

Teaching Plan of Arthritis

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## Introduction

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Approximately 1 (37.6%) in 3 adults with arthritis reported limitation in their usual activities. As the US population ages, the number of Americans ages  $\geq 65$  years with arthritis is projected to increase from ~21.4 million in 2005 to 41.4 million by the year 2030. Given the increasing numbers of older Americans with arthritis, understanding the role of arthritis in developing ADL disability becomes an urgent public health issue (National Institutes of Health, 2006) ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2006](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/2006)). Therefore, I will organize a teaching plan of Arthritis for the seniors of Center Light Senior Center. It comprises of Client Assessment, Planning (Diagnosis, Objectives) Implementation and Evaluation.

## Client Assessment

The assessment process was conducted among seniors at Center Light in Brooklyn. Approximately forty seniors, ages 65 and over, visit the center everyday. Clients come to the center by themselves, through hired private transportation. To begin my assessment I interviewed twenty of the seniors about their health problems, I found out that the majority of them suffer from Arthritis. As a consequence, the Physical Therapist at the center, expressed to me her concern about the low attendance to the Arthritis rehabilitation sessions. While conversing with the seniors, I had the opportunity to find out why they were not attending these classes. A few of them answered that they do not think that Physical Therapy is that important. Others explained that they feel more stiffness in their joints when they attend these sessions. They did not understand how the various exercises can help them with their conditions. Some were worried about their pain and thought that the sessions were causing them to feel more pain. Further, when asked about the type of arthritis that they have. They did not know what type of arthritis they had and did not really know how to deal with the symptoms. Some of the seniors also verbalized that

By the end of the week after teaching, clients will:

- Report increased attendance to the Physical Therapy sessions
- Verbalize willingness to continue the classes
- Report pain relief ✓
- Report increased mobility and energy
- Balance rest and activities
- Verbalize increased hours of sleep, at least 8 hours of sleep at night
- Follow prescribed pain medications
- Distinguish different types of Arthritis
- Use warm and cold compress to reduces joint stiffness

My teaching (presentation) about Arthritis will take effect at the recreational area in Center Light, and will be approximately twenty minutes. My teaching plan will be carried out as follows; I will give an explanation about what is arthritis (inflammation of one or more joints which result in pain swelling, stiffness and limited movement). I will describe the causes of Rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis. I will then reinforce the main concern about arthritis (Immobility). Another plan is too emphasize the importance of attending Physical Therapy, and exercise. I will stress things to remember such as, taking pain medication before pain gets severe, and before exercising. All of these will be conducted by taking into consideration the seniors' learning abilities within the Cognitive Domain (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis). Because most of the seniors have auditory and visual problems, I will speak loud and clear, and make eye contact while teaching. My visual aids such as pamphlet, booklets will be large and colorful to facilitate understanding of the material. I will ask them questions each time I finish explaining a subject, so they can retain the material. I will allocate

time as needed for them to provide feedback. I will include an anatomical model to show the different type of joints that is affected by arthritis. At the end of my presentation I will test their knowledge to ensure understanding by asking the following questions: what is arthritis? Describe the two types of arthritis that were mentioned? What is the importance of exercise, and what are the benefits of physical therapy? In this way I will know if they understand the material.

### **Methods of Implementation**

After developing a plan of care based on the assessment and diagnosis, and by taking into account the seniors learning ability (Cognitive Domain), I further assessed the client's physical and emotional readiness to learn. I assessed their physical readiness to make sure that they were not in pain, or uncomfortable. Also, I tested their emotional readiness to be certain that client were not sad or unhappy. The ways I tested these two readinesses to learn was by asking the seniors questions and by observing their facial expressions.

