

Soci3660

Tutorial 4 Creative Assignment

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For this assignment, I decided to interview my mom and ask her a couple questions about her caregiving duties she performs for her mother, who is an elderly woman living on her own. I related her answers to certain concepts we analyzed in our unit, "caregiving for older persons in families" this past semester. The following are the questions I asked, and her responses, and following that are a couple paragraphs explaining correlations I found between her answers and course concepts that we covered in the "caregiving for older persons in families" unit.

Are you expected to be a sort of "caregiver" to your mom today, and why? What are your caregiving duties? Was this something that you knew was going to be expected of you, and were any of your other siblings/relatives expected to do the same?

-I bring her meals, buy groceries, do her banking, take her to all appointments such as doctor, dentist, optometrist, etc., drive her wherever she needs to go, bake some meals for her and order some meals for her, take her out for entertainment purposes (etc. malls, church, restaurants) read her mail and translate all documents from english to her native language as she is not fluent in English.

-Yes I am expected to be a caregiver to my mom who is 86, because in the Greek heritage, most children are expected to take care of their parents when they are elderly rather than utilizing other options such as putting them in a senior citizens home.

-Yes this was something that I knew would be expected of me because my parents stressed that they did not want to be in a nursing home. When I was younger they would talk about how it was important to take care of elderly parents because my parents took care of me when I was a child. Also, taking care of my elderly parents is the least I can do since my parents have devoted their whole lifetime and energy to me.

-My parents had expected me to take care of them as opposed to my brother because they were brought up in a very religious, old fashioned, traditional lifestyle. They felt that the daughter should be the one responsible for taking care of their elderly parents. They would never expect my brother to take on any of these caregiving duties that I'm doing now.

Theoretically, would you consider putting an elderly parent in a nursery home if their health issues were severe, or would you take on the more time-consuming role yourself?

-I would take on the more time-consuming role myself because I feel that I can provide my mom, and my dad in the past with the best care and attention. Also, the reason is because I have taken my parents to every doctor's appointment in the past and know more about their health than anyone else and I feel that I would be able to make the best decisions regarding any issue that may arise.

-I would take a leave of absence or quit my job in order to take care of my mom now if she needed it because I feel that she should have a happy and comfortable life since she is in her late eighties. My parents came here in order for me to have a better life and I feel that they

worked hard and sacrificed a lot of things for me, so I want to do the same thing back to them and show my appreciation.

What kind of struggles does your mom face while being an elderly woman living on her own? (physical or mental) Would she ever want to go to a nursing home, in the case that her struggles were severe and you aren't able to care for her as much as she needs?

-My mom faces both physical and mental struggles. As an elderly woman she has arthritis, osteoporosis, vertigo and other health issues. She is unable to do things such as cleaning, cooking without getting exhausted and feeling weak.

-Since my dad passed away, my mom has been feeling very lonely and isolated living in the house alone. Also, the pandemic has put her into even more isolation because she is extremely anxious about it so she mainly stays at home. She also is unable to go grocery shopping as she is unable to carry heavy items and a lot of bags, and also is scared to go to public stores because of the pandemic.

-She would never want to go to a nursing home even if her health problems were severe. The main reason is because she has heard that it is a nightmare to be in a nursing home and especially during this pandemic. Her wishes would be that I would move into her house and take care of her on a full-time basis, and she would expect me to do this because she feels that she would not be disrupting my family by coming to my house.

Application to Course Content- Our Soci3660 unit on "Caregiving for Older Persons in Families"

For our final tutorial creative assignment, I decided to interview my mom about her caregiving duties for my grandma, as I know she does a lot of things to help her out in everyday life, especially after the pandemic started. A lot of her answers coincided with material and concepts we covered in our unit on caregiving for older persons in families this past semester. One of the concepts that we covered during that unit was the concept of caregiving being highly gendered, because when people live longer, the caregiving burden often falls on women. In the lecture we talked about how women perform caregiving for older family members to a greater extent than men do. This was clearly displayed in my interview with my mom, as she said that she is expected to take care of her mom who is an elderly woman, and as well with her dad when he was alive, and that this expectation was never shown to her brother. She said she knew that the expectation of caregiving would fall on her even before her parents needed it, since her parents were brought up in a traditional household and lifestyle where the daughter should automatically be the expected caregiver for elderly family members. This displays the concept of gendered caregiving, as there was a clear expectation set on my mom to perform certain caregiving duties to her parents even before they needed it, and the fact that there was never an expectation for her brother to do this is a clear example of how caregiving often falls on women.

As well, the concept of social reproduction in an era of neoliberalism that we analyzed in this unit is relevant to my mom's answers. Some ideologies of social reproduction in today's era of neoliberalism include putting family first, which is called familism, and the individualization of

social problems such as elder care and its costs. The idea of putting family first was displayed in my mom's answers, as that was the foundation that the expectation for her to perform caregiving duties was based on. She was expected to put her family first, and perform whatever duties were necessary in order to care for her parents when they needed help with certain things. This expectation was put on her from before her parents even needed any caregiving, which was displayed in her answer where she said that she would be willing to take a leave of absence from her part-time job in order to care for her mom if she needed more care, as well as her dad when he was alive. This clearly displays the ideology of familism, as she is expected to and would put her family above her job, and anything else. Also, the fact that her parents have told her in the past that they both would not ever want to live in a nursing home, displays familism as well as the expectation is clearly put on her to perform the duties that would be performed at a nursing home. She also mentioned in one of her answers that her mom has said that if her health got bad, she would want my mom to move into her house and take care of her, which again, displays the expectation of my mom to drop other things in her life in order to put her family first.

The individualization of elder care and its costs is also displayed in my mom's answers, as my mom said that she was willing to modify her life and drop other things in her life in order to suit the wishes and needs of her parents. This displays individualization as my mom is willing to take on caregiving duties on her own, without government institutional help such as a nursing home, as her parents have stated that they did not want to do so. She said she would take on all the responsibility, which includes the costs that come with elderly care, including monetary costs as well as personal costs, such as her freedom and time. This is a clear example of the individualization of elder care, and I'm sure there are many other family situations like this in today's society. As well, my mom also mentioned in one of her answers that her mom struggles with loneliness and isolation whilst living on her own as an elderly woman. In the lecture for this unit, we talked about how loneliness is somewhat associated with living arrangements, which is clear in the case of my grandma's, as her loneliness and isolation is caused by the fact that she lives alone and isn't able to go out and do many things because of her physical struggles, leading her to feel even more isolated. Therefore, many course concepts from our caregiving for older persons' unit are displayed throughout my mom's answers in the interview, portraying how these concepts can be put into play in real family situations.