

Review of the book *Caring for madness: The role of personal experience in the training of mental health nurses*

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CARING FOR MADNESS: THE ROLE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN THE TRAINING OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

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This book is written for nurse educators responsible for teaching mental health nurses. Extensive interviews and group discussions of 86 current and former mental health student nurses were analyzed into several themes relating to the students' educational program in the U.K.

The author begins with a brief introduction of existential phenomenology based on Heidegger (p. 3). The philosophy of existential phenomenology is the basis for this book. Following the introduction of existential phenomenological philosophy, the author places the study in a historical context by describing the ancient views of madness from the Vedic time, Egyptian history, Greek civilization, and the period of Enlightenment. The author describes the continuities and contradictions in the care of mental illness throughout time. In addition, a brief review of the asylum attendant is included as a prelude to the study of student nurses' experiences.

In a carefully organized manner, the author describes the study background including the rationale for the study, the clinical environment and U.K. training system, the study participants' backgrounds, and description of the presentation of the data, and organizing themes. The extensive themes were outlined with several quotations from student participants illustrating each theme. Concluding each theme were several implications for nurse educators. The author concluded the book by offering a beginning philosophy of mental health care based on the research findings and the historical context of care.

The research findings clearly evaluate the student teaching-learning experience in both clinical and classroom settings of the mental health student nurse program. The words of the students were powerful and could be used to change, revise, and augment aspects of their educational experience from a curricular perspective. An additional strength of the book was the historical perspective formed by the section on the history of madness. The author's discussion on the dichotomy between the scientific/medical model of mental illness and the social/ethical model of personal responsibility was also a strong point in the book.

Limitations of the book include a limited literature review on the experience of student nurses in training and the method of data analysis of the study results. It was unclear how the study fit into the current body of research and whether the literature was reviewed at the beginning of the research or at the end. The last chapter of the book (the author's philosophy of mental health nursing care) includes a small body of research, but its placement within the study is not clear. The method of data analysis was not clear. Both grounded theory and phenomenology were mentioned; however, the findings were reported in more of a content analysis format.

This book has wider applications other than those of mental health nurse educators. The material could be useful to other nurse educators, especially in the U.K. educational system. The author highlighted the educational system for non-U.K. educators, lending an increased understanding of an educational system different from the U.S. (that of the reviewer).