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Using Phenomenology and Action Research to Assist Adults with Hearing Impairment to Achieve Positive Life Outcomes

PhD

James Cook University
March 8, 2006

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at James Cook University
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Declaration of Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Human (1999), the Joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997), the James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics, Standard Practices and Guidelines (2001) and the James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H1351).

March 8, 2006

_________________________________________  _______________________________________
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Abstract

Progressive hearing impairment in adulthood is often accompanied by debilitating psychosocial problems including major disruptions to a person's ability to communicate orally. This research describes the story of how phenomenology and action research are employed in more visual ways with adults with degenerative hearing impairment in an attempt to enable them to accomplish more acceptable life outcomes. Descriptive analysis, in the form of dialogic, introspective and retrospective phenomenology, is used to capture a deep understanding of the pertinent life experiences of eight individuals who are hard of hearing. Individual action research case studies are then conducted with two members of the original sample. Information obtained from the descriptive analysis enables participants to identify a specific challenge to address in order to achieve a positive life outcome. The phenomenology-action research approach was found to be both suitable and effective for all individuals engaged in this study, particularly for those who completed the action research process. It is, therefore, recommended that further research and development be conducted into the collaborative use of this approach in which the rehabilitation professional works in close co-operation with the individual experiencing progressive hearing impairment to achieve more empowering and self-affirming life goals.
Table of Contents

Statement of Access ........................................................................................................ i
Declaration of Sources ..................................................................................................... ii
Declaration of Ethics ........................................................................................................ iii
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... iv
Abstract .......................................................................................................................... vi
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER 1. RESEARCH FOCUS

Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
Definitions ...................................................................................................................... 2
Background ..................................................................................................................... 4
Research Statement ....................................................................................................... 5
Research Focus ............................................................................................................... 6
Purpose of Study ............................................................................................................ 7
Importance of Study ....................................................................................................... 8
Conceptual or Substantive Assumptions ........................................................................ 9
Scope of Study ............................................................................................................... 11
Limitations and Delimitations of Study ....................................................................... 11
Methodology ................................................................................................................ 12
  Selection of Participants ............................................................................................. 12
Qualitative Research .................................................................................................. 13
Phenomenology .......................................................................................................... 13
Research Design .......................................................................................................... 15
Critical Reflection ....................................................................................................... 17
Action Research ......................................................................................................... 19
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 26
Definitions ....................................................................................................................... 28
Establishing the Need for the Study ......................................................................... 30
Absence of Information for Hard of Hearing Individuals .................................... 31
Need for Professionals to be Aware ......................................................................... 33
Recommendations for This Study ........................................................................... 34
Toward a Phenomenological Study .......................................................................... 35
Disability as a Social Construct ............................................................................. 36
A Professional Paradigm of Disability .................................................................. 36
Defining Hearing Impairment as a Disability ..................................................... 37
Moving From a Medical Model to an Ecological Model: Challenging the
Modernist Perspective ............................................................................................. 38
Phenomenology and Medicine .............................................................................. 40
Postmodernist Challenge for Professionals ............................................................ 41
Hearing Impairment as an Individualised Phenomenon ........................................ 42
Hearing Impairment as a Trauma .......................................................................... 44
A Psychosocial Approach to Dealing with Issues of Hearing Impairment ........ 45
Psychosocial Effects of Disability and Hearing Impairment on Self .................... 45
Fear of Loss of Control ............................................................................................ 46
Fear of Loss of Self-Image ........................................................................................ 47
Fear of Dependency .................................................................................................. 47
Fear of Stigma ............................................................................................................ 48
Fear of Isolation .......................................................................................................... 50
Fear of Abandonment ............................................................................................... 51
Fear of Expressed Emotion ...................................................................................... 52
Fear of Loss .................................................................................................................. 53
Other Psychosocial Problems Associated with Hearing Impairment ..................... 54
Depression as a Psychosocial Effect of Hearing Impairment ................................. 54
Uncertainty as a Psychosocial Effect of Hearing Impairment ............................... 55
Demoralization Syndrome and Hearing Impairment .............................................. 56
Effects of Hearing Impairment on Family or Significant Others .......................... 57
Previous Life Experience and Hearing Impairment .............................................. 57
Family and Significant Others .............................................................................. 58
Unique Aspects of Hearing Impairment ................................................................. 60
Invisibility of Individuals With Hearing Impairment ............................................ 60
The Insidious Nature of Hearing Impairment ....................................................... 61
The Value of Empathy in Professional Practice .................................................... 62
Empathy and Medical Practice .............................................................................. 62
Empathy and Professional Practice ..................................................................... 64
Critical Reflection as a Means for Gaining a Deeper Understanding ................... 65
Critical Reflection and Professional Practice ....................................................... 65
Critical Reflection with Clients ............................................................................. 68
Therapeutic Interventions ..................................................................................... 69
Client-Centred Interventions ................................................................................ 69
Involving Significant Others in the Therapeutic Process .................................... 70
Other Approaches and Interventions ................................................................... 71
Need for Trained Therapists ................................................................................ 72
Giving Voice Through Narration: A Therapeutic Intervention ......................... 74
Self-Determination ................................................................................................. 77
Patient, Agent and Locus of Control .................................................................... 77
Gaining Agency through Collaboration ............................................................... 78
Empowerment ....................................................................................................... 80
Transition ............................................................................................................... 83
A State of Becoming ........................................................................................................... 83
Research with Adults with Disabilities Using Phenomenological Or Associated Approaches ........................................................................................................................................... 86
Summary ................................................................................................................................... 88

