

# GPA Bathing: A six-unit eLearning curriculum to increase confidence and knowledge of final-year nursing students when bathing persons living with dementia



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## BACKGROUND

- Bathing can cause significant distress for persons living with dementia.
- Of all personal care activities, assisted bathing is a daily care activity that leads to the most responsive behaviours and reported as one of the most difficult activities to perform.
- Yet limited formal education is available for nursing students to learn dementia-specific bathing interventions.
- Nursing students often experience anxiety and uncertainty, and are unprepared on how to provide person-centered care to persons with bathing-related responsive behaviours in clinical practice.

## METHODS

**Purpose:** To evaluate the impact of completing a standardized online dementia education program on undergraduate nursing students’ self-efficacy and knowledge in providing person-centered care to persons with bathing-related responsive behaviours

**Design:** Mixed-methods, within-subjects, repeated measures

**Sample:** 4<sup>th</sup> year nursing students at Toronto Metropolitan University

**Intervention:** Participants completed the GPA Bathing curriculum between 2022-2023 academic year (3 units in Fall 2022 and 3 units in Winter 2023)

**Data Collection from Sept 2022 to May 2023:**

**1) Self-Perceived Behavioural Management Self-Efficacy Profile for Bathing (SBMPSEP-B)**

- Completed both pre- and post-GPA Bathing
- 20-item, 7-point Likert-type scales and open-ended questions about best practices (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.96)

How confident are you that when <b>bathing</b> a person living with dementia you can:	Not very confident			—			Very confident		
1. Collaborate with families to complete an individualized bathing history	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
2. Develop a personalized Bathing Care Plan based on the person’s past routines and preferences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
3. Invite a family member to assist with bathing if appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
4. Provide a reason for the bathing event based on the person’s routine history	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
5. Create a calm, private, and inviting bathing environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		

**2) Bathing Knowledge Test**

- Completed at 3 time points: pre, mid, and post-GPA Bathing
- 12 questions, multiple choice questions

**3) Satisfaction Questionnaire**

- 10-item, 7-point Likert-type scale completed post-GPA Bathing

**Data Analysis:**

- Paired t-test, one-way repeated measures ANOVA for quantitative data
- Content analysis for qualitative data

**\*We are still collecting post-GPA Bathing data so we are only reporting pre- and mid-GPA Bathing data\***

## GPA BATHING

Advanced Gerontological Education developed a Gentle Persuasive Approaches (GPA) Bathing eLearning curriculum to strengthen care providers’ knowledge, confidence, and skill to provide person-centered, evidence-informed bathing care. The curriculum, comprised of 6 units, was developed upon best practice bathing competencies identified in the literature and included video case studies.

### GPA Bathing Learning Objectives

By the end of each eLearning unit, the learner will be able to:

- Identify how the process of bathing a person living with dementia requires a relationship of trust, respect and support between the person, family and team.
- Recognize the importance of being flexible in the provision of care.
- Apply individualized bathing preferences to avoid known contributing factors to responsive behaviours/ personal expressions.
- Use GPA competencies throughout the bathing process to prevent and reduce behavioural escalation.
- Develop a personalized Bathing Care Plan using the GPA Bathing GOALS process.

#### 1. Foundations Unit

##### Building a Personalized Bathing Care Plan

Engaging Mrs. Morrison’s Family

#### 2. Shower Bath Unit

##### Applying a Personalized Bathing Care Plan

Including Mr. Bernardo Silva’s Family for Creative Approaches During a Shower Bath

#### 3. Tub Bath Unit

##### Using an Individualized Approach

Inviting Mrs. Maria Rossi for Her Personalized Tub Bath.

#### 4. Bed Bath Unit

##### Using Competency-Based Approaches

Creating a Personalized Bed Bath Experience for Mr. Charles Orlow Using a Towel Bath Technique.

#### 5. Spot Bath Unit

##### Adapting Continence Care

Integrating Mrs. Beverly Smith’s Strengths and Abilities.

#### 6. Team Spot Bath Unit

##### Adapting Continence Care

Collaborating for a Shared Plan in Complex Situations: Using a Team-Based Approach for Mr. Patrick Roberts’s Care.

