B1-29: Epiphanies and Wellness: The Lived Experience

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Abstract:
Introduction: Little scientific knowledge is available about transformative epiphanies. In-depth explanation of epiphanies in terms of how they occur and their outcomes will lead to more definitive implications for their constructive use in nursing. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experience of epiphanies and how they impact wellness. Specific research questions were: (1) What is the lived experience of an epiphany? (2) How is wellness altered as result of an epiphany?

Method(s): Descriptive phenomenology with purposive sampling was utilized. Interviews were conducted to achieve saturation. Data collection occurred at a location selected by the participant and included audio-taped interviews, which were then transcribed. Data was analyzed using Colazzi’s method. To ensure trustworthiness, two experienced qualitative researchers verified adherence to the process and identification of themes. Six participants validated the findings. A major limitation of this study was the homogenous sample, which may not reflect experiences of other socio-economic or ethnically diverse groups.

Results: The final sample included 5 females and 2 males, all Caucasian, ranging in age 24-64. Nine themes were identified, including: Balance Lost; Internal Experience/External Motivation = Pre-Load for Change Experience; Transformation Occurs; Knowing with Certainty; Hope in I Can creates Committed Action; Solidifying Experience; Freedom and Healing; and Illuminating the Experience
**Discussion & Conclusions:** Though participant problems were diverse the epiphany process was similar. All participants found healing after an epiphany occurred. A journey towards wellness was initiated post epiphany and continues 18 months to 24 years later. A major finding was the significant role that shame played in the process. Implications for nursing practice include: recognizing the role that shame plays in health behaviors; the importance of acceptance by health care providers; the potential impact of seemingly mundane interactions with patients; and the critical role that support plays in maintaining behavior changes. Future research will focus on investigating shame and its impact on wellness behaviors.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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