

Abstract

This study explores the individual and universal phenomenon of undergoing planned surgery to remove a part of the body. A qualitative small-scale study of heuristic inquiry captured the authentic processes and essence of the lived experience of embodiment of four co-researchers, through semi-structured interviews.

The literature review demonstrates how research leans towards post-surgery psychological support, which identified a gap in pre-surgery psychological support. The results evidenced successful outcomes that saw seven themes emerge that include loss, shame, affect and unconscious processes.

The reflexive and relational approach of heuristic inquiry used within this study, embraces the authenticity of a personal journey and collective phenomenon, to bridge the gap in research. The findings evidence how pre-surgery psychotherapeutic support benefits clients preparing for such surgery.

Keywords: Heuristic inquiry, loss of a body part, pre-surgery psychological support, psychotherapy