What are you most looking forward to this week?

#### Session 2: Health Preferences

- Are you a morning person or a night owl?
- Do you have any health and wellness goals?

#### Session 3: Impactful Relationships

- Who are the important people in your life?
- What has been the best day of your life so far?

#### Session 4: Past Experiences with Purpose

- What did you first want to be when you grew up?
- What became your life's work?
- How did these experiences reshape your perspective?

#### Session 5: Present and Future Experiences with Purpose

- What do you do today to find purpose?
- What are things that you dream to do in the future?

#### Session 6: Wrap-up, Next steps

- Final Review: Discuss Session 1-5 and clarify any outstanding questions/clarification.

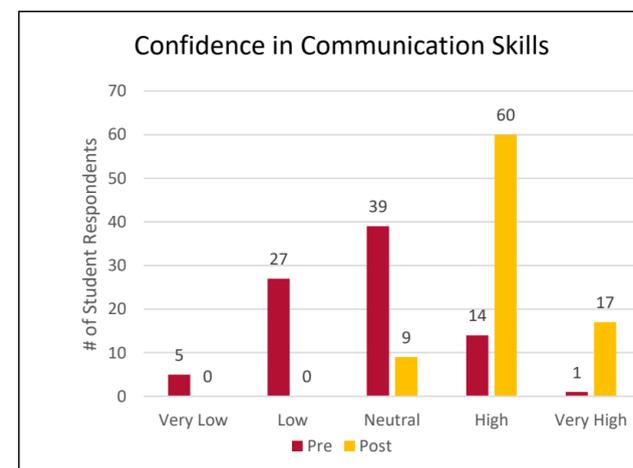
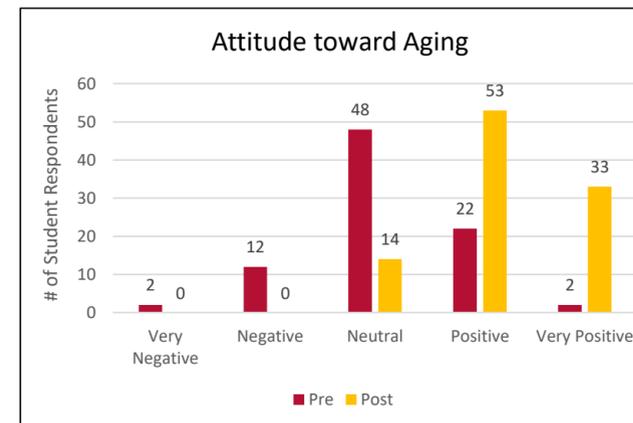
## Results

- 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.

## Results (continued):

### Student Perceptions

100 respondents; 67% response rate

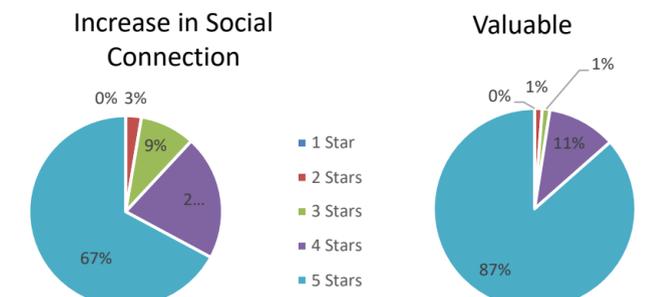


### Student Reflections

- "I had a preconceived knowledge [notion] that older adults tended to not travel as much ...my mentor challenged my stereotypes."
- "My bias to group all older adults into a category was put into question."
- "I assumed that seniors [older adults] were not interested or engaged in learning and keeping up with technology."

## Results (continued):

### Mentor Perceptions



### Mentor Testimonials

- "Conversations were so alive! Connections with curious young people fill my heart and soul."
- "It helped me get through the pandemic"
- "This was an awesome experience."
- "My student is a very smart girl and is very special. She doesn't only support me I support her by being there for her when she needs my help talking through different situations. I am so thankful to have her in my life and look forward to her calls each week. So happy I was asked and got to help out in this program."

### Future Directions

- It is our sincere hope that we will be able to safely implement communication clinical in person in fall 2021.
- Expand and build on this collaboration, with the possibility of extending nurse/mentor relationship over the full academic year for continuity and for maintaining longer term relationships.