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METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HUMAN SCIENCE RESEARCH

In deriving scientific evidence in phenomenological investigations, the researcher establishes and carries out a series of methods and procedures that satisfy the requirements of an organized, disciplined and systematic study. These include:

1. Discovering a topic and question rooted in autobiographical meanings and values, as well as involving social meanings and significance;
2. Conducting a comprehensive review of the professional and research literature;
3. Constructing a set of criteria to locate appropriate co-researchers;
4. Providing co-researchers with instructions on the nature and purpose of the investigation, and developing an agreement that includes obtaining informed consent, insuring confidentiality, and delineating the responsibilities of the primary researcher and research participant, consistent with ethical principles of research;
5. Developing a set of questions or topics to guide the interview process;

6. Conducting and recording a lengthy person-to-person interview that focuses on a bracketed topic and question. A follow-up interview may also be needed;
7. Organizing and analyzing the data to facilitate development of individual textural and structural descriptions, a composite textural description, a composite structural description, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences.

The above methodological requirements may be organized in terms of Methods of Preparation, Methods of Collecting Data, and Methods of Organizing and Analyzing Data.

A method offers a systematic way of accomplishing something orderly and disciplined, with care and rigor. Procedures or techniques make up a method, provide a direction and steps to be followed, and move a study into action. Every method in human science research is open ended. There are no definitive or exclusive requirements. Each research project holds its own integrity and establishes its own methods and procedures to facilitate the flow of the investigation and the collection of data.

In the sections that follow, methods and procedures for conducting human science research are discussed and illustrated.

METHODS OF PREPARATION

Formulating the Question

The first challenge of the researcher, in preparing to conduct a phenomenological investigation, is to arrive at a topic and question that have both social meaning and personal significance. The question must be stated in clear and concrete terms. The key words of the question should be defined, discussed, and clarified so that the intent and purpose of the investigation are evident. The position of each key word, or focus, of the question determines what is primary in pursuing the topic and what data will be collected.

In phenomenological research, the question grows out of an intense interest in a particular problem or topic. The researcher's excitement and curiosity inspire the search. Personal history brings the core of the problem into focus. As the fullness of the topic emerges, strands and

tangents of it may complicate an articulation of a manageable and specific question. Yet this process of permitting aspects of the topic to enter into awareness is essential in the formulation of a core question that will remain viable and alive throughout the investigation. A human science research question has definite characteristics:

1. It seeks to reveal more fully the essences and meanings of human experience;
2. It seeks to uncover the qualitative rather than the quantitative factors in behavior and experience;
3. It engages the total self of the research participant, and sustains personal and passionate involvement;
4. It does not seek to predict or to determine causal relationships;
5. It is illuminated through careful, comprehensive descriptions, vivid and accurate renderings of the experience, rather than measurements, ratings, or scores.

Illustrations of the Topic and Question

In applications of phenomenological research presented in this chapter, I have selected examples from the published literature as well as from studies in which I served as a guide or reviewer of the research design and methodology proposed by the primary researcher.

LaCourse's Study of Time: Personal and Social Meanings

To illustrate the personal and social groundings of the topic and question, I have selected what I regard as a good example of a design and methodology for investigating the experience of time.

In considering time as the topic, LaCourse (1990) first explores its autobiographical and social significance. She describes her personal background and its relationship to the topic and question.

The study of time beckons to me, I think, because issues of time are prominent in my own life. I have strong feelings about time. I love life, and since in so many ways time is life, I love my time. I put careful thought into how I will use it, and I jealously guard against excessive intrusions into my time by others. I have always seen time as a precious commodity. . . . And yet so often I feel I am in conflict with time. There is a lack of clarity within me as to the meaning of time in my life and how I can best

live in harmony with it. I am puzzled, intrigued, and frustrated by time, and challenged to learn more about it. It is this challenge that leads me to consider studying time. I am excited by the idea of reading about it, thinking about it, listening to others talk about their experiences with it, and eventually coming to a place where my understanding of time has been expanded, my perspective broadened, and quite possibly, as a side benefit, my relationship with it enhanced. (p. 7)

I wonder how this feeling that there is not enough time came about. Have I made my life overly complicated, failing along the way to develop the self-discipline and time-management skills needed to cope? Probably this is true to some extent, but I believe my sense of time pressure is due in greater part to my perception of time as accelerating as I grow older, and my consequent anxiety about the passage of time. (p. 8)

