

Chapter 1

Principles of Gerontology

1.1 The nurse is reviewing the discharge plans for an 84-year-old man who is to leave tomorrow. Included is a plan for quitting smoking. In discussing this with a co-worker, the nurse states, “I don’t know why we need to do this, he has been smoking for years, and he isn’t going to stop now.” This statement by the nurse reflects the concept of

1. senescence.
2. reality orientation.
3. negative stereotyping.
4. character assessment.

Answer: 3

Rationale: Often people characterize the elderly in a negative way believing that after a certain age, things cannot be changed. This is the concept of stereotyping in a negative way. Senescence is the process of aging, reality orientation is a strategy to assist individuals when confused or delusional, and character assessment is a process of identifying aspects of an individual’s personality and character.

Implementation

Psychological Integrity

Analysis

1.2 You are preparing to conduct a blood pressure screening at a local senior citizen’s high-rise apartment building in the inner-city impoverished location. In anticipation of the clients you will care for, you will most likely find which of the following characteristics of the residents living at this location. (Select all that apply.)

1. older women.
2. married men and women.
3. widowed women.
4. less educated women.
5. residents living alone.
6. older men.

Answer: 1, 3, 4, 5

Rationale: Statistics indicate that women comprise the majority of people (55%) in all nations and 58% in developing countries. Unlike men, women are also more likely to be widowed, live alone, be less educated, and have less years of labor experience resulting in poverty.

Planning

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Analysis

1.2 The nurse is completing an admission assessment for a female adult client. When discussing the social history, the nurse identifies that the client is a smoker (one pack/day for 20 years) and has worked at a chemical plant operating a chemical packing machine. When reviewing this assessment, the nurse would consider this client at risk for

1. environmental and occupational hazards that may affect life expectancy.
2. increased life expectancy because she is female.
3. no difference in risk because of her social and occupational circumstances.
4. decreased fertility.

Answer: 1

Rationale: Exposure to environmental and occupational risk factors has been known to affect life expectancy in men and will have the same affect on women given similar circumstances. Given the limited information on the chemical exposures, it is inconclusive to consider any affect on fertility or to assume that there is no effect.

Assessment

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Analysis

1.4 The triage nurse is taking vital signs of a 59-year-old African American male who has arrived to be treated for a laceration in his right hand. His blood pressure is 180/104. The nurse applies a dressing to his hand and plans for continuation of his care for the laceration. When questioning the client about his blood pressure, he states he did not know if that was normal for him and that he was not on any medication. In analyzing the blood pressure, the nurse decides

1. this is normal for someone in pain from an injury.
2. this finding is abnormal and presents an opportunity to initiate secondary prevention to prevent the progression of illness.
3. the blood pressure may not be accurate, therefore, it does not need to be addressed.
4. this patient needs to have his pressure taken in a standing position.

Answer: 2

Rationale: Although some people may have a variation in vital signs because of pain, this blood pressure reading is not within the normal range. A good strategy to control chronic illness and prevent progression and disability is to identify opportunities to diagnose and treat chronic illnesses. This scenario provides the nurse the opportunity to develop and implement a plan of care for the treatment of the blood pressure. The other options do not address this strategy.

Assessment

Physiological Integrity

Analysis

1.5 A client stops at the desk of his doctor's office to ask the nurse a few questions. He is a retired teacher who has just been diagnosed with diabetes and wants to know how to manage his care. While the nurse is going over glucose testing, he talks about how expensive his medications and healthcare have become. The nurse can best provide support to him by stating

1. "Don't worry, I don't think the total bill will be too much."
2. "I don't know anything about insurance."
3. "You only need to do this once a day so the supplies should last you a long time."
4. "I believe that some parts of Medicare will cover preventative care, such as diabetes monitoring."

Answer: 4

Rationale: Although Medicare does not pay for routine physical examinations, Medicare Part B does cover preventative services, such as diabetes monitoring. The client is stating concern so telling him not to worry or assuming that even one day of costs is affordable is inappropriate. Stating you don't know anything about insurance offers no support to the client.

Implementation

Psychological Integrity

Application

1.6•A nurse is caring for an 89-year-old woman who was admitted to the hospital for generalized weakness and a cough. The client describes in her assessment that she has to go to the bathroom frequently and manages this by monitoring her fluid intake, especially before going to bed. She has no pain or discomfort with voiding. The nurse may consider this finding

1. normal for a woman that age.
2. indicative of a urinary tract infection.
3. a sign of diabetes.
4. that the patient is drinking too many fluids.

