

A Hermeneutic Photography Study of the Experience of Hope and Aging

Final Report for Sigma Theta Tau International

by

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Abstract for Final Report for STTI

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Aging successfully is a topic that has been targeted in recent years. Given the increased life expectancies in North America, and the graying of the population, increased efforts are being directed at what it is that helps people age successfully. A key ingredient in this process is the role that hope plays in helping people live meaningful lives as they age.

A hermeneutic photography method was used to explore how older adults experience and live hope in their day to day lives. Older adults were asked to photograph how they lived and experienced hope and were then interviewed using the photographs as interview prompts. Phillipps (2000) offers support for the significance of photography in research when she says that "photography gives us a chance to say, in more than words alone, what we believe in, where we stand. It is a form of expression that reveals not only who we are, but how the world appears through our eyes" (Phillips, 2000, p. 44). It is this perspective of hope, that which reveals where the older person stands, how they experience it, and how it appears through their eyes, that was the focus of this study.

An important discovery in this research was to observe that in every situation, the invitation to participate in the study generated reflection about what hope is. There was a very specific and intentional turn towards thinking about and reflecting on hope, what it means to live hope and the significance of hope to living a meaningful life in later years.

Thematic analysis revealed that these study participants lived a philosophy of hope embodied in an attitude of hope that says that “in the depths of despair there’s a feeling that there has to be something better”. When one is living hope, there is a feeling of safety. There is a belief that one has some control even in difficult circumstances. Nurses working with older adults have a unique opportunity to intentionally nurture hope or to assist them in finding and maintaining hope in their lives if it has been misplaced. The camera can capture things at times that are not accessible to researchers such as the events of day to day life → moments of joy, or grief or just greeting the day and how that is done.

**Financial Summary for STTI Research Grant
By Sharon Moore**

For: A Hermeneutic Photography Study of the Experience of Hope and Aging

ITEM	COST	
Supplies (paper, audio tapes, DVD's, CD's, postage, digital recorder, printing, printer cartridges, mailing envelopes, postage)		\$ 680.00
Secretarial support for transcribing audio tapes (30 hours of interviews x 4 hours transcription time per interview)	120 x \$15/hour	1800.00
Travel Costs (mileage and parking) 5 trips to Edmonton for data collection and meetings with consultant(360 miles per round trip), Travel to research sites in Calgary	Total 3000 km x.45 (1825 miles)	1350.00
Long Distance Charges (during data collection and analysis phase for consultation)		20.00
Disposable cameras	15x\$10.00	150.00
Photo developing costs for 15 cameras	15x \$11.00	165.00
Reprints for participants		100.00
Consultant Fees		
1. Technology Consultant	12 hours x \$50.00/hour	600.00
2. Hope/photography/research expert consultant	12 hours x 50.00/hour	600.00
Finding Hope Books for Participants	15 x \$10.00	150.00
Total Expenses		\$5465.00