I am drawn to a study of time in part because I have had difficulty living in harmony with time. I have been in conflict as to how to be in relationship with other people, and still be true to my privacy and other time needs. Finding the delicate balance in time usage which is necessary in order to achieve objectives without becoming rigid, overly organized, or over-extended has been a huge challenge for me. (p. 12)

The social meaning and relevance of LaCourse's topic is connected to tendencies in society to seek to control and exploit time for purposes of economic production and security, presumably for purposes of "health, happiness, and effectiveness in living" (p. 3). She points out that often the focus in society is on *past* traumas or *future* events and opportunities rather than on the present. She states that, "an exploration of . . . the continuity of time . . . from the perspective of co-researchers could provide valuable information" on balancing personal and social requirements (pp. 4-5). Another social concern with reference to time relates to time management issues and the stress individuals experience as a result of poor time management skills.

LaCourse's Study of Time: Formulating the Question

LaCourse formulated her question and defined its key words, as follows:

My research question as it now stands is: "How do people perceive and describe their experience of time?" The major components of this question

are "how," "perceive," "describe," "experience," and "time." . . . Use of the word "how" facilitates clear, concise wording of the question and denotes my openness to anything whatever that may emerge about time in the course of my interviews with co-researchers. The word "*perceive*" implies something about the relativity of time. . . . Time is perceived differently by different people, and by the same person in different situations. The clichés, "time flies when you're having fun" or "I lived a lifetime in a moment," speak to this. Also, time drags for most people when waiting or doing something unpleasant. The word "*describe*" refers to *what time is and means* for co-researchers. The word "*experience*" is a way of pointing to the fact that I will be seeking comprehensive stories from the research participants of how they perceive and describe time in their everyday lived experience. (pp. 2-3)

Locating and Selecting the Research Participants

There are no in-advance criteria for locating and selecting the research participants. General considerations include: age, race, religion, ethnic and cultural factors, gender, and political and economic factors. Essential criteria include: the research participant has experienced the phenomenon, is intensely interested in understanding its nature and meanings, is willing to participate in a lengthy interview and (perhaps a follow-up interview), grants the investigator the right to tape-record, possibly videotape the interview, and publish the data in a dissertation and other publications.

Locating and Selecting the Research Participants: Fraelich's Investigation of Presence

Fraelich (1989) investigated the experience of psychologist-psychotherapist "presence" in relationship to the client. In locating participants and enlisting them for the study, Fraelich prepared a statement describing the nature and purpose of the study and sought to locate psychologists-psychotherapists who regarded "presence" as a necessary component of therapeutic effectiveness. The "statement of instructions" was placed (with permission from the director of training) in the mailboxes of psychologists-psychotherapists working in a large community psychological clinic. Fraelich comments that, "Each person who replied was then contacted by me and a 10 to 20 minute pre-interview meeting was arranged at the clinic at times mutually agreeable to both of us" (p. 66). From the interview and a discussion of the nature and purpose of the

study, Fraelich determined whether the volunteer was an appropriate co-researcher for his proposed investigation. This depended on whether the co-researcher was willing to join Fraelich in an open-ended investigation of "presence," willing to commit the necessary time and work that would be involved, willing for the interview to be tape-recorded and the data from it used in a doctoral dissertation and publications.

In his preliminary instructions to co-researchers, Fraelich conveyed to them that he would share with them the specific material from their interview that he would use, that he would remove all identifying data, including the name of the co-researcher, and that the co-researcher would be free to withdraw from the study at any time. When a mutual agreement was reached, a "permission form" was signed. A date and time for the lengthy interview were mutually agreed upon. The co-researcher was asked to immerse him- or herself in incidents that stood out in the experience of psychologist-psychotherapist presence in interviews with clients, and to bring to awareness whatever awakened in descriptive meanings of presence. Fraelich comments, "I hoped that by doing this, each participant would be able to bring a rich set of experiences into the interview" (p. 68). He adds,

Each participant was informed not only of the true nature of the study but was encouraged to become a research participant on equal footing with me. An active attempt was made to recognize the participant as a co-researcher. Each participant was encouraged to join with me as a truthful seeker of knowledge and understanding with regard to the phenomenon of presence. (p. 68) [Reprinted by permission of the author]

Following the pre-interview meeting, Fraelich

reflected upon my research question and re-envisioned the phenomenon that I wanted to come to understand. From this perspective, an opening statement, to be read to the participant just prior to the beginning of the interview, was prepared. The purpose of the statement was to provide a standard way to begin the interview and to present an opening remark geared to encourage the participant to initiate his or her own search and to again convey the overall purpose and intent of the interview. (p. 68) [Reprinted by permission of the author]

To illustrate final procedures that are employed in selecting co-researchers, I have placed in Appendix A, from Trumbull's (1993) study of coronary artery bypass surgery, his "Letter to Co-Researchers" and his "Partici-

pant Release Agreement.” They present necessary details of the agreement and inform the co-researcher of the nature and purpose of the study.

