

The experience of aging in a nursing home: Biographies and dominant discourses of aging in different social contexts.

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Abstract

In the present dissertation, the researcher studies the aging experience in a nursing-care home while working as a psychologist in the same institution. Methodologically, she uses “Narrative Gerontological Analysis” by interviewing elderly residents and making participatory observations. This dual role raises ethical concerns about whether the position of authority in the elderly center (psychologist) is affecting this specific vulnerable population. But through theories such as “Levina's ethics” and “self-subjugation” according to Foucault, her dual role will not be approached as divided, but as a single-holistic role, in which the implementation of a holistic care is a key concern. Specifically, the researcher, both before and at the end of the research process, establishes a continuous relationship with the participants, based on the ethics principle, according to Levina.

The research aims, to understand the effective functioning of the narratives of the participants in relation to experience “aging in a nursing home”. According to literature, narratives help individuals who live in an elderly center, to build a cohesive self in the present, or resist to various forms of oppression. This transcendental analysis states that individuals in their narratives are not pathetic carriers of the dominant Discourses, but at the same time they express their knowledge resistance to them and deconstruct them. By giving individuals the opportunity to relate their experiences, the researcher recognizes their need for resistance against dominant Discourses of aging, aiming to create a quality of life that is not defined by social stereotypes about “successful aging” but it is created from the voices of elderly people themselves.

2016 she is working as a psychologist in elderly centers in Norway and Greece. She has presented 6 research projects in conferences around Europe and her research interests includes: the experience of elderly population living in nursing homes, the experiences of elderly people who define themselves as drug users and the experience of elderly people who identify themselves as members of the Lgbt+ community.

Speaker Publications:

1. Morgan Ames, Janet Go, Jofish Kaye, and Mirjana Spasojevic. 2010. Making love in the network closet: The benefits and work of family videochat. In Proceedings of Computer Supported Cooperative Work 2010.
2. Trent Apted, Judy Kay, and Aaron Quigley. 2006. Tabletop sharing of digital photographs for the elderly.
3. Shirley Ann Becker. 2004. A study of web usability for older adults seeking online health resources.
4. Jarg Bergold and Stefan Thomas. 2012. Participatory research methods: A methodological approach in motion. Forum: Qual. Soc. Res. 13
5. John Bond, Peter Coleman, and Sheila Peace (Eds.). 1993. Ageing in Society: An Introduction to Social.

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Biography:

Theodora Aligizaki has completed her BSc and MSc degrees in the field of Psychology and nowadays she is a Phd Student in the field of Sociology focusing on Social Gerontology. Since