

Communication Difficulties of the Elderly in Case of Receiving Bad News in Old People's Homes in Romania

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ABSTRACT: The elderly is a special category, and communication becomes difficult in terms of bad news. To maintain a good emotional state of the elderly, the specialist will have to appeal to communication skills. Good communication is a condition without which the elderly cannot receive this bad news under normal circumstances. Thus, by communicating well, it is possible for the elderly to ease their emotional state by encouraging them and training them with knowledge and skills to deal with bad news. Correct communication means that the specialist will find a way to make them listen with gentle words. Regardless of the bad news that the elderly person is supposed to receive, the responsibility lies with the person giving the news. It is very important to know that the impact of bad news is equal to the effect they have on the elderly. In conclusion, a practical definition of bad news is: "any news that seriously affects and negative perception of the individual on his future (***) 2012).

KEY WORDS: bad news, communication, elderly people, good communication

Introduction

Communication is vital for everyday living, especially for elderly people. Lisa Millraney the specialist in speech pathology from Vanderbilt University said, communication is not limited to listening and speaking. Reading and writing are also vital modes of conveying information, and as noted above, these too

can be negatively affected by elements of aging. Most communication changes of elderly people are gradual (Millraney, study.com/academy).

As for our communication with the elderly around us, our ignorance is very great. We often do not know how to communicate with our parents and grandparents. Usually, stress makes us forget and how to communicate nicely with our partner our elderly man who also has various needs and desires. The communication of bad news is an area of special expertise long studied and researched.

Content

No matter where we are in the presence of the elderly, we need to be careful not only about how we convey the bad news to them, but also about our body language. There is no middle ground here. In social care homes for the elderly it is important to speak to them in their mother tongue. It is very difficult to communicate with them in a secondary language. Then there would be a limit to communication.

The shortage of careers for the elderly in homes is very high in most European countries. There is also a lack of people with the ability to communicate with the elderly. There are no college programs that teach how to care for the elderly. If these disciplines existed in the curriculum and were thoroughly studied, perhaps these communication difficulties would disappear from the social care rooms of the elderly suffering from old age and loneliness or from so many chronic, neurological and mental illnesses.

Gary Chapman states that “in order to express ourselves, we need to use gestures, onomatopoeias, drawings. We can communicate but very hard. Linguistic differences are a component part of human culture. If we want to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, to learn the language of those with whom we want to interact” (Chapman 2019, 11). Currently, in Romania, there are homes for the elderly licensed on 19.07.2021 in number of 676 public and private homes for the elderly, with a capacity of 29,452 beds, under the methodological coordination of the Ministry of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family (Mmuncii 2021); Most public homes are located in Neamt and Vrancea counties. We must admit that the number of beds is insufficient for the elderly with needs for permanent supervision and special

care. A real assessment of the current situation regarding all social service centers for the elderly, institutions that offers assistance and hosting, or home care services, located in public or private administration, could not be performed because they were missing coordination of the approach, specific evaluation methodology, as well as legislative levers to ensure the provision of information you are right and their transmission, from the local level to the central administration (Roş 2012, 86).

If in Romania are officially registered in July 2021, 676 public and private homes, how many specialists in communication with the elderly would we need?! Andrei Pleşu said that you cannot refuse any form of participation in community life (Pleşu 2014, 43). Then how will we get involved in the communication difficulties of our parents, grandparents and our elderly life partners, what methods and techniques will we use and last but not least what communication recommendations will we give to help them more?!

The authors of *Communication and Aging* said, "People use communication to perform many functions in their day-to-day activities, including employment, social and leisure activities, community involvement, personal relationships, and meeting needs for daily living". Many of these functions change with typical aging. People withdraw from careers. Their social circles and personal relationships may change as they adjust their life roles and change their activity patterns (Yorkston, Bourgeois and Baylor 2009).

Many elderly people often suffer more from isolation, ignorance, marginalization, and lack of communication with others than one disease or another. Talking to an elderly person in a hurry, angry, bored, indifferent, without making sure that you have adapted to his understanding, level of culture, ability to receive, ability to hear, can hurt him, deepening his suffering.

Abuses against the elderly include psychological, emotional, or verbal abuse that refers to inappropriate language mentioned above, which is stressful and is added to others that an elderly person is forced to endure. This can mean a condemnation to psychological and social isolation, to the precipitation of psycho-intellectual regression, constituting at the same time an overload stress.

