

Retelling, Reliving, and Remembering: Using Narrative Inquiry Method to Explore the Lived Experience of Being Left Behind After Missing

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Every year 35,000 missing person reports are made in Australia, yet little is known about the experience of being left behind. Hope is a significant trope within media narratives in the search for a missing person, but what does hope mean? Further, what does hope mean when the person remains missing? In exploring the experience of hope for Australian families of missing people, the study presented here facilitated meaningful opportunities to listen to lived experience narratives. Storytelling, utilising a narrative inquiry framework, is a powerful tool used to build rich, layered understandings of the experiences of ambiguous loss. While previous research studies have centered upon individual interviews to gather data, this is only one portal for potential data collection. The study expanded this engagement of narrative inquiry method across three platforms, in-depth interviews, a virtual focus group, and then through an invitation for individuals to clarify their participation and experiences via Skype-based interviews. This methodological approach offered the researcher the opportunity to explore the stories in two ways: (1) by observing the ways in which participants spoke of their experience of hope through public and private narratives and (2) then more broadly between each other (within the group.) This presentation will explore this innovative research design and reflect upon the validity and strengths of this qualitative methodology to extract complex and unique data.

Progressive Qualitative Methodology Can Facilitate Participation of Aboriginal People in Research

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A criticism of research is that it is not equitable in its design or application, with an income gradient disadvantaging the poor and marginalised. In Australia, much research has been done on Aboriginal people, but Aboriginal people themselves have benefited little, adding to distrust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people over many years. As a non-Aboriginal researcher living in a community with a high Aboriginal population, this presents the challenge: How can I use my research skills to improve the health of my community? How does one take “scientific” research practices to transform them into research that can be done with a community rather than on a community? How can research findings benefit Aboriginal

people? I would like to share the approach taken in a recent study with several unique aspects influenced by coresearchers who are Aboriginal Health Workers. Reciprocity in learning about culture and research existed within the research team. Approaches to reporting, coercion, data collection using conversation cards and a conversation map, and culturally appropriate support for participants will be discussed. Imposing “scientific” research designs and practices on Aboriginal people and communities without consideration that each community is unique has the potential to cause further harm and disempowerment. I would like to inspire others to challenge methodological norms to come up with research methods with their community to allow the unique voice of their community to be heard, and listened to.

Pushing the Boundaries of Intercultural Research in Australia

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Despite the vast body of qualitative research on the experience of childbirth in non-indigenous women in the western world over the past 50 years, little is known about birth from the perspective of the Aboriginal woman in Australia. The overall image that emerges from the literature is high risk taking, irresponsible, unhealthy women with little regard for their own health before, during pregnancy and childbirth, and beyond. In this recently completed study, 10 Noongar women, from urban and rural Western Australia, shared their lived experience of birth over the previous 2 years. Analysis of interviews yielded the women’s own voices that challenge a healthcare system which fails to provide a culturally safe birthing space in a context of ubiquitous prejudice. Women identified the essence of birth, underscoring what is important to them individually, culturally, and collectively. Positioned at the cultural interface, this study describes a collaborative, power sharing model between the non-indigenous researcher and an Aboriginal women’s advisory group which helped to guide and inform the entire research process. Interpretive phenomenology afforded a basis for gaining valuable cultural insights that have the potential to inform clinicians, educators, policy makers, and researchers on ways to better understand the needs of Noongar women in birth. This intercultural research highlights a method of integrating Aboriginal values and ethics into interpretive phenomenology and thematic analysis, pushing the boundaries of traditional research methods and providing a conduit to foreground the voice of this muted and marginalised group.

Doing Hermeneutic Phenomenology: Illustrated Through a Study of “Being Aged” in the Everyday

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Phenomenology is a philosophy. It is a way of thinking, of questioning, and of writing. Therefore, understanding what makes hermeneutic phenomenology what it is is important when designing and conducting research. Yet numerous studies