

Exploring the suicidal prison: Adults' experience of a suicide crisis - A reflective lifeworld research

7. Lived experience, survivors and postvention

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Abstract text

Background: Traditionally, suicide risk is assessed based on the degree and intensity of suicidal thoughts, plans, and preparations in combination with known risk and protective factors. However, despite decades of research, no single variable predicts imminent suicide risk. The research has led to several theories and statistical risk factors, which are to some extent incongruent with survivors' experiences and known acute warnings signs. There are few studies with the aim of exploring suicidality as a phenomenon regardless of age, gender and any psychiatric diagnosis. There are also lack in knowledge when and how suicidal ideation turns to a suicidal crisis. What does it mean to be suicidal?

Aim: The aim was to understand and illuminate suicidality as a phenomenon, and what it means to be in a suicidal crisis as experienced by survivors. This study also aimed to find the essence of suicidality

Method: Four men and three women who survived suicide attempt with a variety of age, psychiatric diagnosis and psychiatric care were interviewed with phenomenon-guided lifeworld-interviews. The transcribed data was analyzed using phenomenological meaning analysis.

Findings: The essence of suicidality manifests itself as the mental prison in which the person can neither stand nor escape. Through life there is a struggle between fragile vitality versus inherent lethality. When the struggle for life becomes overwhelming the person ends up in suicidal isolation without diversion and loss of self. The suffering escalates until the person is entangled in suicidal psychache and loss of vitality. The suicide action is an agonizing struggle between powerful instincts and suicide incentive.

Conclusion: More powerful and subconscious driving forces than suicidal thoughts leads to suicide attempt. Further research of the suicidal prison is needed and could lead to development of preventive interventions early in the suicidal crisis and assessing imminent suicide risk.