

ABSTRACT

Title: Our histories make us what we are. Life meaning and transformative learning living with Parkinson disease.

Key-Words: transformative learning, lifelong learning and lifelong illness, life meaning, Parkinson Disease, qualitative research.

Transformative learning is an adult learning theory about the way how a person makes meaning of life experience. As noted by Mezirow (2009) transformative learning is *“learning that transforms problematic frames of reference to make them more inclusive, discriminating, reflective, open emotionally able to change”* To know the diagnosis of a chronic neurodegenerative disease, as Parkinson disease (PD), could be an experience of a process of transformative learning involving significant components of distress, reflection, emerging sense of change in perspectives, new behaviors. Learning about the disease can empower people, but also a sense of uncertainty about the progression of the illnesses might be a constant emotion that needs to be acknowledged. Learning can be anxiety producing so health educators need to use multiple methods to address individuals' learning styles (Boyde, Tuckett, Peters, Thompson, Turner, and Stewart, 2009). As we know learning is integral to coping with chronic disease and it is important to use with patients with PD their experiences as learners to understand the influence of different events, emotions and beliefs over their life course.

Our study aim is to describe the role of learning in coping with Parkinson disease and to identify the relationship between lifelong learning and lifelong illness.

The current study is a qualitative study and use face-to-face in-depth interviews that will be followed by content analysis.

We propose to present a case study of 62 years old male with 11 years of diagnosis of Parkinson disease and 14 years of experienced perceived symptoms.

Interview content analysis reveals that diagnosis of Parkinson disease and subsequent learning involves emotions, positive and negative affects; learning is a social activity and occurs in social context: work environment and with colleagues, friends, family, other patients with Parkinson disease, engagement in patient association (e.g. APDPk) events and activities oriented by therapists.

Our participant with PD engages with various types of learning that occur in social context, which makes learner's experience unique. Health professionals, namely therapists are or can be resources for chronically ill self-directed learner and should be aware and understand the role of incidental, informal and problem-based learning in the life of an adult learner in a coping process.