**Psychology 171**

**Option C: Life Review Assignment**

A life review is a method used to encourage older people to examine and evaluate their lives. Numerous psychosocial and cognitive benefits are associated with participation in a life review. Telling one’s personal journey can reduce feelings of social isolation and lead to increased positive feelings as well as help the elderly see more clearly their purpose in life (Robinson & Murphy-Nugen, 2018).

In this current CoVid-19 pandemic, many elders may be impacted by social isolation. This assignment is one option to connect with an important elderly person in your life and to possibly provide cognitive stimulation, communication and an expression of love and gratitude. This assignment requires that you interview an older (65+) relative or acquaintance. An account of one’s story may be told through writing (i.e., email or letter form, etc.) or through an interview (i.e., phone, text or Skype, etc.) if face to face contact is not possible and/or advisable. Please make sure the person you chose to interview fully understands the nature of the assignment and willingly agrees to participate. This assignment will allow you to get to know your interviewee as an individual with a unique personal history. The interview and assignment can also serve as a “legacy” which may be given to family members or cherished as a gift bestowed from an elder who shares their wisdom. A list of life review questions compiled by Susan Bosak, founder of the Legacy Project is on the course site for you to select from: you DO NOT NEED TO ASK ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS (please see: Option C: Sample Life Interview Questions: Susan Bosak, Legacy Project).

Suggestions for the life review interview:

1. Allow sufficient time for the process of data gathering (i.e., several hours or consecutive days).

2. You might want to use your phone to record the information, however, some people might be intimated by this process. Let your interviewee make that decision. If you take notes, try and be as accurate as possible.

3. Assure the person being interviewed that he/she may refuse to answer any questions or that an answer be deleted at a later time.

4. Because you will be discussing old and perhaps sensitive memories, be prepared for emotions to surface. This is normal. Allow the person time and support. You don’t need to fix anything or feel guilty for asking the question.

5. Be empathic and nonjudgmental. Remember that the person is honoring you by sharing his/her life story.

6. There may be a tendency for the conversation to wander during the interview. Do your best to stay focused, but remember, this process is important for the older person.

7. Make sure to thank the person and even offer to let him/her read your transcript.

**Write-up and Evaluation:**

1. The first part of the paper, the interview summary, should be about 3-4 pages long (typed, double spaced). Be sure to introduce your person (i.e., name, age, where did their ancestors come from, cohort member, etc.). You may use direct quotations or provide a summary of the most significant parts of the interview.

2. The second part of the paper should be around 1 page long and should include your interpretation/analysis of the content of the interview. You might reflect on course content (e.g., how might the person been affected by ageism in your opinion). You might put your interviewee’s life in context and see how your person is similar to or different from a general pattern (e.g., your grandmother may not have stayed at home as a full time caregiver to children, unlike most women in her cohort). Also, what did you learn about the person you interviewed as a result of doing this project (e.g., their values, hopes for the future etc.)? What did you learn about your family? Yourself?

The written assignment should be typed and a maximum of 5 pages in length (not including the title page and possible reference page). Be sure to use APA formatting. A good reference is: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

**Due: Monday, March 29th, 2021**