

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was primarily explored and described the lived experiences of culturally diverse mental health nurses working in Qatar. They were purposively selected using the following criteria: a) worked in a female unit of a psychiatric facility for at least three years, b) worked in at least two different countries and 3) consented to take part in the study. Data collection was done through series of interview utilizing open-ended guide questions. Data analysis was done utilizing Collaizi's phenomenological approach.

The study findings generated four central themes, namely: 1) The workplace environment, 2) Challenges and struggle, 3) Adaptation strategies and 4) Rewarding career. The findings revealed the following: 1) that aggression and violence from patients and families are the common sentiment among the participants which they attributed to noisy environment and small space; 2) that language barrier is one of the major challenges encountered by the participants in the workplace; 3) that the use of therapeutic interventions as well as vigilance are the most common means of handling the unpredictability of the patients' actions while teamwork is one of their aces in working in the acute unit, when dealing with their culturally diverse peers/ coworkers; and 4) that their job as psychiatric or mental health nurse to be fulfilling although risky, not only because of the monetary benefits but also the personal fulfillment and professional growth they derived from being a mental health nurse. With these results, the study concluded that professional and personal rewards outweigh the multitude of challenges and occupational risks of mental health nurses. The author recommended that psychiatric nurses should continuously learn and explore other therapeutic methods by attending mandatory course training since the knowledge they could acquire from these lectures could help in strengthening their skills in dealing with their patients.

Keywords: Live experiences, workplace environment, challenges and struggles, adaptation strategies, rewarding career.