Reframing a sense of self: a constructivist grounded theory study of children’s admission to hospital for surgery

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Abstract

Children are significant users of healthcare and their needs are different to those of adults. Whilst important gains have been made in children’s hospital care since the last half of the 20th century, there is a recent trend to reduce dedicated paediatric services in Australia. In order to provide healthcare services that are child centred and that truly respond to the needs of children, children’s perspectives on their healthcare are essential. Yet the inclusion of children’s perspectives in health services and research is lacking. It is through listening to, and hearing children, that health care can move closer to meeting their needs. This qualitative study explored the experiences of 10 primary school aged children (six to twelve years of age) admitted to hospital for surgery, from their perspective. A constructivist grounded theory approach was used that incorporated flexible, child centred research techniques including interviews and the ‘draw and write technique’.

This thesis presents a substantive theory: children’s reframing of their sense of selves to incorporate the experiences of hospitalisation and surgery. The children were active participants embedded within the phenomenon. Admission to hospital for surgery presented a form of adversity for the children in what was an embodied experience of contrasts. Major concepts of the experience were: ‘being scared’; ‘hurting’; and ‘having fun’. There were two major processes the children engaged in for reframing their sense of self to incorporate the experience. The first was around their meaning making activities, expressed as ‘coming to know’ and the second was their ability to move on from the adversity and reintegrate the experience into their normal lives, expressed as ‘bouncing back’. In order for the children to successfully incorporate the experience into their sense of self, a supportive context or holding environment was necessary, expressed as ‘being held’.

Children were the primary source of knowledge about their views and experiences for this study. The findings highlight the importance of centring children’s healthcare on the needs of children and their families. The findings suggest that ongoing problems with paediatric practices continue to impact negatively on children’s experiences of hospitalisation. Although there is a body of evidence about what constitutes best practice, in reality, practices fall short of these recommendations.
Acknowledgements

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Finally, special thanks to my family, Ross, Paddy, Annie and Will: Thankyou for keeping me grounded in family and my apologies for time away from you, for poor housekeeping and thrown together meals! I’m free next weekend – what would you like to do?
Childhood has its own way of seeing, thinking and feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute ours for them (Rousseau in Emile, 1792).
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Reflective practices at the Security Council: Children and armed conflict and the three United Nations. European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 24, Issue. 2, p. 293. Constructivism has a problem in accounting for agent-led change and for what motivates agents to make up their minds about how to put their agency to use. I show that constructivism’s problem of change is related to tensions between constructivism’s own key assumptions about the mutually constitutive relationship between structure and agency, understanding of change and to an essentialist conception of identity. I argue that agency is constituted through processes of identification involving identity and narrative constructions and performance through practice and action. The substantive theory of admission produced was organised across three major categories, namely: a person-centred beginning; building relationships along the way and barriers to the service received. A focus on experience at the broadest sense leads to the achievement of the four outcomes leaders aspire to in varying combinations in healthcare organizations around the world: clinical outcomes, financial outcomes, consumer loyalty, and community reputation. A constructivist grounded theory study. Interventions that help carers of children with complex health conditions move through the phases of our Parenting under Pressure process may help them safeguard the survival of their children, and their own survival as parents as they manage multiple demands. Reframing encourages a manager to use more than one frame to make sense of the situation. Every frame has strengths and limitations, and thus, each frame is more or less valuable for making sense of a particular situation. Once we perceive this limited amount of information from our environment, our personal theories determine how we interpret this information to construct our reality. Conceptual/Open-ended Questions 1. In the example in the text, the two U.S. F-15C pilots patrolling the no-fly zone in post Gulf War Northern Iraq, who shot down the two American Blackhawk helicopters, were described as doing “the normal human thing in the face of ambiguous perceptual data.” What was that “normal human thing”? Evaluating children’s self-esteem can be an effective method for understanding their past and present circumstances, and useful to treat for children with psychosomatic disorders. Self-esteem is the “feeling of self-appreciation” and is an indispensable emotion for people to adapt to society and live their lives. For children, in particular, the environment in which they are raised contributes profoundly to the development of their self-esteem, which in turn helps them to adapt better to society. Various psychologists have provided definitions of self-esteem, and examined methods of objectively evaluating self-esteem.