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Quantitative or Qualitative? Chossing the Best Fit Method for Gaining New Insight about What Matters to Residents in Nursing Homes

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Quantitative or Qualitative? Choosing the Best Fit Method for Gaining New Insight About What Matters to Residents in Nursing

Nila Reimer, PhD, RN, CNE

Purpose

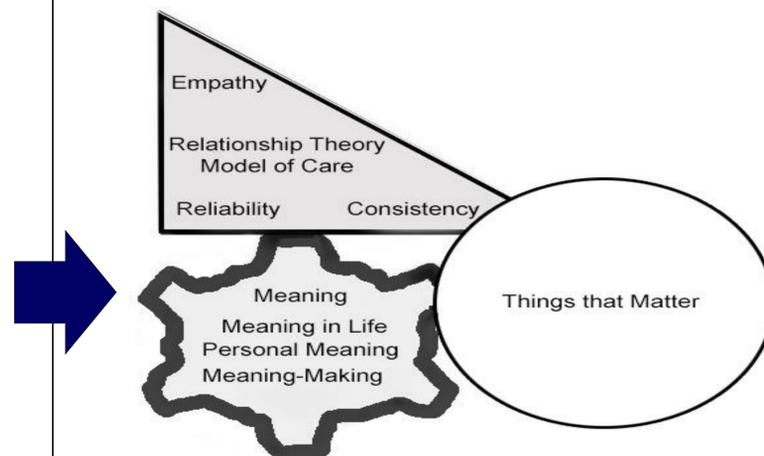
An intense focus on quality of care in nursing homes has led to improved resident care during the past decade largely because of integration of person-centered care strategies. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe things that matter to residents while living in the long-term care sections of nursing homes.

Method

A quantitative method derived from the Relationship Theory (Winnicott, 1970) measuring variables of empathy, consistency, and reliability was initially considered for this study. However, further inquiry about meaning-making for residents in nursing homes led to methodological questions:

- What if empathy, reliability, and consistency were not reflective what mattered most to residents?
- What if residents experienced quality of care as something different than empathy, reliability, or consistency?

Illustration of evolving research topic: Things that matter to residents while living in nursing homes.



Theoretical Frameworks

The Theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness (Newman, 1994) and the Person Centered Care Theory (McCormack & McCrance, 2010) provided guidance for developing a participant–researcher relationship and interview questions that promoted validity for this study. Expanding consciousness represents health when persons achieve person–environment interaction. The concept of presence in both theories provided guidance in understanding partnerships between residents and nurses.

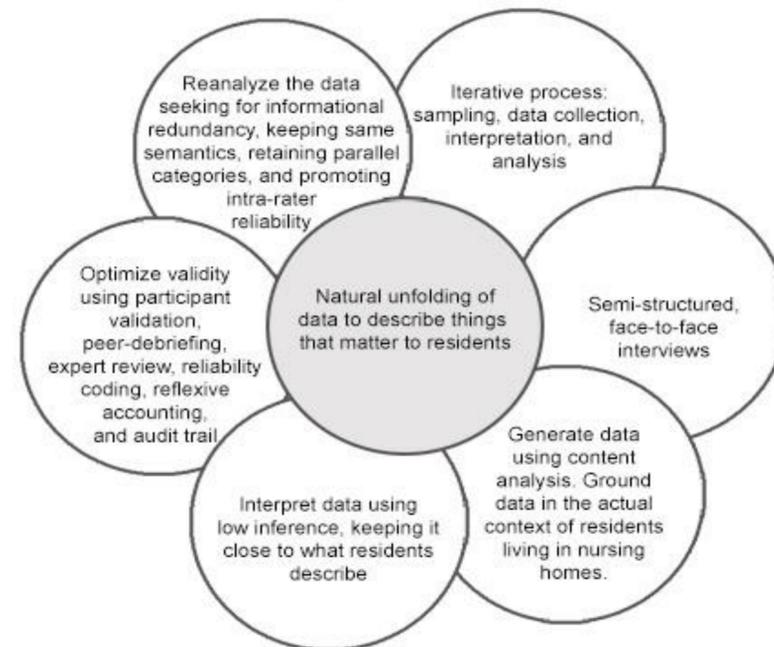
References:

McCormack, B., & McCrance, T. (2010). *Person-centred nursing: Theory and practice*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Black
 Newman, M. A. (1994). *Health as expanding consciousness* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: National League for Nursing Press.
 Winnicott, D. (1970). Cure versus care. In C. Winnicott, R. Shepard, & M. Davis (Eds.), *Home is where we start from* (pp. 112–120). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Research Questions

- The decision to use a qualitative research design emerged during the research process.
- What are things that matter in the words of the residents?
- What makes these things matter to residents?
- What things that matter to residents in nursing homes may be included in their care?
- Are things that matter to residents captured in current person-centered care practices in nursing homes?

The qualitative description method is an iterative process using low-inference interpretation.



Findings

Although empathy, consistency, and reliability surfaced in the data findings, residents’ descriptions of additional aspects divulged a powerful message: Positive and negative things that mattered to residents influenced their well-being while living in the nursing homes. Four meaningful clusters of data emerged from the interviews:

- Accepting life in the nursing home
- Enduring loss
- Relishing good care
- Getting by