

5th International Conference on

Pediatric Nursing and Healthcare

July 11-12, 2016 Cologne, Germany

Handling demands on success among girls and boys in primary school- A conceptual model

Marie Wilhsson

Halmstad University, Sweden

Background: Stress among adolescents in Western societies is becoming an issue of increasing concern and the global trend of adolescents' health shows a gradual deterioration that is independent of national differences and increases with age. Research shows that many adolescents report high levels of stress, associated with a change in expectations about performance and an increased focus on school results.

Purpose/methods: The aim of this study was to explore the main concern of adolescents to get a deeper knowledge on how they cope with demands in everyday life. Grounded theory was used as a method to generate a model.

Results: The core category "striving to be successful and to succeed" explains participants' main concern in their everyday lives as a continuous process aiming for success in the present and to succeed throughout their lives. The category is what the participants describe as a race against time and can be divided into the two conceptual categories "struggling with time" and "separating life into different worlds", pronouncing how they struggle and cope with their main concern in order to obtain wellbeing. Our results show a difference between how girls and boys cope with their demands.

Conclusions: We show that girls and boys used different strategies to cope with stress in their everyday life. The results are based on adolescent's experiences and are therefore an important contribution for initiating interventions aimed at promoting adolescents mental health from a gender perspective.

Biography

Marie Wilhsson is a PhD student since 2012 at School of Health and Welfare. His clinical background is in pediatric care, school nursing and psychiatric youth care.

marie.wilhsson@hh.se

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