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 90
What is Phenomenological Research? ................................................................................... 91
The Goal of Phenomenological Research .......................................................................... 92
Selecting a Phenomenological Approach ....................................................................... 92
Research Methods .............................................................................................................. 93
Study Examples .................................................................................................................. 93
Selection of Participants .................................................................................................. 95
Length of Study .................................................................................................................. 96
Reduction/Epoche/Bracketing .......................................................................................... 97
The Interview ..................................................................................................................... 101
The Hermeneutic Circle ................................................................................................... 106
Analysis of the Data ......................................................................................................... 109
Summary ............................................................................................................................... 113

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 116
Introduction of Candidates ............................................................................................... 117
Recording the Interviews ................................................................................................. 119
Transcribing the Interviews ............................................................................................. 119
Reviewing the Transcriptions .......................................................................................... 120
Length and Frequency of Interviews ................................................................................ 121
Special Note .......................................................................................................................... 121
Legend ..................................................................................................................................... 121
Notes From My Diary ....................................................................................................... 122
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
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<td>127</td>
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<td>128</td>
</tr>
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<td>130</td>
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<td>134</td>
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<td>135</td>
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<td>135</td>
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<td>136</td>
</tr>
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<td>136</td>
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<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
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<tr>
<td>139</td>
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<td>140</td>
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<td>141</td>
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<td>142</td>
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<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tinnitus – A Catch-22 .................................................................................. 210
Working Environments .................................................................................. 211
Employment .................................................................................................. 211
Medical/Psychological Ramifications ............................................................. 212
Audiologists .................................................................................................. 212
Relationship Issues with Family ..................................................................... 213
Isolation ......................................................................................................... 214
Critical Reflection ......................................................................................... 215
Plans Altered .................................................................................................. 216
Music ............................................................................................................. 217
Summary ....................................................................................................... 218
Andre ............................................................................................................. 219
Frustration .................................................................................................... 219
Identification of Hearing Impairment ............................................................. 222
Alienation ..................................................................................................... 223
Stigma ........................................................................................................... 228
Self-Image/Self-Confidence .......................................................................... 231
Employment/Advancement .......................................................................... 236
Children ....................................................................................................... 239
Relationships ............................................................................................... 240
Denial/Avoidance .......................................................................................... 241
Fatigue .......................................................................................................... 244
External Locus of Control ............................................................................... 244
Internal Locus of Control .............................................................................. 246
Acceptance ................................................................................................... 249
Critical Reflection .......................................................................................... 249
Relationship, Marriage and Communication ............................................... 252
Summary ....................................................................................................... 255
# CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxanne</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nils</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roxanne</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aaron</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindy</td>
<td>359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nils</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andre</td>
<td>361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharon</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

xvii