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A hermeneutic exploration of how mental health nurses use solution focused brief therapy in clinical practice?

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Aim: The aim of this study is to report on the outcome of a study into the experience of nurses who had undertaken training in solution focused brief therapy (SFBT).

Background: SFBT was developed in the 1980's by a team of family therapists in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. Since then it has developed into an approach utilised in a wide range of situations including mental health care, education, organisational development, coaching, and justice services. This presentation explores the impact of training experienced mental health nurses to utilise SFBT interactions and focuses on the unique experience of participants in relation to their mode of practice.

Design: The study employed a hermeneutic design, drawing on the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, within a narrative framework. Individual interviews were transcribed and texts explored thematically and through the Nursing metaparadigm of Jacqueline Fawcett, and compared with a metaparadigm of SF practice.

Results: Through a prolonged immersion in the texts, a hermeneutic understanding of how the nurses utilised SFBT was arrived at? This was framed around the four concepts of Human Being, Environment, Health and Nursing and the way solution focused practice informed the Nurses' engagement with these concepts.

Discussion: The outcomes suggest that the experience of nurses who have undertaken training in SFBT is related to the paradigm of nursing which informs their practice. Where the nursing paradigm is of the assessment and delivery of care needs modality, SFBT training has little to offer the nurse; however, where the nursing paradigm reflects an interpersonal, dynamic modality based on shared relationships, training in SFBT can be a transformative experience for the nurse.

Conclusion: This study offers an original contribution to our understanding of how mental health nurses interact with their patients, and how mental health nurses can be empowered to work collaboratively with service users.

Biography

Steve Smith is a Senior Lecturer (Enterprise Fellow) in Mental Health and Wellbeing. He completed his PhD as a part-time student in 2015. His research focuses on the impact of training in Solution Focused Brief Therapy on the professional and cultural identity of nurses. His interests include the relationships within Communication, Language and Thinking, Philosophical Hermeneutics, the role of the mental health worker in primary and secondary care, and mindfulness based health and wellbeing.

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