

This research is dedicated to my family



UNIVERSITY  
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## SUMMARY

When a stepfamily is formed, the members have no shared family histories or shared ways of doing things, and they may have different beliefs. There is considerable evidence in stepfamilies that adjusting to new relationships is difficult and leads to many unhealthy conditions. This research was carried out for the purpose of investigating the experiences stepfamilies have in their relationships and the implications for mental health. The objective of the research were to:

- Explore and describe the experiences of family members in stepfamily relationships and the implications for mental health.
- Describe guidelines as a framework for the advanced psychiatric nurse practitioners to support stepfamilies to mobilise the available resources to promote, maintain and restore the mental health as integral part of their health and wholeness.

The paradigmatic perspective in this study was guided by the Theory of Health Promotion in Nursing (Nursing Department 2001:3-8, Rand Afrikaans University) which reflected and provided the focus on the whole person (body, mind and spirit), as well as the parameters for nursing service and beliefs in the nature of man, health, illness and nursing.

A functional approach was followed (Botes, 1991:2) based on the model for conducting study (Botes, 1998:9). The qualitative, descriptive, explorative and contextual design prepared by Mouton and Marais (1996:43:44) was utilised. The use of in-depth semi-structured interview (phenomenological) as utilised as a data collection in this study Field notes were taken after every interview. Permission to conduct this study was granted by the participants and the authorities at the clinic.

Steps were taken throughout the study process to ensure trustworthiness using Guba's model (in Krefting, 1991:212-216) in which four aspects of trustworthiness namely truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality were considered.

Data analysis was done through the descriptive method by Tesch (in Creswell, 1944:155). The services of an independent coder were utilised and consensus discussion between the independent coder and the researcher were held in which the identified themes were confirmed

Themes were also reflected upon and utilised within the Theory for Health Promotion in Nursing (Nursing Department 2001: 3-8, Rand Afrikaans University), with reporting the results after data analysis, a literature control was engaged into for the purpose of highlighting similarities and differences between the results of this research and other studies conducted in the past.

Tabulation of the results was done according to the main theme and categories as shown in Table 3.1 in Chapter three.

Conclusions were drawn and guidelines described for advanced psychiatric nurse practitioners to support stepfamilies to mobilise the available resources to promote, maintain and restore the mental health as an integral part of their health and wholeness. Recommendations concerning nursing practice, nursing education and nursing research were also stated in this research.

