Helping Students Develop Empathy for Our Aging Population

Empathy (n): The action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experience of another. 

Empathy in patient care includes:

- Verbal communication
- Understanding nonverbal cues
- Spending time with patients
- Providing care

In 2000, a study interviewing nursing home residents reported that 44% of residents said they had been abused and 95% of residents said they had been neglected or had seen another resident being neglected. Geriatric patients who experience abuse, even modest abuse, have a 300% higher risk of death. 

Geriatric Simulation Suit

“Expressing care for another is not an innate ability present more naturally in some people than others, but rather a skill that can be taught and nurtured through a supportive educational environment.” We must help our future workforce develop this skill so appropriate care is provided to our rapidly aging population. Videos, curriculum and experiential learning tools like age simulation suits can help.

Geriatric Sensitivity Training

by attempting to recognize and empathize with patients, providers improve the odds of successful health outcomes like:

- Increased diagnostic accuracy
- Increased sharing of illness-specific information with patients
- Increased patient participation and education
- Increased patient compliance and satisfaction
- Greater ability of patients to cope with prescribed treatments
- Decreased rate of depression
- Increased quality of life
- Decreased illness duration and severity
- Decreased rate of malpractice litigation

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Health & Social Assistance Industry Growth Rate through 2022: 29%

Average Industry Growth Rate through 2022: 11%

Careers in geriatrics and gerontology are increasing... 

4 of the top 6 occupations with most projected job growth through 2024 deal with geriatric care.

- Health occupations and social assistance industries are projected to have the fastest employment growth and add the most jobs through 2024.
- $5 million job openings will be available in the healthcare and social assistance sector from 2012 to 2022.
- Healthcare and social assistance industry careers are projected to increase 29 percent through 2022, compared to an average of 11 percent for all industries.

We must help our future workforce develop this skill so appropriate care is provided to our rapidly aging population. Videos, curriculum and experiential learning tools like age simulation suits can help.

83% of participants were able to improve with the use of visual aging after participating in an age simulation suit experience.

95% of participants better understood the physical conditions of aging after participating in an age simulation suit experience.

Geriatric Simulation Suit

Joint Stiffness

Decreased Mobility

Decreased Visual Impairment

Hearing Loss

Decreased Field of View

Loss of Strength

Decreased Appetite

Incontinence

Joint Stiffness

Increased Mobility

Decreased Visual Impairment

Hearing Acuity

Decreased Field of View

Loss of Strength

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Incontinence

Joint Stiffness
STEP-BY-STEP PRINTING INSTRUCTIONS:
All PDF documents require the use of Adobe Acrobat Reader, which can be downloaded for free at www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html.

1) Open file in Adobe Acrobat
2) File -> Print
3) Under Page Size & Handling, highlight the Poster button
   a. Select tile scale of 100%
   b. Select an overlap of 0.005 in
   c. Select poster orientation of Portrait
4) Click the Page Setup button at the bottom of the page
   a. Select paper size to 11 x 17
5) Check your Printer Properties by clicking the Properties button after the printer name to ensure
   a. Color printing is enabled
   b. Single-sided printing is selected
   c. Page size is selected as 11 x 17
6) Click the Print button at the bottom of the page
7) Cut out printed poster and tape 4 printed pages together

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