Answer: 1

Rationale: Changes occur normally through the aging process. One of which is a reduction in bladder capacity. Given this is her only symptom, it is unlikely the client has a urinary tract infection, diabetes, or that her fluid intake is inappropriate.

Assessment

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Analysis

1.7•You are answering questions of a 92-year-old man's family who has been admitted for the treatment of pneumonia. His 32-year-old granddaughter asks you why her grandfather became so sick so quickly with the disease. She further states that she had pneumonia last winter and was never even hospitalized. Your best response to her questions would include

1. your grandfather must have chronic illnesses that put him at risk.
2. all elderly have decreases in the ability to restore balance to the body systems when challenged by trauma or infection.
3. there are some differences between men and women and illness.
4. I don't think you can compare your grandfather to yourself.

Answer: 2

Rationale: The loss of organ reserve that can occur with aging can lead to the concept of homeostenosis or inability of the body to restore homeostasis after even minor environmental challenges, such as trauma or infection.

Implementation

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Application

1.8•A client tells you during her admission assessment that she is taking several herbs and supplements. She states she read a theory about how this would help slow down the aging process. She asks you if you believe in this approach. In preparing to respond to her question, you would consider which of the following theories of aging?

1. cross-link theory
2. error theory
3. free radical theory
4. nutritional theory

Answer: 3

Rationale: The cross-link theory states that cross-linked proteins resulting from binding of glucose to proteins causes various problems associated with nutrition. Error theory is a category and not a theory itself, and nutritional theory is not one of the theories of aging. The free radical theory states that accumulated damage caused by oxygen radicals causes cells, and eventually organs, to lose function and organ reserve. The use of antioxidants and vitamins is believed to slow this damage.

Implementation

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Application

1.9•While making rounds on the unit, you find a 90-year-old client sitting in his chair looking out the window. He seems sad and depressed and talks about how his health has declined over the years. He was planning to do a lot of things after his retirement and now, with his recent surgery, he feels he cannot do anything. You respond to him by helping him to understand that these changes are often a challenge for the elderly with which to cope and adapt in order to age successfully. This response incorporates what type of aging theory?

1. biological
2. psychological

3. sociological
4. spiritual

Answer: 2

Rationale: Psychological theories advance that, as a person ages, various coping or adaptive strategies must occur in order to age successfully. The biological theories focus on physiological changes, the sociocultural focus on roles and relationships, and spiritual aging is not related to this client's concerns.

Implementation

Psychological Integrity

Application

1.10•A 62-year-old former professional football player is in the hospital for a total knee replacement as a result of osteoarthritis. In discussing the disease with the patient during preoperative teaching, you may consider the incorporation of the error theory of aging to help the client understand how the disease has affected him. The specific theory that applies in this case is

1. cross-link theory.
2. somatic DNA damage theory.
3. free radical theory.
4. wear and tear theory.

Answer: 4

Rationale: Osteoarthritis is characteristic of disc degeneration that results from joint usage. This disease is characteristic of the aspects of the wear and tear theory, which states that there is a "master clock" that controls all organs and cellular functions, which becomes less efficient over time. Abusing one organ or bodily system through repeated injury that occurs with contact sports may result in premature aging and diseases such as osteoarthritis. The cross-link theory is related to the accumulation of cross-linked proteins causing disease, the somatic DNA damage theory states that genetic mutations occur and accumulate with increasing age, and the free radical theory states that cell damage is a result of accumulation of oxygen radicals.

Implementation

Health Promotion and Maintenance

Application

1. 11•A nursing student is preparing a program for her peers covering health concerns for seniors. When planning the program, which of the following statements should be included in the presentation?

1. The rate of heart disease death for senior citizens is demonstrating an increase in rate.
2. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for senior citizens.
3. Cancer is the leading cause of death in the senior citizen population.
4. Decreases have been shown in the rate of Alzheimer's disease.

Answer: 2

Rationale: Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the senior population. The rate of heart disease is on the decline. Cancer is among the top causes of death but is not the number one cause of death. Alzheimer's disease rates remain consistent.

Planning; Health Promotion; Reduction of Risk Potential; Comprehension

1.12•The nurse is teaching a client about the need to take the flu and pneumococcal vaccines. The client states he is too old and there is little reason to waste the solutions.

Which response by the nurse is most therapeutic at this time?

1. "You are likely to get this disease if you do not take the vaccines."
2. "I will report your concerns to the physician."
3. "It is never too late in life to begin health promotion activities."
4. "I understand your feelings."

