

Using an Established Method of Concept Building to Guide Doctoral Students in Developing Novel Concepts Generated from Practice

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Introduction: Concept building for research

- Developed by faculty working with doctoral students as they identified and created conceptual structures to guide research.
- Offers a meaningful systematic approach that incorporates scientific (existing theory and current literature) and experiential (empirical evidence, including stories) evidence.
- Requires the student to clearly articulate ideas that stem from practice, which is critical for development and implementation for a program of research.
- Concept development serves as a catalyst for focusing on a program of research.

Objective

- To understand a teaching approach for guiding students in the 10 step concept building process

Purpose of concept building

- The primary purpose of concept building is to guide research, not theory development.
- All phases are necessary to develop the concept; however, each phase has the potential to produce content for presentation and publication.

Method: Concept Development 10 Phase Process

- Practice story
- Phenomenon of interest
- Theoretical lens
- Literature derived preliminary core qualities
- Reconstructed story from story-gathering
- Minisaga
- Refined set of core qualities with definitions
- Concept definition
- Model
- Minisynthesis

Practice Story

- Write a practice story of interest; nurse-patient practice-centered story that represents human caring-healing processes.
- Reflect on a practice experience by centering on an area that you wonder about, have questions about, and may have a hunch about.
- Start writing a story emerging from a practice experience that holds a deep interest. Don't worry about spelling or grammar, just write. Try to write the story with a beginning, a middle, and end.

Example: Practice Story

- Her headaches make her tired and she doesn't want to do anything because of feeling nauseated.
- Stress and school work aggravate the headache- loud classes and playing sports.
- She gets headaches every day and had to get used to them.
- When she plays basketball and gets really hot, she gets a bad headache and can't concentrate.
- She has to leave family or friends, goes to a dark quiet room and wants to be alone.
- Nothing helps her headaches; she just pushes through the day

Phenomenon of interest

- The practice story is not an isolated story
- Name the concept from the practice story
- Many adolescents describe an enduring distress due to the pain of headaches but they managed to “push through” the day
- *Phenomenon- Taking on enduring distress*
 - Taking on- to handle something
 - Enduring- continuing , long lasting
 - Distress- suffering, pain, affliction

Theoretical lens

- Identify a disciplinary perspective- the perspective shapes the meaning of the phenomena
- Encourage a middle range theory that provides a beginning theoretical base for the concept
- A developing concept must be viewed from the perspective of a theory which provides guidance as the concept emerges
- Use of a middle range theory should create a strong logical connection and enhance clarity of the phenomena of interest

Middle range theory: Symptom Management Theory (SMT) (Humphreys et al., 2018)

- Three essential concepts of SMT:
 - Symptom experience- perception, evaluation and response to a change in a usual feeling
 - Symptom management strategy- efforts to avert, delay or minimize the symptom experience
 - Symptom outcomes- clear and measurable outcomes to assess before and after an intervention

Literature derived preliminary core qualities

- Think about the meaning of the concept and what can be possible core qualities
- Search the literature for defining core qualities
- Develop a literature matrix for the concept *Taking on enduring distress*
 - *Reference*
 - *Core quality*
 - *How is the core quality defined by the author*
 - *Theoretical foundation*
 - *Key words*

Example: Literature derived preliminary core qualities

What was searched

- Headache treatment
- Adolescent headache
- Experience of chronic pain
- Adolescent pain
- Pain uncertainty
- Pain challenges

Identified core qualities

- Challenges in living the everyday (school)
- Not knowing how to resolve (teaching about pain)
- Moving forward (continuing task and ignoring pain)

Reconstructed story from story gathering

- Gathering the story from someone who is living the emerging concept
- Phase I: query the human health experience designated by the emerging concept with the person sharing the story
- Begin by asking about the headache (now); about when it started and how it was experienced when it first began (past); then how it progressed until now (moving from past to present); and what hopes are held regarding the experience of headache in the months ahead (future).

Reconstructed story from story gathering

- Phase II: Specifically query the identified core qualities with the person sharing the story
- The person sharing the story is an expert who has lived the emerging concept through his/her experience

Reconstructed story from story gathering

- Creates a beginning, middle and end that highlights the core qualities described by the story teller during the story gathering
- Present a story about the emerging concept as shared by the storyteller
- A succinct synthesis totaling no more than 500 words
- Not all encompassing, provides one real world perspective that contributes to developing the emerging concept
- After gathering a story, it may be necessary to return to the literature if any new core qualities were identified

Example: Reconstructed story

- *Jill is a 14 year old high school student. She is a straight A student who likes to play basketball. She has been living with chronic headaches for over a year.*
- *Challenges in living the every day: She reports that she has a headache during the story gathering. "I have a headache right now. I forget about it until I think, talk, and move around.". "I didn't want to wake up this morning. I had a headache when I woke up". School can be especially challenging: "Too much noise makes me feel like I am all cooped up and things are closing in. The others never want to be quiet so it is hard to concentrate".*
- *Not knowing how to resolve: She admits that she doesn't always know what will make her headache better. "I take a pain reliever each night but it doesn't always work and I don't know what to do".*
- *Moving forward: Jill continues her activities despite the pain and feels the headaches will get better. She continues to play basketball and works hard in school. "In basketball when I get headaches...my coach lets me sit out. I try my best to make A's because I want A's". "If I try my hardest and if I keep on taking my [prescribed] medicine, maybe the headaches will start to decrease and maybe after this year or next year, I won't even have to take it anymore.*

Minisaga

- The reconstructed story is further synthesized into a minisaga
- Minisaga further delineates what has been learned about the concept
- A minisaga is a short story that is 50 words long and communicates the essence of the reconstructed story in the context of the core qualities
- The purpose of the minisaga is to “crystallize the essence of the emerging concept so that it can be readily shared with others” (Liehr & Smith, 2018, p. 366).

