Heather MacDonald

University of New Brunswick, Canada

Getting back into the game: Returning to work after depression

In this grounded theory study, 40 English speaking women from a rural province of Canada were interviewed to learn about their experiences of returning to work after a depression. Women described getting back in the game as being difficult and challenging as they have not completely recovered by the time they returned to work. However, they felt compelled to return to work in order to keep their jobs, in order to resume health and social benefits, and to reinstate their wages. A number of themes emerged from the interview data. These included the presence of stigma, the active pursuit of silence and battling adversity. Each of these core themes serves to describe the women's experiences of returning to work. The women described wearing a mask or "putting on a face" to combat the stigma associated with their illness. In this presentation, the three themes will be discussed along with a thorough description of wearing a mask. Strategies that employers can employ to ease the transition back to work will be discussed.

Biography

Heather MacDonald completed a Master's degree in Nursing at the University of Toronto, Canada and a PhD at the University of Manchester in the UK. Currently, she is a Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of New Brunswick, Canada. Her Doctoral work examined respite for parents who were caring for children who required complex care. This paper comes from that work.

heatherm@unb.ca

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