Answer: 3

Rationale: Taking the vaccines is a form of health promotion. The client should be advised that age should not restrict health-saving activities. While the client has an increased likelihood of developing the diseases if the vaccines are not taken, stating this does little to meet the client's voiced concerns. Telling the client you understand is not the most therapeutic response.

1.13•The nurse is working in a long-term care facility that embraces the Continuity Theory of Aging. The nurse is charged with developing client activities that will promote this theory. Which of the following activities will meet the criteria?

1. Develop a family night for clients to invite members of their family to the facility to eat with their loved ones.
2. Encourage the clients to begin exercise programs.
3. Plan a relaxing movie night for residents.
4. Arrange for a group of children to visit the residents.

Answer: 1

Rationale: The Continuity Theory of Aging promotes successful aging by maintaining previous values, habits, preferences, and family ties. Encouraging family involvement will promote this theory. Not all clients may have had a past interest in exercise. The movie night does little to promote relationships. The visit from children will not increase the clients' relationships with their previous values, habits, preferences, or family members.

Planning; Psychological Integrity; Analysis

1.14•A recent nursing school graduate is hired at an assisted living facility. During orientation, she reports she is nervous about working with the older adult because of the personality changes she has heard ensue with aging. What response by the nursing preceptor is indicated?

1. "The personalities of the elderly do undergo some significant changes after the eighth decade of life.
2. "The losses many elderly experience understandably will impact their personality."
3. "After retirement, feelings of disuse cause many elderly to begin demonstrating personality changes."
4. "Personality is relatively stable throughout life."

Answer: 4

Rationale: There are few changes in personality during the life cycle. Lifestyle changes, retirement, and death have limited impact on personality.
Implementation; Psychological Integrity; Application

1.15•A client voices concerns about her physical appearance despite diligently following a healthy diet. Which of the following age-related changes can best explain these changes?

1. Body weight increases after middle age.
2. Body fat increases until middle age.
3. Fat is redistributed to the hips after middle age.
4. The changes associated with body fat promote a pear-shaped appearance for aging women.

Answer: 2

Rationale: Body fat typically increases until middle age and then stabilizes until late life, when weight tends to decline. With aging, fat is redistributed to the abdomen rather than to the hips. This promotes an apple shape rather than a pear shape.

Diagnosis; Physiological Integrity; Application

1.16•A 60-year-old client in good health has asked the nurse about what steps can be taken to build muscle mass. What information should be provided to the client?

1. Exercise can slow the loss of muscle mass.
2. Muscle mass declines by 40% between the ages of 30 and 70.
3. Increasing protein and fat intake will increase muscle mass.
4. There is little that can be done to reduce the loss of muscle mass associated with aging.

Answer: 1

Rationale: Between the ages of 30 and 70 years, there is a loss of 22% to 23% of muscle mass. Exercise can slow this loss. Calories are burned more slowly during aging, and adding fats can promote fat build-up, not an increase in muscle mass.

Implementation; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Application

1.17•The nurse is planning a presentation concerning the Immunological Theory of Aging. When reviewing items for inclusion in the program, which of the following should be considered?

1. Hormones control the pace of aging, and their reduction will result in a decrease in immunity.
2. Some individuals are genetically programmed to have a markedly reduced immune system.
3. Reduced immune function leads to an increase in vulnerability to illness, aging, and death.
4. Anti-oxidants are linked to a bolstered immune system and improved response to aging.

Answer: 3

Rationale: According to the Immunological Theory of Aging, a programmed decline in the immune system results in an increase in vulnerability to illness and ultimately death. Hormones are a strong consideration in the Endocrine Theory of Aging. The influence of genetics is a part of the Programmed Longevity Theory of Aging. The Free-Radical Theory supports the influence of anti-oxidants.

Planning; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Application

1.18•A resident at the assisted living facility reports continued anger about the loss of her husband to a younger, more attractive woman 4 years ago. She further asserts this is responsible for both her physical and social decline. Which of the theories of aging is supportive of this position?

1. Jung's Theory of Individualism
2. Erickson's Developmental Theory
3. Disengagement Theory
4. Activity Theory

Answer: 1

Rationale: A key focus of Jung's theory is the impact of an inability to accept past accomplishments and failures to promote successful aging. Erickson's theory of aging suggests that ineffective meeting of the tasks of each stage of life will result in maladjustment. The Disengagement Theory considers the need of an individual to engage in society and maintain equilibrium. Activity Theory promotes the need for the older adult to stay active and engaged.

