



AN AMAZING VACATION EXPERIENCE AND NOT ONLY FOR CHILDREN

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INTRODUCTION

- Jordan River Village is the only overnight camp in the Middle East for children coping with chronic diseases and children with special needs.
- The camp is one of 16 camps around the world belonging to the international organization founded by Paul Newman.
- The village operates all year long and holds about 40 vacation sessions a year, hosting about 1500 campers a year; children and youth aged 9-18 from all sectors of the state of Israel (Jews - secular, religious and ultra-orthodox, Druze, Circassians, Muslims, Bedouins, Christians and children from the Palestinian Authority and Gaza).
- The village has an innovative and elaborate medical center, staffed all year round by doctors and nurses who are authorized to take care of the children. The village team is reinforced by a professional volunteer staff.
- The volunteer nurses play an independent and/or complementary role for the clinic staff.
- The focus is on the child and not his/her illness, on “yes” for many children who are used to hearing “no”/ “be careful.”



METHODOLOGY

- Seven nurses (six pediatric nurses & one ER nurse) wrote a reflective journal about their volunteering in Jordan River Village.
- Content analysis was used to analyze their journals.
 - The stages:
First stage - Open coding
Second stage - Hermeneutic inquiry

RESULTS - C E N T R A L T H E M E S

1 Mastery

Preparation for something unknown

"I had no idea what to expect-I thought the kids would be extremely sick. But with a lot of them, you'd actually have no idea that they had an illness."

Networking

" A colleague spoke about the wonderful project of the Jordan River Village and expressed great satisfaction with her volunteer work. She encouraged other nurses to volunteer."

Moving beyond one's comfort zone

" Before I left for the village, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute my time and professional knowledge to the sick children."

Maturity

" I was 47 and I thought, what else can I do with my life? I realized that I could use my knowledge and skills in other places and volunteering in the village seemed to be an empowering experience."

2 Reframing

Subcategories:

Re-conceptualization of the nursing professional knowledge and role:

"Giving, without asking for any recognition, gives great satisfaction."

Blurring professional boundaries in a nurse-child interaction: "I realized that I could do the same, just be there ... without giving too much importance to my role or contribution."

To let free of nursing stereotypes

perception about sickness: "The children teach me to see the "half full glass."

3 Circles of Influence

"I have had very significant personal and professional connections with a group of volunteers. We make sure to get to the same vacation session year after year."

4 Parallel Process

"My (one the nurses son) son was also very well integrated into the village life. He joined the group of children and took part in all activities. He was just there with them, not distinguishing himself from the sick children. He was a child like them, and they accepted him like that "

5 Atmosphere of Tolerance

"I eagerly anticipate driving down to the village entrance where my heart will reopen“

CONCLUSIONS

1. Pediatric nurses volunteer staff contribute to creating a more successful therapeutic environment that also focuses on the leisure time of a sick child. And helps enlarge the perception of the volunteer staff.
2. A more balanced daily context expands the repertoire of communication & interpersonal skills of the volunteer nurses influences the perception of a pediatric nurse's volunteer. It opens a different perspective of the pediatric nurse's volunteer.
3. Deepening the holistic and spiritual perception of pediatric nurses volunteers of the essence of illness in children, their growth and coping processes, and the way they make their meaning from their illness.