Trumbull also provided a summary guide. I present an abbreviated, edited version of it, to illustrate it as a model of helpful instructions to potential co-researchers.

Summary Guide of Study for Potential Co-Researchers

As a research project required for the PhD degree in clinical psychology, I will complete a dissertation on the topic “What is the experience of undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery?” The topic was chosen after my uncle and father had this surgical procedure. I will conduct a literature review to learn about prior published works on this topic. Since I am interested in descriptions and meanings connected with your experience, I will use qualitative research methods in obtaining the essences of your experience. I will interview 12 to 15 co-researchers and adhere to the ethical principles of human science research. The structural and textural descriptions that I will be seeking will be formulated into a synthesis of the experience as a whole.

On completion of the study, Trumbull sent to each co-researcher a letter expressing his appreciation for their contribution to the knowledge of the nature, quality, meaning, and essence of the experience of undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery. An abbreviated version of the letter appears in Appendix B.

Trumbull also sent his complete analysis of all of the data to each of his co-researchers and requested a response as to its accuracy and any changes that would present more clearly or fully the experience of undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Human science researchers are guided by the ethical principles on research with human participants. The studies referred to in this volume maintained the necessary ethical standards, established clear agreements with the research participants, recognized the necessity of confidentiality and informed consent, and developed procedures for insuring full disclosure of the nature, purpose, and requirements of the research

project. All of the studies were qualitative, involved participants who volunteered to be co-researchers, emphasized processes that were open-ended and methods and procedures that could be shifted, and permitted alternatives in response to participants' ideas and suggestions, as needed for accuracy, safety, and comfort. Co-researchers were free to withdraw at any time. The investigators also provided detailed information regarding the nature and purpose of the study in response to co-researchers' questions prior to selecting research participants; also during the study and following the analysis of data. Because minimal risk was involved in terms of the health and well-being of the participant, rarely did the need for terminating an interview arise, or the need for immediate therapeutic support, or for referral for psychotherapeutic help. In all studies, the designs and processes of data collection were completely open for discussion. The co-researchers often contributed effective ways of guiding the long interview. Information that the investigator considered private, and possibly damaging, was removed or disguised to protect the identity of the research participant. Confidentiality was maintained relevant to the data to be used unless the co-researcher was fully informed and agreed to its use.

The kind of debriefing, suggested by Blanck, Bellack, Rosnow, Rotheram-Borus, and Schooler (1992) for the removal of "any misconceptions and anxieties that the participants have about the research and to leave them with a sense of dignity" (p. 961), was not required in the qualitative studies reported here. Because the interviews were conversational and open-ended, misconceptions were clarified as they occurred, open disclosures were accepted and supported. The importance of self-reports in data collection was emphasized so that the research participant felt his or her contributions were valued as new knowledge on the topic and as an illumination of meanings inherent in the question. The research participant could also review and confirm or alter the research data to correspond to her or his perception of the experience.

VALIDATION OF DATA

A good example of validation of data is borrowed from Humphrey's (1991) study of "searching for life's meaning."

Humphrey interviewed 14 co-researchers in exploring his topic and question. He sent them copies of his synthesis of the textural-structural

description of their experience. He requested of each participant that she or he carefully examine the unified description of the search for life's meaning and that additions and corrections be made. Of the 13 who responded, 8 stated that the synthesis was accurate and that no changes were needed. Humphrey comments:

The fourteenth was contacted twice by mail and twice by phone, but did not respond.

