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Cognitive behavioral group therapy to facilitate transitions among Icelandic female university students

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Introduction: The university years are generally considered a pleasant, though demanding period in an individual's life. For most students, this is also a time of transition through young adulthood and academic studies associated with multiple challenges. Further, students have been found to be prone to heightened psychological distress, especially females and younger university students during this transitional time. The middle range theory of transitions by Meleis et al. (2000) provides a framework to understand the nature of changes, challenges and reactions of university students moving through young adulthood and university studies. Additionally, the theory guides nurses in their role of facilitating change that occurs in students' lives.

Aim: The main aims of this secondary qualitative content analysis was to identify cognitive and behavioral strategies which may guide nurses in facilitating the transitional experience among university female students who experience psychological distress.

Methods: The sample included 19 university female students, aged 22-45 years, who were enrolled in 8 of 11 faculties within the university. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted two to four weeks following completion of a four sessions cognitive behavioral group therapy. The opening question was, "Please describe your experience participating in the CBGT sessions?" The follow-up questions were, "In your opinion, what did you feel were the most helpful elements of the sessions?" "Which were the least helpful elements?" The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Secondary deductive content analysis was conducted according to Graneheim and Lundman (2004).

Result: The findings of the secondary deductive content analysis resulted in the following three main themes which are in agreement with Meleises Mid-range theory of transitions: Nature of transitions, transitions conditions and pattern of response. The results will be displayed in more detail on a poster.

Biography

Johanna Bernhardsdottir completed her MS degree in psychiatric nursing from the University of Minnesota and her Ph.D. from the University of Iceland. She is the Chair and Director of research and development in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing at the Landspítali-University Hospital, Department of Psychiatry and an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Nursing, University of Iceland. Her main research area is university students' mental health and cognitive behavioral therapy.

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