

The Lived Experience of Women with Breast Cancer during the Surveillance Phase of Recovery: A Liminal Process to Healing and Recovery

Patricia K Amado
University of Miami, USA

Purpose: The purpose of this presentation is premised upon my hermeneutical phenomenological study on breast cancer survivors. The method of hermeneutics enables all disciplines to understand the narrative inquiry approach to research; what it is from a therapeutic lens; what uniqueness it provides in dealing with coping and making- meaning out of a chronic illness such as breast cancer and the art of story-telling as a venue for communication and a method to facilitate healing body, mind and spirit while battling a chronic illness.

Method: Through the use of narrative inquiry as a research method in nursing will introduce an innovative way to understand phenomena (illness) in order to understand the lived experiences of woman diagnosed with breast cancer and also those living in fear of the recurrence of the disease. It is important as healthcare professionals and laypersons realize the experience of what happens for women in the transition from health to facing a life- threatening disease. Narrative inquiry represents a better perspective on the story of illness that at times may be difficult to voice. A cognitive engagement of discourse in an open semi- structured format may give voice to the person within the context of their own journey through illness. With semi-structured interviews, the investigator will have a set of questions on an interview schedule, but the interview will be guided by the participants rather than be dictated hence the advantages of this method is as follows:

Objectives: Differentiate how the phenomenon of breast cancer and transition can be viewed from various paradigms: for education, practice and research

Understand the phenomenon of surveillance

Provide all practitioners an innovative method to address long term survivor needs

To introduce the concept of a liminal pathway which will contribute to the development and the body of knowledge in nursing

- There is an attempt to establish rapport with the patient which allows a richer relationship to gather personal experiences of illness
- The ordering of questions is less important as in gathering information in a history and physical (less empirical approach)
- The interviewer is freer to probe interesting areas that arise.
- The interview can follow the respondent's interests or concerns. It is a creative method of healing as someone is faced with a chronic and sometimes terminal journey.

Results /Conclusion/Findings

Quality of life is a multi- dimensional facet of one's social, spiritual and physical, emotional well- being. Breast cancer survivors face many fears, whether it is fear of recurrence loss of health and fear of dying. In order to treat each person holistically the healthcare provider needs to acknowledge alternative ways of healing for the breast cancer patient. Through introducing narrative therapy as a therapeutic way to express feelings one can make sense of this malady through the art of dialogue and may introduce new ways of learning how one builds resiliency in this specific population. It is an innovative method to help people transition to a better quality of life. A Liminal pathway through transilience, transition and acceptance with authentic reflection on illness was discovered. This has been an important tool in moving forward in life and accepting a higher quality of being.