Minisaga

Living with chronic headaches for over a year, she continues with her activities despite pain. There is an uncertainty about what causes the headaches and what to do to make the pain better. Managing headaches by being alone was her best response to dealing with the pain.

Refined set of core qualities with definitions

- As the process moves through concept development, core qualities will emerge
- Formulation of the core qualities has been happening throughout the phases of concept development: beginning with literature review which helped to establish preliminary core qualities that were then taken to the story gathering
- At this point may reconsider preliminary core qualities or may go back to the literature for affirmation
- There should be enhanced clarity about the nature of the core qualities which enable an explicit definition
- Two to four core qualities should be identified and supported by the literature

Refined set of core qualities with definitions

- Challenges in living the everyday represents the impact of pain and the consequences of pain on daily life including restrictions in activity.
- Not knowing how to resolve represents a lack of knowledge and inability to manage pain.
- Moving forward undeterred represents a determination to participate in important life activities including school.

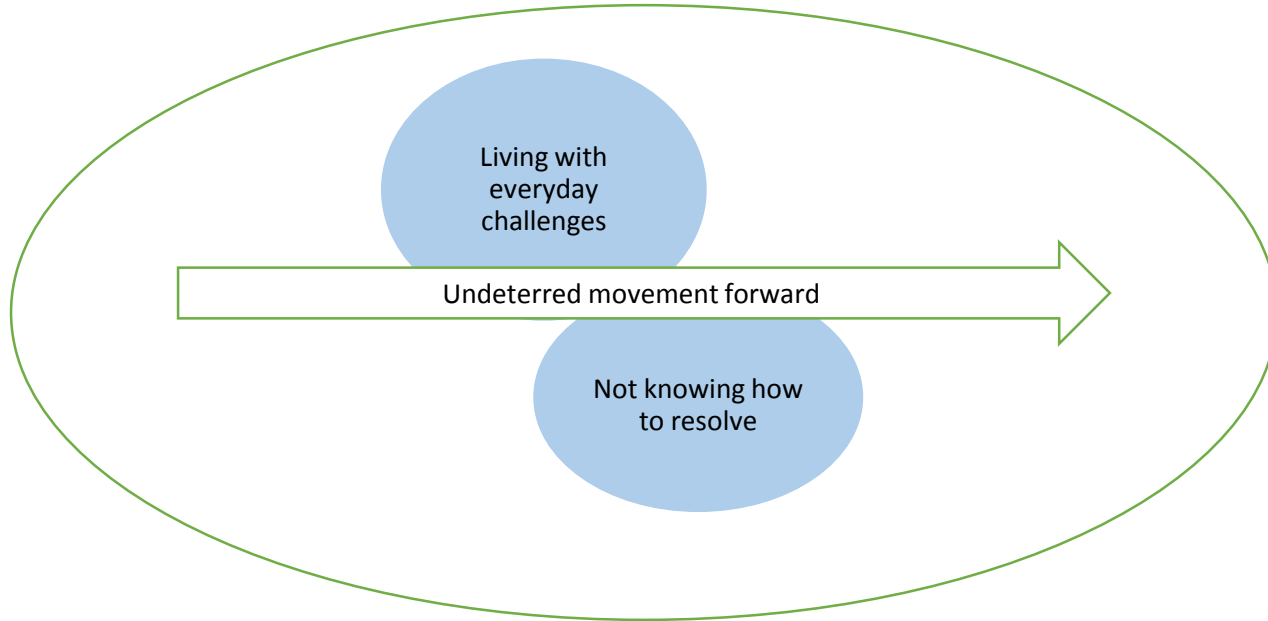
Concept definition

- Formulate a definition integrating the core qualities
- *Taking on enduring distress is an undeterred movement forward while living with everyday challenges in spite of a not knowing how to resolve.*

Model

- A structural representation of the defining core qualities of the concepts
- Depicts relationships of the core qualities
- The link between the theoretical perspective, concept definition and the model should be apparent

Model: Taking on enduring distress



Mini-synthesis

- Create a mini-synthesis that identifies the population, definition of the concept, and research applications
- The mini-synthesis is a 3 sentence representation that pulls together the concept development process.
- *Headache is a chronic pain syndrome which impacts the adolescent's day to day activities. Taking on enduring distress is an undeterred movement forward while living with everyday challenges in spite of not knowing how to resolve. An intervention based upon a novel symptom management strategy to improve headache outcomes is proposed.*

Experience of moving doctoral students through this process

- It appears to be a linear process, but it more iterative and creative
- The strength of this process is that the concept is rooted in the student's practice which the student is deeply interested.
- The end of the process is just the beginning as the students will develop the concept further.
- When students stay with ideas that they are deeply interested, the movement to dissertation is facilitated.

Experience of moving doctoral students through this process

- The end of the process is just the beginning as the students will develop the concept further.
- *The Experience of Adolescents Living with Headache*- dimensions of the health challenge of adolescent headache and approaches used to resolve headache
- Key dimensions of the complicating health challenge of adolescent headache included pain, uncertainty, distancing self from family and friends, challenges with school, and not knowing how to resolve.
- Approaches used in the attempt to resolve the challenge of living with headache include self-management through medication, sleep, and transcendence.

Questions