

# **Chapter 5 Designing a Qualitative Study**

## **A Phenomenological Study**

By Group 2

Kanasha Blue, Hui Cao,  
Amanda Recio, Shaun Smith

# A Phenomenological Study

Crucial aspects of a phenomenological study:

- Phenomenon
- Appropriate sample size  
(5-25 recommended)
- Philosophical idea
- Bracketing

- Rigorous data collection
- Data analysis procedures
- Attempt to fully describe  
the essence of the  
experience

Type of phenomenological studies:

➤ Hermeneutical

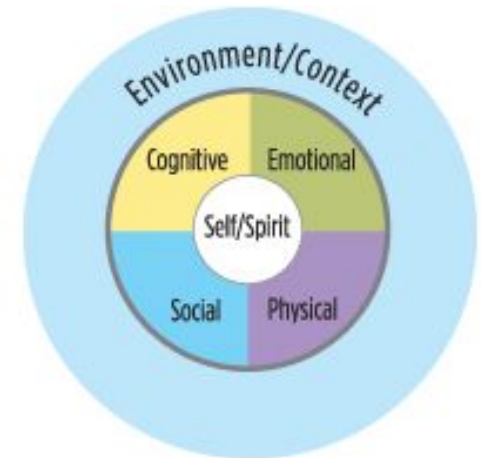
➤ Transcendental

## Appendix C: “Cognitive Representations of AIDS”

by Elizabeth Anderson & Margaret Hull Spencer

### Synopsis

- **GOAL:** Attempt to showcase the cognitive representations that AIDS patients had about their disease
  - Combination of individuals’ mental representation of HIV/AIDS and their emotional responses
- Such “images” were desired in hopes to better assist patients with their therapy, behaviors, quality of life



## Why a Phenomenological Study?

Transcendental

- Attempted to find a common cognitive representation among *several* individuals
- Attempted to capture “the lived experience” and describe the essence as best as possible
  - captures the “WHAT” and “HOW”
- Upholds a strong philosophical component
  - Intentionality of Consciousness - consciousness is directed towards objects; interconnectedness of both subjects and objects

## Defined Structural Features

- Utilized the Self-Regulation Model of Illness Representations framework
  - how individual symptoms and emotions experience one's perception of their illness, focusing on components of:
    - label, timeline, cause, consequences, control/cure
- Heterogeneous sample: 58 men and women (41/17), Black/White/Hispanic
- Researcher bracketed themselves out of the study to avoid bias
- Interviews conducted (each 10-40 minutes, recorded & transcribed) over an 18 month period at three locations
  - Patients also asked to “draw” their disease - 8 consented

## Questions Asked

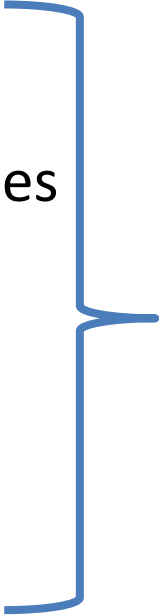
*According to Colaizzi, 1978, the success of phenomenological studies depends on the questions asked! Two or three broad, open-ended questions are recommended.*

*→ Will the questions allow participants to truly express their own personal “lived experience?”*

- What is your experience with AIDS?
- Do you have a mental image of HIV/AIDS?
- How would you describe HIV/AIDS?
- What feelings comes to mind?
- What meaning does it have in your life?

## Data Analysis

- Systematic analysis procedures were utilized as suggested by Colaizzi (1978), focusing on rigor
  - Reading through the transcripts
  - Identifying significant phrases or sentences (horizontalization)
  - Formulating meanings and **clustering**
  - Integrating the results
  - Validating the findings



This analysis led to 11 major themes based on 175 significant statements.

## Reporting Findings

- Discussion of “exhaustive description” of patients’ experiences and coping strategies to best capture the true “*essence*” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 80) as a culmination
  - reflective, targeting deep insight
  - utilizes structural and textural descriptions