Title: Physical/Mental illness and Well-Being, Emotions and Meaning: Re-conceptualizing the Medical Healing Relationship Model for Holistic Health and Wellness

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By nature, humans are "sentient" beings translating emotional needs and desires through social interaction into ways of meeting those needs and desires. Human experience is physical and psychological, which includes emotions and meaning. An existential perspective of health care embraces how illness/health are conceptualized, experienced, what it “means”, and how it shapes the sense of self. Existential refers to existence, the specific mode of “being”, such as illness/health. When illness occurs, people want to know why this is happening, what it means to their existence. Camus (1951) suggest “suffering“ has to have meaning, “It is not the suffering of the child that is repugnant in itself, but the fact that the suffering is not justified…. In the eyes of the rebel, what is missing from the misery of the world, as well as from its moment of happiness, is some principle by which they can be explained.” Affliction must have meaning for healing and wholeness. It is this pursuit of meaning in one’s life, directly influencing life, living, suffering, and death, which is missing in the medical model. While the “medical” model heals the body, “restorative” holistic health care must be reframed to include emotions and meaning. An exploratory study found “cyclical patients” in physical therapy attributed some “meaning” to their illness. The results suggest the cyclical pattern presented in 33% of the participants has an emotional connection to their illness. The implications maybe that the “medical model” is not enough to treat the psychological framework of health and meaning.

Biography

Dr Smith, 41 years of social work practice, administration, and teaching; Wyoming Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Kansas Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker; Member - Council on Social Work Education, National Association of Social Workers, Academy of Certified Social Workers.

Publications - *Race, Gender & Class*, *Journals of Social Work Values and Ethics*, *Nursing Scholarship*, *International Journal of the Humanities*, *International Journal of Learning*; *Forum on Public Policy: Journal of the Oxford Round Table*, *International Journal of Diversity in Communities, Organizations and Nations*. Presentations - Universities of Granada and Barcelona-Spain; Cambridge and Oxford Universities-England, University of Waterloo-Canada, & Queen’s College-Belfast/Northern Ireland.

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