Three offered important suggestions concerning omissions or questions of emphasis. Two indicated that they did not believe that the "dark side" of their search for meaning—the terrifying sense of meaningless or universal chaos which they sometimes experienced—was adequately represented. . . . This was an eye-opening confrontation to me, inviting me to look more closely at my own fear of the existential void and hidden desperation which might lead one to hold onto something rather than risking the apparent abyss of meaninglessness. I had thought that my heuristic exploration of my own search had been thorough. . . . I had been aware that two transcribers had resigned from continuing to work on my project while they were working on two different research interviews right at the point at which the participants were describing comprehensively their fear of meaninglessness. Clearly this is a powerful and difficult aspect of the search for meaning which some of us would rather avoid. Fortunately, the step of participant validation highlighted the reduced emphasis on this aspect. I returned to . . . my own search and also reexamined the research interviews. (pp. 81-82) [Reprinted by permission of the author]

Humphrey revised the "synthesis" statement, significantly expanding the qualities and meanings of the dark side of searching for life's meaning.

REVIEW OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCH LITERATURE

Another method of preparing to conduct a phenomenological study involves review of the professional and research literature connected with the research topic and question. The investigator assesses the prior relevant studies; distinguishes their designs, methodologies, and findings from the investigator's own study; and indicates what new knowledge he or she is seeking and expects to obtain.

Cooper (1989) has identified four major kinds of literature review. The *integrative* review presents the "state of knowledge" relevant to a topic and draws conclusions from the many separate studies that are reviewed. These studies typically define the problem, outline the methods of data collection, evaluate the data, make analyses and interpretations, and present the findings. The *theoretical* review analyzes the theories that account for the existence of the phenomenon. The *methodological* review examines the research methods developed and utilized in the published works. The *thematic* review organizes the core themes presented in the studies and presents their findings within the core themes. Regardless of the approach, both formal and informal methods are used.

In conducting a review, Cooper (1989) emphasizes employing multiple channels. These might include a computer search for abstracts of the psychological and educational literature (e.g., PsychINFO and ERIC), a computer search of the *Social Science Citation Index*, *Books in Print*, and *Dissertation Abstracts International* from which relevant abstracts are obtained and become important resources for more extensive study.

Manual and informal sources might include a follow-up of references cited in review papers on the topic as well as those appearing on book lists obtained from library indexes; browsing in bookstores and libraries; contacts with experts on the topic; conversations with professors and other students; documents of relevant government agencies; studies of comments on the topic from past reviews of the literature; and attendance at professional meetings. In determining the key descriptors for locating references, the *Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms* and comprehensive dictionaries are utilized.

From his survey of 57 authors of research reviews covering psychology and education, Cooper (1989) determined that the significance of the references were derived from various searches. The *most central* were: computer searches of abstract databases, such as ERIC and PsychINFO; manual searches of abstract databases; computer searches of a citation index, such as SSCI; manual searches of a citation index; references in review papers written by others; and references in books written by others (p. 59). The most frequently used were: references in review papers written by others, references in books written by others, communication with people who typically share information with the researcher, references in nonreview papers from journals, and computer searches of abstract databases (Cooper, 1989, p. 59).

Cooper (1989) summarizes the purposes for using the technical and nontechnical literature. The technical literature includes: *theoretical sensitivity* regarding concepts and relationships in order to look for evidence from one's own research that confirms or rejects the relevancy of the concepts and relationships and in order to learn ways of approaching and interpreting one's data; *secondary sources of data* may provide useful interviews and field notes as well as descriptive materials of relevant events, actions, and perspectives of the research participant; *guides to questions* to explore with one's co-researchers; *ideas helpful in developing one's theory*; and *supplementary validation* of the accuracy of one's research findings (pp. 51-52).

The nontechnical literature "can be used as primary data, especially historical and biographical studies. In most studies they [i.e., letters, biographies, diaries, reports, videotapes, and newspapers] are important sources of data, supplementing the most usual interviews and observations" (Cooper, 1989, p. 55).

Trumbull's Study of Coronary Artery Bypass Surgery: Literature Review

Trumbull (1993) in his phenomenological study of coronary artery bypass surgery conducted a computer search of the Medline database covering the years 1980-1991. He located 6,919 citations of articles and dissertations. Eliminating the nonhuman and foreign language studies and restricting the list to psychological, psychiatric, psychosomatic, and psychosocial investigations, he reduced the list to 82 titles.

In a second database, using PsychINFO and covering the same 1980-1991 years, Trumbull obtained a printout of 30 citations, 5 of which were dissertations. Of these, 27 involved psychological and psychosocial impact and the quality-of-life effects of bypass surgery; 2 dealt with the impact on spouse and family; and 1 focused on medication and its impact, after bypass surgery.

