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Mental Health Inpatients with autistic spectrum conditions, the desire and fear of discharge-a phenomenological study

Statement of the Problem: People with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) are particularly vulnerable to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, especially in late adolescence and early adult life. It is well-documented that admission to hospitals to meet the mental health needs for those with ASC should be a last resort. On this basis there is a clear need to consider more closely what exactly is happening at different times of the hospital discharge encounter and how best to minimize the stress experienced. Anxiety is a common characteristic for people who live with autistic spectrum conditions and whilst studies on anxiety in this population are commonplace and case studies correlate anxiety with mental health service experience, little is known about the actual triggers of anxiety and its manifestations, particularly during the discharge process. The purpose of this study is to explore how mental health inpatients with autistic spectrum conditions experienced and coped with discharge when admitted to a UK acute mental health inpatient facility. Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Interpretative phenomenological data analysis study using semi-structured interviews captured the experiences of 20 adults from the East of England who were former psychiatric inpatients with an established diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition. Findings: broad themes which explained in rich detail, participant reflections regarding the situations and events within the acute care mental health facility that triggered their anxiety, behavioural manifestations of anxiety and, responses to the discussion of discharge.

Biography

Martin is an autistic individual who currently is in school to get his degree in Speech Pathology at San Jose State University, and resides in San Jose, California. He is the author of Chatter Box: My Life with Autism a Mother and Son's Perspective about growing up with autism along with his mother's perspective. He is excited about what is in store with his company Spire Autism. He spoke in Dubai to the autism parents about hope. He has also taught instructors how to teach autistic students and collaborated with local politicians receiving a proclamation declaring the city recognize autism awareness and acceptance month.

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