Depression Assessment and Psychosocial Interventions for Cancer Survivors and Their Partners

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Theoretical Perspectives and Background

I have a contextualist perspective to practice and research because I believe that depression in cancer cannot be understood or treated without considering the context, including the people within the context, in this case the cancer survivor and family members (Badger, 2008). This perspective grew from early in my career as an advanced practice nurse in psychiatric mental health nursing in a Veteran’s Administration (VA) mental health clinic. I was exposed to some key theories, such as family systems theories (Broderick, 1993), interpersonal relations in nursing theory (Peplau, 1995), and the diathesis-stress vulnerability theories of depression (Rohde, Lewinsohn, & Seeley, 1990). In my practice, my clients seemed to have depression and some type of life-threatening or chronic illness and their family members or partners suffered from depression as well. I use the term partner rather than family member because of the changing dynamics of the U.S. family (Segrin & Flora, 2005), with more than half of...