A 4 stage model described how clients and their relatives experienced the process of developing schizophrenia

**COMMENTARY**

The qualitative study by Barker et al adds to the current understanding of the lived experiences of individuals with schizophrenia and their families. The authors described their analysis in sufficient detail, enabling readers to easily grasp their process. It adds to existing knowledge by using a narrative approach.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous qualitative studies of living with schizophrenia. An enduring sense of self, which has been challenged by early illness experiences, continues to be important. This study also reinforces that the prodromal period is fraught with difficulties for clients and families.

This study had a small sample size, even for qualitative research. If client-family dyads are considered, only 8 stories were examined. Although the paired participant approach assists in establishing the "truth" of the experiences, the study should be replicated with other pairs in other settings.

Clinicians interested in working closely with individuals with schizophrenia and/or their families will find this paper useful. It suggests that (1) prodromal issues may be related to changes in behaviour or strained relationships, (2) clinicians should listen carefully to the concerns of clients and their families during the first hospital admission, and (3) clients and families may feel that despite years of treatment, they still lack adequate explanations. Clinicians should be encouraged by the recent publication of qualitative studies, particularly narratives. These stories contain some potential approaches that may be useful when a clinician is at a loss about what to try next with a specific individual.

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