Transforming Perspective on Older Adults: Conceptualizing the “Silver Tsunami” as a Cultural Paradigm Shift

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## Faculty Disclosure

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Goals and Objectives

• Session Goal:
  – Recognize Older Adults in an interpretive paradigm.

Session Objectives: At the end of this session-
  – Identify types of ageism.
  – Define subculture and paradigm.
  – Describe older adults as a shift to an interpretive paradigm.
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A wave of 10,000,000 Baby Boomers

Corrects history professor
Remembers being there

“We all, at some point, grow old and acquire other qualities, and these can always be turned to good advantage.”
-Paulo Coelho

The Silver Tsunami
By 2030 there will be 72.1 million older Americans

Bigger faster younger higher longer softer

50+ Shades of Grey

Yet another reminder of our aging workforce...

EMPLOYEE PARKING

Mount Carmel College of Nursing
Ageism

Ageism Hurts ... more than you know

Ageism is the stereotypical construction of old age

MC
College of Nursing

The first thing some people notice is her age.

AGE
Ageism (Peterson, 1989)

Is unfairly limiting a persons access to certain valued opportunities and rights based on an irrelevant criteria such as age.

Developed by gerontologist Robert Butler (1969)

Term to describe a form of bigotry similar to racism and sexism.
Types of Ageism

Personal Ageism
Bias against persons or groups based on their older age.

Institutional Ageism
Missions, rules, and practices that discriminate against individuals and or groups because of their older age.

Intentional Ageism
Practices carried with knowledge of bias: take advantage of the vulnerabilities of older persons.

Unintentional Ageism
Practices in which perpetrators unaware of bias against persons or groups based on their older age.
Subculture Theory
Subculture is a group that has beliefs and behaviors that are different from the main groups within a culture or society. (Merriam-Webster, 2015.)

- Rose, Arnold 1965
  – “Older adults are better served by developing their own standards and their own subculture than by continuing to remain involved with the wider culture of their middle years.”
Paradigm- pattern of beliefs and practices not directly testable through research. (Jackson, 2015)
Types of Paradigms

• **Empirical** Paradigm- stems from one reality that is determined through the senses. (Monti & Tingen, 1999)

• **Interpretive** paradigm- phenomenon through the eyes of the people that live it. Contributes greatly to holistic nursing. (Jackson, 2015.)

• **Critical** paradigm- focuses on social struggles, domination, and institutions to rid oppression. (Weaver & Olson, 2006)
• “I can truly make a difference in an older adult’s life.

• “I fell like I value the client as an individual more. No one solution will work for everyone and it is important to find out what the client desires and expectations are.”

• “It didn’t seem like a nursing home. It felt like a community.”

• “I learned so much from the older adults that I can truly take with me forever. I am now open minded about the life of the older adult.”

• “There is always much more to an older adult than just a body. They have a past, a history full of wisdom.” (Mt. Carmel Senior Nursing students 2013-2014)
Ah hah moments...

• Need continued theory development for nursing education for older adults.
  – Resiliency
  – Age related changes/ wellness focus
  – See the older adult as a subculture

• Evaluate “what difference does it make?” rather than “is it true?”
  (Warm & Schroeder, 2012)
• Almost all of us will be a member of this subculture.
• Continued improvement of the older adult population.
• Development of change agents in classrooms and workforce about older adults.
When life is your life's calling!