How eating disorders impact social identity

Description

The subject is social identity, health, and illness

I am required to write an 8 page (no more no less) essay double spaced, with a proper reference page with 6-8 sources in APA 6th ed format. The sources need to be peer-reviewed and academic articles from my school library (McMaster)

The instructions say to connect these academic sources to course material, concepts, and theories where we are to discuss and analyze a specific case of our choice where personal and social identity is impacted by illness and or health.

I wanted to focus my paper on how eating disorders directly impact a person's social identity, go through some case study examples, and find how and why their identities are impacted.

The course material mainly focuses on a movie called "a child's grief" where children who suffer from trauma regain their social identity through storytelling.

Therefore, I think it would be best to demonstrate and find academic articles proving how storytelling, narrative, and journals have helped people with eating disorders regain their social identity.

This concept can also connect to an article we discussed in a class called:

Ryan, Ellen Bouchard. (2006). Finding a New Voice: Writing Through Health Adversity. Journal of Language and Social Psychology, Volume 25, Number 4, 423- 436.

and

Pennebaker, and Seagal 1999, forming a story: health benefits of narrative. journal of clinical psychology

where these two articles can be used to connect storytelling and overcoming illness and the importance of narratives

We also need to focus on some theories. I want to focus on stigma and labeling models where society tends to decide what is perceived as 'normal', the impact of stigma for example how others' opinions on one's mental illness can impact their social identity and other class concepts about stigma: are 1. existential stigma and 2.achieved stigma and relate this to the social identity model. This concept is also shown in the Bryan article and I would like to involve that in the essay.

Other class concepts we have learned:

the value of narratives and the application of their analysis shown in

Freedom, (1997) "I'm lighting my own lantern now"

and "I won't make a place for you in my heart" also by freedom 1997

we also learned about: the strategy of narratives and their health benefits >>> shown in

pepper and widely 2009, "using narratives as a strategy, qualitative research journal

we can also talk about the feminist theory and why eating disorders develop in so many young females and relate this to their social identity but the main class concepts is stigma

Some academic articles I have found are...

Kenny, T. E., Boyle, S. L., & Lewis, S. P. (2019). #recovery: Understanding recovery from the lens of recovery‐focused blogs posted by individuals with lived experience. International Journal of Eating Disorders, 53(8), 1234-1243. doi:10.1002/eat.23221

Matsumoto, A., & Rodgers, R. F. (2020). A review and integrated theoretical model of the development of body image and eating disorders among midlife and aging men. Clinical Psychology Review, 81, 101903. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2020.101903

McNamara, N., & Parsons, H. (2016). ‘Everyone here wants everyone else to get better’: The role of social identity in eating disorder recovery. British Journal of Social Psychology, 55(4), 662-680. doi:10.1111/bjso.12161

Somaiah, C. (2010). Cybergrace among eating disorder survivors in Singapore. Emerging Practices in Cyberculture and Social Networking, 69(1), 179-195. doi:10.1163/9789042030831\_011

Walters, B. H., Adams, S., Broer, T., & Bal, R. (2016). Proud2Bme: Exploratory research on care and control in young women’s online eating disorder narratives. Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine, 20(3), 220-241. doi:10.1177/1363459315574118

and some notes I made on the articles...

Topic- How eating disorders impact social identity and the solutions storytelling can provide.

Brief Definition of eating disorders-

“characterized as fulfilling social-psychological needs such as conquering feelings of worthlessness, cultivating feelings of success, and achieving positive distinctiveness from others” (McNamara & Parsons, 2016, p.663)

Thesis- Being labeled as having an eating disorder allows for society to shame, stigmatize, and misunderstand individuals in order to control their identities (Somaiah, 2010). However, the use of; blogs, metaphors, and imagination through storytelling are used for the individual to regain control and understand their illness that ultimately regains their identity.

Narrative #1 - Cybergrace among Eating Disorder Survivors in Singapore

Gayle was diagnosed with ED

took up weight loss skipped meals, threw up and took laxatives

Insomnia, obsessive exercise, baking adventures, experiences of being at the ward and meals there, and reactions to various medications are shared.

Instead of succumbing to her ED, she regained control over it through storytelling

Gayle personified her ED and referred to it as an abusive lover

She tells her ED “to go play with someone else, I’m quite done playing with you” (Somaiah, 2010, pp.185-186).

She then decided to ‘divorce her ED’ (methaphor)

Dawn, a 23-year-old community outreach executive used to suffer from anorexia (Somaiah, 2010, pp.182)

Summons the name of Jesus in her narratives to ‘curcumsise’(sic) her ED thoughts (Somaiah, 2010, pp.182)

Writes how “Jesus doesn’t want Dawn to starve” “God needs to be put again as a priority, and promises, ‘I WILL FIGHT WITH THE UNFAILING STRENGTH OF THE LORD TO EAT LIKE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING’ (Somaiah, 2010, p.182).

Analysis of theory and vocabulary #1- Gayle

This powerful use of a metaphor, allowed Gayle to regain her social identity.

allowed her to express how she really felt about her ED, that she wanted it to go away, and was done with it.

The metaphors provided emotional and spiritual support against the enemy, the eating disorder (Somaiah, 186).

By typing her thoughts, she self-reflected and self-medicated to regain control over her situation and regain social identity

Analysis of theory and vocabulary #2- Dawn

Dawn uses God to address her emotions of anorexia

This allows her to express, explain, and interpret her illness that ultimately validates herself through recovery (Walter & Adams et al., 2016).

Dawn says that God wants her to eat, which contributes to her own inner devils and allows herself to eat

allowed them to control difficult thoughts and feelings, eventually, they took over the ED and they no longer felt unable to manage their actions (Kenny & Boyle et al., p.1238).

Theoretical framework- Social identity theory

Narrative #2 - Cybergrace among Eating Disorder Survivors in Singapore

entity relies on validation from valued groups in society (people of power) (Matsumoto & Rodgers, 2020)

We often compare ourselves to others, which results in our identity being formed by others (Matsumoto & Rodgers, 2020)

When people are labeled with having an eating disorder, their social identity becomes lost

“blogs noted social support, regaining control over the ED, recognizing self-worth, and realizing the costs of having an ED as contributing to the recovery” (Kenny & Boyle et al., 2019, p.1235)