Trumbull also used *Sociological Abstracts* for the same period. No citations appeared in the printout relevant to psychological and psychosocial aspects of bypass surgery. However, repeating the search and adding "heart disease," 27 citations appeared; 26 of these were irrelevant to his question. The one relevant listing was with reference to psychosocial impact, outcomes, and quality-of-life effects as a result of bypass surgery.

The fourth database used was *Magazine Index*, which included popular magazine citations. From this, three citations were relevant—two autobiographical accounts of persons who had the surgery and one on psychosocial impact, outcomes, and quality of life.

In his “hands on” search in a major library system, Trumbull found nine books in print that were relevant to his study of the experience of undergoing coronary artery bypass surgery. The list included four that presented educational and informational materials on diet and lifestyle changes aimed at preventing further problems following the surgery; three were autobiographical accounts of individuals who had the surgery; and two were on prevention of further problems through diet and lifestyle changes following surgery.

Trumbull located only one qualitative study. In this study a content analysis of bypass surgery was undertaken.

The research generally, in articles, dissertations, and books, focused on isolated aspects of behavior associated with quantitative outcomes and effects of the coronary artery bypass surgery.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Typically in the phenomenological investigation the long interview is the method through which data is collected on the topic and question.

The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended comments and questions. Although the primary researcher may in advance develop a series of questions aimed at evoking a comprehensive account of the person's experience of the phenomenon, these are varied, altered, or not used at all when the co-researcher shares the full story of his or her experience of the bracketed question.

Often the phenomenological interview begins with a social conversation or a brief meditative activity aimed at creating a relaxed and trusting atmosphere. Following this opening, the investigator suggests that the co-researcher take a few moments to focus on the experience, moments of particular awareness and impact, and then to describe the experience fully. The interviewer is responsible for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively.

Stevick: Study of Anger

In her study of anger, Stevick (1971) chose her research participants on the basis of their ability "to provide full descriptions of their lived experience of anger" (p. 135). Because her research participants were former students and friends (within the age range of her design—between 15 and 18), Stevick knew which girls would be able to provide comprehensive descriptions of their experience of anger. She states, "Method and phenomenon must dialogue; what method will best allow the full emergence of the phenomenon in all its aspects: the situation, the behavior and experience of the subject?" (p. 135). Stevick opened each interview with a broad statement: "Try to remember the last time you were angry and tell me anything you can about the situation, about what you felt, did or said." Additional questions were asked spontaneously during the interview "for clarification and fuller descriptions of their replies" (p. 135). The following excerpt from Stevick's investigation illustrates the open-ended interview process in phenomenological research.

- E: Try to remember one of the last times you were angry and tell me about the situation, how you felt and acted, and what you said.
- S: The last time I was mad it was at my grandmother. I wished she was dead; she's really always getting behind you no matter what you do. It's always wrong, no matter what you do. Like last night we came home, she wanted us to wash clothes. We said, no, that we were working today, so we'd do it later. So she gets all mad and tells us, "Oh, you never do anything right; you never do anything around here." So anything you do is always wrong. So being angry means you can't stand a person . . .
- E: Do you do or say anything when she starts doing that?
- S: I never say anything when she does it, cause I know to keep my mouth shut; she just likes to hear herself talk. So I just say to myself, "Let her talk and she'll have to shut up sooner or later."
- E: While you're angry you said that you think of how you hate her, then later you tell yourself you're going to get away. Do you cool off by telling yourself that?
- S: Yes, I say, "Well, sooner or later you'll be away from here, so . . .
- E: Do you say or do anything when you get angry at other people?
- S: I cry sometimes. When they really say something to you, you just go up to your room and just say, "Why does it have to be me living in this house with these people." And you just cry over it and it's better after you finish crying.

E: Do you ever talk back?

S: Sometimes, usually she doesn't hear me cause if she heard me it would all be over . . .

E: What is this feeling like, that you have to let something out?

S: Because if you don't, well, I feel like it has to come out; I either talk to somebody or I cry or say to myself, "You're going to get out of here." Because if you don't it's all going to build up. (Stevick, 1971, pp. 137-138)

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Sometimes a general interview guide, or topical guide, is used when the co-researcher's story has not tapped into the experience qualitatively and with sufficient meaning and depth. Broad questions, such as the following, may also facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, substantive descriptions of the co-researcher's experience of the phenomenon. The language and timely way in which the questions are posed facilitates full disclosures of the co-researcher's experience.

