

Attributes of Gratitude in Promoting Purpose in Life of Thai Adolescents

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Abstract : Purpose in life is one attribute of the concept of spirituality which is used in health promotion to promote holistic wellbeing. Purpose is a significant foundation of motivation and achievement that guides adolescents down positive life paths. Adolescents who have life purpose are more likely to achieve greater success and wellbeing in their lives. The current study used qualitative research methodology to describe the experiences that enhanced the purpose in life of 27 Thai adolescents from different backgrounds, living in urban areas in southern Thailand. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and observation. Thematic analysis methods guided data analysis. The results showed that love and connectedness are important in enhancing purpose in life. They illustrate four attributes of love and connection reflecting the four attributes of gratitude that enhance purpose in life: (1) self-love, or gratitude to oneself, whereby participants endeavor to live life in a positive way by taking care of themselves based on moral and ethical values; (2) connectedness or gratitude to parents or significant others, whereby participants are committed to taking holistic care (physical, psychological, and spiritual) of their significant others; (3) connectedness or gratitude to peers, whereby participants support their peers to help them live their own lives in a positive way; and (4) connectedness or gratitude to the wider world (environment, society, nation and beyond), through a sense of altruism towards others. The findings provide helpful insights for parents, nurses, and other health professionals supporting adolescents to obtain a purpose in life.

Keywords : adolescent, gratitude, purpose in life, spirituality

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