

Grounded theory: Toolkit or Toolbox?

Methodological Explorations in Health Research

Symposium as part of Royal College of Nursing
International Research Conference 2021

Presenters:

Rev Dr Alasdair Gordon-Finlayson, University of Northampton

Dr Jacquie Ridge, University of Northampton

Dr Fiona Barchard, University of Northampton

Dr Lee Yarwood-Ross, University of Wolverhampton

Chair: Dr Lee Yarwood-Ross

Symposium background:

Since grounded theory's (GT) inception (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), scholars have adapted the original method to suit epistemic and pragmatic requirements (Bryant 2019). GT has been used in nursing research in a myriad of ways to generate new knowledge in diverse substantive areas. This symposium explores and celebrates ways in which GT researchers have capitalised on earlier approaches to produce insightful health research. Dr Alasdair Gordon-Finlayson will introduce the symposium demonstrating that grounded theory methods can work both as a toolkit – an array of procedures and techniques that can be adapted, blended or borrowed by other methodologies – or a toolbox – a complete and self-contained methodology. Applying insight to the 'toolkit', Dr Jacquie Ridge will explore the use of Visual Grounded Theory to investigate Authentic Identity: Construction and Sustainability of Professional Identity in Adult Nursing. Dr Fiona Barchard's use of Social Constructionist GT, in which she develops a theory of adult nurses' understanding and use of courage in their professional nursing practice, demonstrates more of a 'toolbox', though one in which she is still able to adapt GT to a specific epistemological position. Similarly, Dr Lee Yarwood-Ross will discuss the 'toolbox' approach, but where he adopts a more purely Classic (Glaserian) methodology in his work exploring how veterans with combat-related limb-loss resulting from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts engaged in a basic social process of 'facing losses'. Finally, Professor Cathy Urquhart will discuss the continuum of the 'toolkit and toolbox' of GT, reflecting on her study of internet forums use in Chronic Care Management. She will use these experiences to pose the following questions: What does pluralism mean in grounded theory research? When does a grounded theory study become a non-grounded theory study? What key aspects must exist for a study to be called a grounded theory study? [Prof Urquhart withdrew from the symposium]