Effective communication is key when providing quality life care. The dynamics of communication of the team of specialists with the elderly people and family can be challenging. These challenges stem from the sharing of

complex information, highly emotional topics, and life literacy barriers (O'Toole, Alvarado-Little, Ledford 2019).

It should be noted that in all the concepts regarding the theory of needs, communication is included among the fundamental needs of a person, in general, of a person suffering and elderly even more so. It has been said that the complex human being is an indivisible type, whose existence involves psychological needs, communication needs and spiritual needs. They personalize the human being. Every person is a human entity whose needs and resources are individual and specific.

Therefore, human needs are presented as multiple and complex, the purpose of satisfaction being to obtain a state of well-being, comfort, and increase in quality of life protection. For example, healing or recovery may no longer be possible, but the quality of life is always a difficult goal to achieve when we want to live our lives with dignity. I have seen communication become so specific and intricate over time that family members and caregivers feel as though they've developed a new language, one that only they and the person with dementia can understand (Miller 2008).

In several nursing homes in Romania, religious assistance - another form of communication with them is provided by a priest who officiates weekly religious services and of the Holy Communion.

Socializing activities are a priority for communication recommendations. Here the elderly are advised to avoid situations of conflict with other beneficiaries, given that they have to live with another elderly person, a foreign person, with different interests and degrees of tolerance. It also intervenes to resolve conflict situations. Communication with relatives, the family is encouraged, through visits but also by telephone, thus reducing the feeling of family abandonment.

In Romania, there are specialized centers that deal with a large number of beneficiaries and the Ministry of Education, through its Institutions, train's elite specialists in the difficulties of communication with the elderly. According to Order no. 73/2005 on the approval of the model Contract for the provision of social services, concluded by social service providers, accredited according to law, with the beneficiaries of social services, a Contract for the provision of social services is concluded with each institutionalized elderly, which will include at least the clauses provided in the model contract.

The coverage of the full amount of the monthly contribution shall be as follows:

a) the elderly who have income and are cared for in the home owe the monthly maintenance contribution in the amount of up to 60% of the value of the monthly personal income, without exceeding the approved average monthly maintenance cost for each home;

b) the difference up to the full amount of the monthly maintenance contribution will be paid by the legal supporters of the elderly cared for in the home, if they make a monthly income per family member in an amount higher than the net value of the minimum gross basic salary in the country guaranteed payment, established by law (mmuncii 2018, 1).

According to the Institute for Human Resource Development, the course with Nomenclature Code of 5133.1.2, the occupation of Nursing Home Care involves a wide range of skills for carrying out the care activity.

Because the specific activities are carried out in permanent collaboration with the assisted person/family/medical team, the communication at the workplace contributes to the good development of the specific activities.

Workplace communication includes:

- ✦ Receiving and transmitting information
- ✦ Information structure
- ✦ The role and importance of communication
- ✦ The basic role and typology of communication
- ✦ Communication techniques
- ✦ Particularities of the assisted person
- ✦ Psychology of ages

The competencies acquired after graduating the course are first of all the communication at work and then the application of the norms of safety and health at work and PSI; ensuring hygienic-sanitary conditions; ensuring professional development; completing the care sheet of the assisted person; management of allocated resources; planning the daily activity of the assisted person; providing hygienic care for the assisted person; providing first aid to the assisted person; ensuring the comfort of the assisted elderly person; assistance with feeding and food administration; mobilization and transportation of the assisted elderly person; mobilization and transport of

immobilized assisted persons; compliance with and application of medical prescriptions; monitoring the health of the assisted person (IDRU 2018).

Alexandr Galitsky, a well-known painter, elaborates 10 rules of communication with the elderly parents:

1. Under no circumstances should you engage in controversy or quarrel with the elderly, do not try to convince them of anything.
2. Take matters into your own hands.
3. Do not remind the elderly about problems and pain.
4. Accept the elders as they are.
5. Put yourself in your parents' shoes.
6. Forgive.
7. Don't blame yourself.
8. Don't expect satisfaction from communication.
9. Show genuine interest in the elderly.
10. Analyze the technical characteristics of the elderly person (Galitsky, fasingur.info).

Conclusions

Before concluding, I would like to point out that we must not forget that each of us has grandparents, parents and partners who will one day grow old, and some of our loved ones may get into trouble, just like the people in front of us. To paraphrase the play on words above, let me say that just as children, we used to listen to our grandparents hear our childhood stories, we should now have the same patience with them when they tell, in a few words, the story of their lives.

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