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## EDUCATION AND PURPOSE OF THE ELDERLY: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH TO SELF-CARE

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### RESUMO

Population aging is a worldwide phenomenon that marks today's times and has become an urgent research topic. The great challenge for researchers in the area is not only to collaborate to increase the number of years of people's lives, but also to contribute to the quality of life during this period. This research has as main objective to understand the life projects of the elderly participating in the research, as well as the role of education for the realization of these projects. It is a qualitative research that included the participation of ten elderly people aged between 55 and 71 years old, all linked to a Superior Education Institution (public or private). The individual and semi-structured interviews were conducted in two Brazilian cities: Goiânia and São Paulo. This work followed the ethical parameters of research with human beings. The data analysis followed the theoretical and methodological precepts of the Organizers of Thought Models (MORENO; SASTRE; BOVET; LEAL, 1999). The results showed ten central elements in the speech of the elderly: 1. having good health; 2. thinking about and taking care of yourself; 3. aging well; 4. being with the family; 5. studying / seeking knowledge; 6. helping people / doing volunteer work; 7. encouraging spirituality; 8. reflecting on mortality / finitude; 9. living in the present time; 10. retiring. One of the important considerations pointed out by the work is that purposes that transcend oneself are strongly related to psychological well-being and the experience of a significant aging process, confirming the results of previous research like the one of Colby, Bundick, Remington & Morton (2017). Our research shows that the act of learning is present throughout one's entire life and that the insertion of these people in educational institutions contributes greatly to the quality of life of the elderly population, especially regarding signification and resignification of purpose in life.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Education, elderly, self-care

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