

AN EXPLORATION OF LIFE PATTERNS IN MIDLIFE AFRICAN  
AMERICAN WOMEN WITH TYPE-2 DIABETES:  
A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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**Purpose:** The phenomenon of interest of this study was life patterns of midlife African American women with type-2 diabetes utilizing Margaret Newman's Theory of Health as Expanding Consciousness and protocol for research.

**Method:** Newman's praxis research methodology and van Manen's phenomenological method were utilized for the generation and analysis of data. A multiple strategy approach for data generation was used and saturation was reached with eight participants. Two audio taped interviews were held with each participant. In the first interview, participants were asked to describe the most meaningful persons or events in their lives and what it was like to live with type-2 diabetes. During the second interview, participants were presented a diagram that depicted their life patterns and what it was like to live with type-2 diabetes. The participants were given the opportunity to confirm, clarify, and elaborate on the diagram. Through bracketing, self-reflection and phenomenological reduction, the researcher came to know the enduring patterns, emergent essential structures and the synthesis of unity.

**Findings:** Two essential structures emerged: a) being there and being with others, with substructures of relationships with family, friends and marriage, church and leadership roles and achievements and work; and b) hindrance to being there and being with others. The synthesis of unity, life of service, emerged from these structures. Group similarities and individual differences among the participants were explained utilizing Young's Spectrum of Human [Development].

**Discussion:** Methods for diabetes education should be evaluated and redesigned. Nurses must enter the person's life world and offer educational interventions that fit into their work and according to their life patterns and what is meaningful to them. Further research must focus on whether or not this strategy is effective in altering the course of diabetes and the complications caused by this disease.