

Social Patters in Canada: Visiting with the Elderly

Task: Visit a senior (senior means someone at least 72+) at their home and make unstructured observations about their home and talk to them about their lives OR visit a seniors' home, take unstructured observations of the home and talk with a resident.

Process:

- Contact a senior(ex. an elderly neighbor or friend's grandparent) or seniors home. Tell them that you are learning about the elderly and elderly issues and would like to visit.
- Visit the home (retirement or private) and conduct unstructured observation. Unstructured observation means write down all of the random things you hear, taste, see and smell. You aren't looking for anything in particular; you are looking for and at everything. What stands out?
- Speak with a senior and ask them questions about life in the home (or on their own) and life as a senior
- Write up your observations in a report

Possible Questions:

- Tell me about your life- When and where were they born, siblings, parents, school life, family life, things that were different to how they are now, if they married, had a family, kids, occupations, the changing role of the family...
- Their work life- Did they work or stay in the home, how they chose their career, what they did in their career, things they enjoyed and didn't enjoy about their job, how their career changed over the years...
- Their experience on aging- How would they describe getting older, challenges they have faced, adjusting to retirement, decision to move into the home, life in the home
- Their opinion on... Society today, the health care system, youth today, taxes, politics...

Report Format:

Your report will be 2-4 pages in length

There are two parts to your report:

Part 1- Observations on Aging

Part 2- A Life of Change

At the top of your report briefly list the location you visited, the time and what you did while you were at the facility.

Part A will be informal, will be a collection of your observations about the setting, the people, the behaviours of residents and staff, etc. and can be in point form. This will differ a lot based on your experiences.

Part B will be in paragraph form and should reflect on what you learned based on your conversation with a senior. Reflect on what the senior said to you. What themes were important in their life, what role did their family play, what wisdom did you gain from talking with them, what changed throughout their life.

Lastly what does this make you think about your life?

Rubric:

Describe the location you visited and their relation to you

0 1 2

Unstructured observations

0 1 2 3 4

Questions you asked your senior and their answers

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

What did you take home from this experience?

0 1 2 3