1. What dimensions, incidents and people intimately connected with the experience stand out for you?
2. How did the experience affect you? What changes do you associate with the experience?
3. How did the experience affect significant others in your life?
4. What feelings were generated by the experience?
5. What thoughts stood out for you?
6. What bodily changes or states were you aware of at the time?
7. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experience?

BEGINNING AN INTERVIEW

Prior to the interview the primary investigator engages in the Epoche process described earlier so that, to a significant degree, past associations, understandings, "facts," biases, are set aside and do not color or direct the interview. Engaging in the Epoche process may also be necessary during the interview.

An example of beginning an interview is taken from Rick Copen's (1992) preliminary work on insomnia.

J = Janet

R = Rick

J: I don't know where. I'm not sure where you want me to start, how to get into this.

R: You can start by describing your experience with insomnia when it first occurred.

J: I still wake up in the middle of the night and I'll go through nights when I wake up and I can't get back to sleep, you know. All thoughts will run through my mind.

R: All thoughts like—

J: Well, concerns, my children. I think about my children and their younger days. I live a lot in the past.

R: Okay, those ruminations at night, they're about the past.

J: And, well the past leading to the future and now and I think about dying a lot. I have very erratic bedtime hours and, um I, you know, am going to the Sleep Disorders Clinic and trying to get me to where I go to bed at a regular time and get up at a regular time.

R: Yes.

J: I eliminate naps . . . when I don't wake up in the middle of the night I can get maybe three or four hours of sleep at night. I'm exhausted the next day and because I don't work now, you know. I'm retired I have the ability to go take a nap, which throws me off kilter again, as far as going to bed early.

R: Early is what time?

J: Like nine, or nine-thirty.

R: And then how long would you sleep?

J: Until about, oh, two.

R: And when you wake up, what's it like?

J: Oh, I'm a very restless sleeper. I'm always rolling over and looking at the clock. And one of my things I have turned the clock to the wall now. I don't find myself looking for the clock 'cause I know it's not there. . . . I don't get a good night's rest. I have dreams. I mean, it seems like every time I wake up I'll go to the bathroom or something. I'm dreaming and the only way I can get back to sleep is to try to get right back to bed and think of the dream and get myself back into it.

R: Oh. And that helps.

J: That's what I've been doing ever since I've been to the clinic.

- R:** So you focus on the dream you've had and where you've left off and somehow that—
- J:** I try to. I don't know whether I dreamed but when I wake up again or when I wake up when I turn, I mean, I'm always turning. I'm a very, very restless sleeper and I don't remember being this restless before.
- R:** . . . When you wake up at 2:00 in the morning, are you wide awake then?
- J:** I am if I get in bed and start thinking. You know, if I start thinking, no matter what it is. I'll have something on my mind you know, and um, for, you know, and I'll start. If I think about anything in the present, my present life then I won't go back to sleep and I can get off on tangents and other thoughts and I'll stay awake for several hours.
- R:** You're waking up then is kind of a gradual thing at two in the morning? And then you'll start thinking?
- J:** When I wake up it must be when I turn over or when I look at the clock and if I start thinking of something immediately then. If I look and I see it's three thirty sometimes I'll think, oh, great. I'm going to be awake again. Or sometimes I'll think, Oh, I've only got two more hours before, you know. Then I'll start thinking. You know, it depends on how I feel about myself. You know, I'm extremely, my life seems to be centered around my weight, and if I'm thinner I feel better and I like myself. I've recently lost forty pounds through an Opti-Fast program, and I've put on ten of it. I don't like it. And so I'm upset and if I wake up in the middle of the night the first thing I think of, I go to the bathroom and I get on the scales in the middle of the night to see if I've lost any weight. [Reprinted by permission of the author]

ORGANIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Organization of data begins when the primary researcher places the transcribed interviews before him or her and studies the material through the methods and procedures of phenomenal analysis. The procedures include *horizontalizing* the data and regarding every horizon or statement relevant to the topic and question as having equal value. From the horizontalized statements, the *meaning or meaning units* are listed. These are *clustered* into common categories or *themes*, removing overlapping and repetitive statements. The clustered themes and meanings are used to develop the *textural descriptions of the experience*. From the textural descriptions, structural descriptions and an integration of

textures and structures into the meanings and essences of the phenomenon are constructed.

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