To begin my teaching I first asked, "What is arthritis?" Clients responded by saying that it means "pain in the joints." I then explain fully what arthritis is, and described two most common types of arthritis (Rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis). A gentleman verbalized that he has arthritis but he did not know what type. So, I further clarified with large pictures of the joints the difference between the two. Then the gentleman shouted with excitement, "Oooh know I know what type of arthritis I have, I have Osteoarthritis, thanks you so much for making it clear to me." Then all of the seniors applauded with enthusiasm. Until this point, the reaction was positive, and this attitude demonstrated that the senior was interested and attentive with the teaching. As the presentation went on, I then proceeded with an explanation about the main concerned of arthritis, which is Immobility, and the importance of attending physical therapy sessions. Some of the seniors seems confused, and reacted negatively by stating that, "if they go

to physical therapy it will cause them more pain and stiffness in their joints.” One lady verbalized that “she does not have time to attend physical therapy”. Another lady said that “she rather to stay home and watched television than attending those stupid therapy sessions.” The reaction was negative at this point. The seniors seem aggravated with this part of the presentation. So I moved on with encouraging the clients to use warm and cold compress to alleviate pain, inflammation and joint stiffness. Some of the seniors “nodded their head,” others yelled “oh yeah.” A gentleman stated “I am going to do just that.” One lady said, that her doctor told her to do that, and she does it know and then. Client reacted with willingness to use these methods to alleviate joint stiffness and pain. I also explained and encouraged clients to take pain medication before the pain and stiffness gets worse, and I advised not sitting for a long period of time, but while sitting move their legs and feet. Some of the seniors verbalized, that most of the time they do not take their pain medication because of the side effects (dizziness, fatigue etc.). Others stated that they take herbal remedies and does not need to take pain medication because they feel worse. At the end of my presentation I asked questions such as, what is arthritis. What is the different between the two common types of arthritis? What warm and cold compress does to their joints? Client was able to repeat what I had taught them and verbalized understanding of the material.

When I finished my presentation, clients was clapping, and expressed that they appreciate that I toke the time to teach them about their condition. Clients responded with great satisfaction. On the other on, in this presentation, there were no treatment involved because the clients have their own doctors; therefore, they were no need for referrals.

### **Evaluation process**

After teaching about arthritis I evaluated the clients' progress toward achievement of goal/outcome. I proceeded as follow: Clients behavior about balancing rest and activities was positive. Seniors reported getting 8 hours of sleep at night. Seniors also, were able to tell the difference between Rheumatoid and Osteoarthritis. Clients verbalized the use of warm and cold compress. Therefore, it is evident that these goals were met. On the other hand, during my teaching, several clients responded negatively when I emphasized the importance of attending Physical Therapy. Most claimed that if they go to the Physical Therapy session, they would feel more pain and joint stiffness. As a consequence, these clients did not attend Physical Therapy sessions. Clearly, this objective was not met by many. Another negative response from the seniors was in the area of pain medication. Some clients verbalized that they do not take pain medication because it makes them feel dizzy and tired. It is evident that this goal of my teaching was not fully met.

Clients come to the center by private hired transportation. The transportation picks them up and drops them off at the Center. Unfortunately, client families were not present during my teaching; therefore, I could not inform the families to encourage the clients to attend Physical Therapy and the need to take their pain medications. Thus, my recommendation to the Physical Therapist, Nurses and the Nurses' Aides who work at the center, is to emphasize the consequences of Immobility (constipation, obesity, and poor circulation, pneumonia), in order to motivate the seniors to take their pain medications and attend physical therapy sessions regularly. I will also talk to the director of the center to allow teaching on arthritis more often. Another recommendation, is to get families involve in the teaching, so they can be more inform about the clients condition, thereby reinforcing the need to take pain medications and going to physical therapy. In this way, the seniors will repeatedly hear the information and positively respond to

their condition by taking their pain medication, and attending Physical Therapy sessions. Further, I will recommend the clients to talk to their doctors, he/she can change they prescribed pain medication with one that may have less side effects.

Finally, by doing this teaching about arthritis through (Assessment, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation) was eye opening. I learned how to appropriately teach seniors within their domain of learning, how to teach within a multicultural group, and how to motivate clients to understand the material through implementing feedback. This gave me an inside view about the best way to teach older population in the future.

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