## RESULTS

### Qualitative Findings: Pre-GPA Bathing

**Bathing older people experiencing responsive behaviours makes me feel:**

- Scared, anxious, and concerned about safety
- Incompetent, lack of confidence, and helpless
- Uncomfortable, stressed, and frustrated

*“It makes me feel sad & helpless that I couldn’t help the individual meet their needs.”*  
*“Unconfident, scared, bad nurse.”*

**Strategies used when bathing older people with responsive behaviours are:**

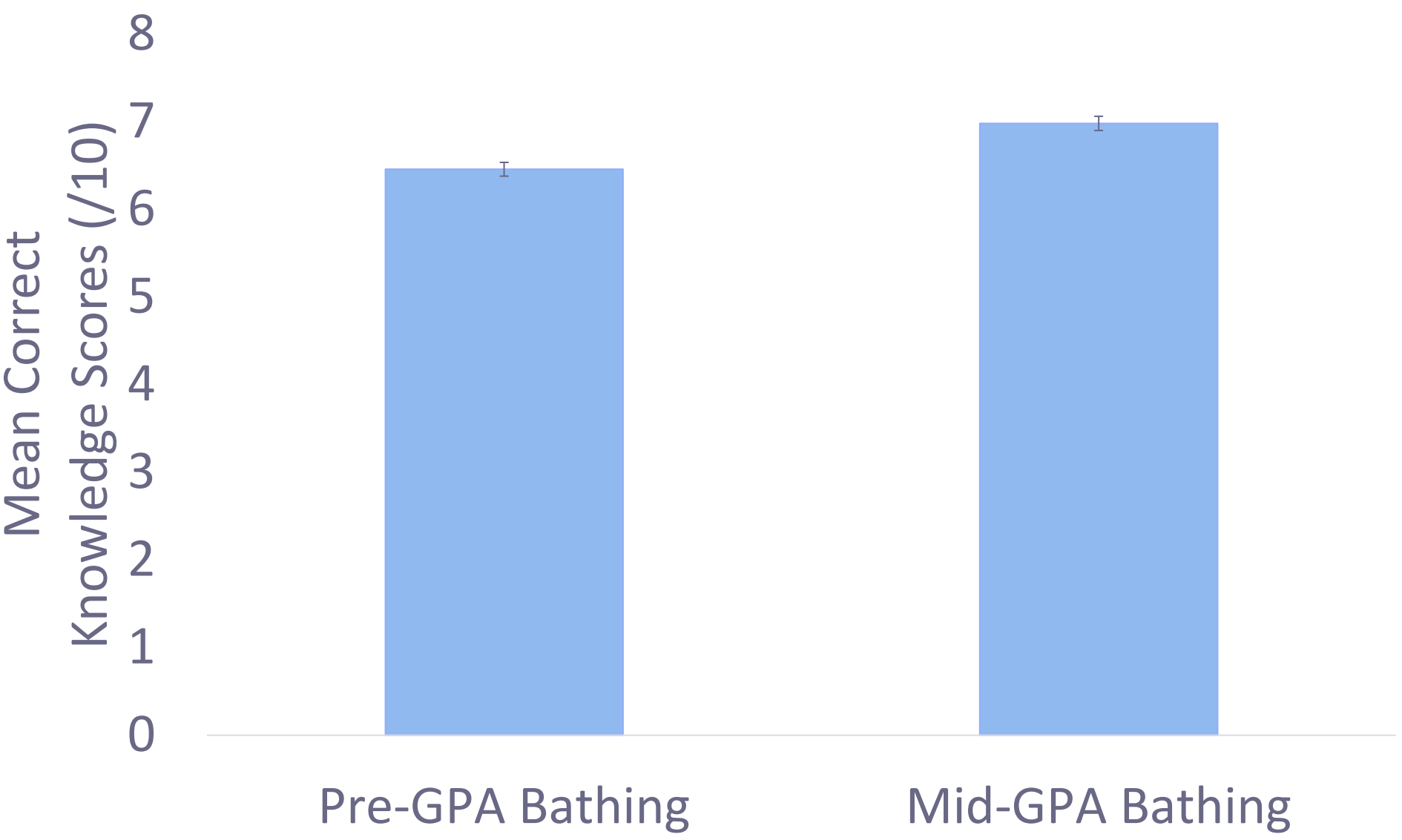
- Re-approach; leave and return
- Remain calm, take it slow, and get support
- Incorporate explanations, choices, and preferences
- Distractions and redirection; Basic communication techniques

**What students hoped to learn from GPA Bathing:**

*“To be more confident and have tools to address difficult issues.”*  
*“Correcting what I learned in the field that was perhaps not ‘best practice’.”*

### Quantitative Results: Bathing Knowledge

Midway through the GPA Bathing units (post units 1-3), participants showed a significant increase in their Bathing Knowledge Test scores relative to baseline ( $p<.001$ ).



## CONCLUSION

- Without adequate education, nursing students **will continue to perpetuate the stigma associated with gerontological nursing**, such as viewing caring for older adults as “heavy”, “dirty work” and “low-status”
- Caring for older adults are not preferred or viewed negatively among nursing students due to the **inference that highly scientific skills and care approaches are not required**
- According to existing literature, gerontological nursing is often the least preferred area of practice among nursing students
- GPA Bathing will not only help nursing students cultivate more confidence and knowledge in bathing care, but also will facilitate the development of **newfound understandings of the complexity of dementia care**
- The **eLearning component** of the GPA Bathing curriculum aligns with the current trends as education has increasingly transitioned to virtual platforms to increase accessibility