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## The lived experience of breast cancer in the surveillance phase of recovery: A liminal process

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**Background:** Breast cancer is one of the most prevalent types of cancer today among women of all ages. Many women are being diagnosed each year and learning to cope with a chronic illness. Accompanying the victory of survivorship, however, are challenges in the surveillance phase of recovery. Surveillance is the time after surgery, chemotherapy and /or radiation is complete and the patient is continues to be receiving regular scheduled check-ups by the oncologist. Breast cancer survivors face many fears during this period of time, including fear of recurrence, loss of health, or fear of dying from the disease to name a few.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to illuminate the lived experience of women after they have undergone their treatment regime for breast cancer and have entered the surveillance phase of recovery. This study gave a voice to the women's experience through their life story and the resiliency they demonstrated while transitioning to a new life within the context of illness.

**Methods:** A purposive sample of 13 women ages 25-75 years old from survivorship clinics in south Florida was selected to explore the question: What is the lived experience of women with breast cancer in the surveillance phase of recovery? Data collection was gathered with one-hour semi-structured interviews and was audio- taped, transcribed for verification, and member checked by the researcher. Data analysis included interpretation and description of textual writing guided by van Manen's (1990) six activities of research methodology.

**Results:** The themes that arose from the study were transience, transition, and acceptance. Liminality was the foundational essence of the themes in this study and was paramount in creating a pathway to moving forward as well as understanding the ambiguity and uncertainty experienced by women affected by breast cancer.

**Conclusion:** This research study exposed the complexities of the health challenges confronting women living with breast cancer while in the surveillance phase of recovery. A significant element of this lived experience understood the threshold between wellness and illness which the women unreservedly shared. Gaps in current literature highlight the need for additional research to understand the utility of liminality in all stages in the survivorship trajectory.

### Biography

Amado Patricia Kathryn received her undergraduate nursing degree from DeSales University (BSN), her Master's degree in Nursing Education MS(Ed), from Florida Atlantic University and her PhD from Barry University. She is currently enrolled in a FNP program to enhance her clinical expertise. Her areas of teaching include undergraduate and graduate courses across the curriculum as well as under graduate student advisement and mentorship. Her research is focused on areas of breast cancer and creating healthy transition post treatment. She is also recognized as a speaker in the nursing profession. She has spoken at international conferences and schools of nursing regarding her creation of luminal pathways in transitioning through chronic illness. Her research formed the basis of a concept analysis framework which she is developing to advance nursing practice. Her past and present positions include Sigma Theta Tau, Delta Epsilon Iota International Honor Society and are an active member of the NLN and the ISNCC.

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