

Narrative Research of a Counselor's Lived Experiences: A Study of Anxiety Disorders in High School Students

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Extended Abstract

Aim

This study's objectives were to analyze the narratives of a high school counselor, to investigate the causes of anxiety and its symptoms among high school pupils, and to offer suitable solutions in this field. Anxiety is characterized by a mental sensation of fear and apprehension or a negative event that is accompanied by various autonomic nervous system-mediated physical symptoms. Anxiety is not only a prevalent human experience, but it may also be associated with a medical condition like asthma or a psychiatric condition like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Method

The research was conducted using a qualitative approach and the method of narrative research. In the present narrative research, the data source is a 42-year-old female participant who has served as a consultant for two girls' high schools in Bostanabad, East Azerbaijan Province, for the past 17 years. Narrative interview, semi-structured interview, field observation (attending some counseling sessions), and taking notes were used to collect data. Using thematic analysis, the narratives were analyzed. 12 hours, a face-to-face interview, and also communication, conversation, and friendly exchange via virtual communication networks such as Imo, Whatsapp, and Shad allowed the first author and the participant to experience close and sincere cooperation in the research process, which is one of the tenets of narrative research.

Findings

Age, education, and family circumstances were found to be the causes of anxiety in adolescent students. These factors were classified into five categories: family issues, academic issues, improper social relationships, physical changes (puberty), and unfortunate occurrences. Parental discord and divorce, economic deprivation, gender discrimination, and unreasonable parental demands are among the family factors that contribute to the development of anxiety disorders in students. In addition to university entrance exams, school exams, and a large quantity of homework, students experience anxiety due to their academic problems. Emotional and romantic relationships during adolescence, high vulnerability from friends, and the need for their approbation are among the factors that contribute to the establishment of false social relationships that increase anxiety in adolescents, according to narratives. The analysis of student narratives revealed that the symptoms of this disorder manifest in four ways: physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive. Isolation, irritability, anxiety, and agitation are emotional symptoms, whereas fatigue, headache, heart palpitations, tremors in the hands, and anorexia are physical symptoms. Changes in behavior include alterations in eating and sleeping patterns, restlessness and aimless walking, nail gnawing, and disregard for personal appearance. Also included among the cognitive symptoms are the inability to focus, a negative outlook on everything, and incorrect and erroneous judgments. Adjusting sleep patterns, physical activity, and diet, parental support, focusing on the positive, engaging in enjoyable activities, and talking to an anxious student are all strategies for reducing anxiety in students.

Discussion

The anxiety of adolescent students may not be entirely avoidable, but it can be mitigated by addressing some of their educational and domestic issues. The analysis and interpretation of this narrative have addressed a number of counseling-related obstacles. A review of the country's educational system, particularly the school evaluation system, as well as the hiring of expert counselors in schools and placing a premium on these educational forces, as well as holding training courses for parents of children with anxiety disorders, will be crucial in reducing student anxiety, according to the research findings.

Keywords: Anxiety, Consultant, Lived Experiences, Narrative Research.