

Ordinary Women Making Ordinary Magic:

Loss and Resilience Through Auto/Ethnography



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Purpose

This study was intended to explore the resilience processes intersection with the grieving experience by delving into narratives of loss from women in my family and extended family, including myself. I also wanted to develop my own identity and cultivate my own resilience to help myself enact anticipatory resilience, specifically using stories as a resource for resilience.

Relevant Concepts

Auto/ethnography can be described as “an autobiographical research genre, displaying multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to cultural.” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739, as cited in Murray, 2023).

Loss is an unavoidable aspect of life that is often associated with death, although death is not the only type of loss that an individual can experience

Resilience is seen as a “constitutive process through which people reintegrate and actively construct their new normal through language, interaction, networks, and attention to their identities and identifications, within their material environments and societal discourses” (Buzzanell, 2019, p. 68)

Final Thoughts

- 5 main aspects relating to CTR processes helped participants to enact resilience:
 - Having a strong support system, specifically in family
 - Acceptance of adverse events
 - Open and honest communication
 - Having something to look forward to or setting a goal
 - Maintaining and establishing a routine

Communication Theory of Resilience (CTR)

Communication Theory of Resilience, also known as CTR, is a dynamic theory that highlights specific ways in which resilience can be enacted. This theory, attributed to researcher Patrice Buzzanell (2010) proposes that people create resilience through 5 distinct processes:

- 1 Crafting normalcy
- 2 Affirming identity anchors
- 3 Maintaining and using communication networks
- 4 Constructing alternative logics
- 5 Foregrounding productive action while backgrounding negative emotions

Methodology

My main method of this research involved constructing personal narratives and three semi-structured narrative interviews. I also gathered information and stories from family members. I created a list of eleven questions to serve as my interview guide that had a range of topics to probe for certain answers about CTR and resilience in general, as well as loss.

- A large limitation within my project was that all participants were white. I would recommend expanding this research to minority communities and families to gain a more accurate understanding into enacting resilience.
- This project helped me to enact my own resilience and to develop my identity further.