

A Psycho-Education Strategy as a Method for Reconstructing Identity in the Context of Family Violence

Authors : Charlene Petersen, Herman Grobler, Karel Botha

Abstract : Restorative intervention with adolescents from a family violence context is a much needed resource given the limited access to mental health services in South Africa. In this research article the qualitative component which formed part of a mixed methods design of an overall research study, is discussed. A qualitative case study design was used. This article explores a psycho-education strategy, using a visual creative medium as a method for reconstructing identity in the context of family violence. The aim of this psycho-education strategy was to move away from interventions based on the biomedical model, but focused more on meaning-making about violent traumatic events adolescents have experienced, and to develop more positive, adaptive views about themselves in the present, and experience hope about the future. The research question that was asked was how the meaning, that adolescents from a specific community in South Africa give to family violence, contribute to defining their identity? Twelve participants were purposively selected for the study and included both male and female adolescents with ages ranging from 15 to 18 years from three secondary schools. The strategy was applied over five sessions with the intention to bring about awareness of different selves, identifying and naming the selves, and becoming aware of the configuration of identity that could lead to a redefined identity. The data were thematically and visually analyzed. Through the process of tailoring which forms the basis for reconstruction process, participants could identify the different selves, become aware of how they configure in the field. Through the process of tailoring the different self-parts, the sense of self became more self-cohesive and allowed the individual to become aware of the role of certain. Through identifying and naming the future self and resilient self the participants were able to accomplish some order and meaning in their lives. It provided them with a sense of predictability and an optimistic and hopefulness towards the future. The research findings indicated that this strategy can be used as a method for reconstructing identity in the context of family violence.

Keywords : identity, family violence, self-configuration, reconstructing identity, psycho-education strategy

Conference Title : ICICC 2015 : International Conference on Identity, Culture and Communication

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : June 25-26, 2015