Diagnosis; Psychological Integrity; Analysis

1.19•An assisted living facility is targeting a group of residents at risk for cardiac problems. As part of the program, the residents are being offered blood pressure

monitoring, BMD analysis, and referrals to a nutritionist for counseling to reduce cholesterol levels. These activities are examples of

1. primary prevention.
2. health promotion.
3. secondary prevention.
4. tertiary prevention.

Answer: 3

Rationale: Secondary prevention activities focus on the early diagnosis and prompt treatment of health problems. The activities planned are examples of this type. Primary prevention and health promotion are the same types of activities. Their focus is preventing the onset of illness. Tertiary prevention activities are geared toward restoration and rehabilitation.

Planning; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Analysis

1.20•A client reports she has just become eligible for Medicare. She has been reading about her coverage. Which of the following statements indicates an understanding of the health plan?

1. “My Medicare coverage will cover routine physical examinations.”
2. “I am required to have a ‘Welcome to Medicare’ examination.”
3. “Because I have a family history of heart disease, I can have a screening ultrasound.”
4. “My plan recommends I have a mammogram annually.”

Answer: 4

Rationale: Medicare services have been expanded to promote preventative services such as a mammogram. Medicare coverage does not cover routine physicals. The “Welcome to Medicare” examination is voluntary. The availability of the ultrasound for at-risk individuals requires the client meet a series of criteria.

Assessment; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Analysis

1.21•The nurse is preparing a care plan for an African American client at risk for colon cancer. Which of the following should be included in the plan of care?

1. Fecal occult blood screening every 2 years
2. Flexible sigmoidoscopy testing annually
3. Serum cancer marker testing every year
4. Colonoscopy every 2 years

Answer: 4

Rationale: Currently, colonoscopy screening is recommended every 2 years for those at high risk. Fecal occult blood screening is recommended annually. The flexible sigmoidoscopy is recommended every 4 years. Serum cancer markers are not indicated for this client given the

information provided.

Planning; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Application

1.22• A recently hired graduate nurse questions her preceptor about the demographics on the unit. The preceptor reports that the clients and their diagnoses are consistent with nationwide demographics. Based upon your understanding, which of the following statements best supports this?

1. The African American clients have a lower incidence of hypertension than the Caucasian clients.
2. The Hispanic clients have a greater incidence of obesity than the Caucasian clients.
3. Diabetes is not a significant problem in the African American community.
4. The female clients with chronic disorders are more self-sufficient than men with similar ailments.

Answer: 2

Rationale: Obesity and diabetes are significant issues in both the African American and Hispanic communities. Hypertension is a common concern in the African American population. Female clients with chronic disorders are more likely to need assistance with ADLs than men having the same disorders.

Assessment; Physiological Integrity; Application

1.23•A group of nursing students is preparing a presentation for teens. Their focus is on healthful living. Which of the following statements by a participant indicates an inadequate understanding of the content?

1. The rates of disability are decreasing in the United States.
2. The majority of senior citizens have at least one chronic condition.
3. Respiratory disorders are one of the leading causes of disability in the United States.
4. The beginnings of chronic disease are noted in populations starting around age 30.

Answer: 4

Rationale: The onset of chronic disease begins in the second decade of life. The remaining statements are true.

Evaluation; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Analysis

1.24•The clinical facility has a unit that has a focus of tertiary prevention. Which of the following goals is consistent with this focus?

1. Clients with pressure ulcers will have whirlpool therapy as indicated.
2. Clients at risk for the development of pressure ulcers will be turned every 2 hours to prevent pressure ulcer development.

3. Clients will be assessed for the presence of factors that place them at risk for pressure ulcer development.
4. Clients will be taught to move in bed at least every 2 hours to prevent pressure ulcer development.

Answer: 1

Rationale: Tertiary prevention focuses on restoration and rehabilitation. Whirlpool therapy would be a means to heal the wound. The remaining options are examples of primary prevention.

Assessment; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Analysis

1.25•A recent graduate nurse wants to know what role he can play to reduce the gap between life span and healthy life span. What information can be provided to the graduate nurse? Select all that apply.

1. Provide education concerning modifiable risk factors.
2. Engage in tertiary promotion activities.
3. Encourage client participation in primary prevention activities.
4. Volunteer at a local senior citizen center.

Answer: 1, 2, 3, 4

Rationale: All of the responses are activities that can promote the health and wellness of the older adult.

Implementation; Health Promotion and Maintenance; Application