

https://dspace.org/

The effectiveness of existing mental health treatment facilities at the University of the Witwatersrand: perspective of students from rural areas

Mbonambi, Nyameka

2021
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/33839

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

The newfound transformation in 1994 brought hopes for transformation. Transformation for black students meant that they could attend universities and study degrees previously reserved for whites; many students moved from rural to the universities located in urban areas hoping for a better future. The shift from rural areas to urban areas simultaneously brings excitement and anxiety for black students who leave their homes with a hope to obtain a degree at a university such as the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). This research study is concerned with an understanding of whether mental health treatment facilities at The University of the Witwatersrand are sufficient in addressing their mental health needs. To understand how the student perceived these services the enquiry used Experienced-Cantered Narrative (ECN) as the theoretical framework. The aim of the study was to examine the effectiveness of mental health facilities for students coming from rural areas in SA. Foucault's construction of power helped the researcher how the construction of students as subjects of knowledge positions them within Wits. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness allowed for an examination of how students see themselves in relation to campus mental health facilities as social fields. Guided by qualitative narrative methodology, the study attempts to understand the complexities of mental health and mental health treatment for black students coming from rural SA. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 students, 2 for testing and the other 10 active participants. The main findings of the study indicate that discourses of class, race, language and geographic location, combined with hidden nuances of intersections such as socio-political history play a significant role in how students understand mental health and mental health facilities. The findings indicate the importance of attending to hidden nuances when treating mental health. The study argues that to create an inclusive mental health treatment the facilities should focus on bringing diversity and inclusion of lived experiences when policies are formulated.

Key words: mental health, phenomenology, psychosocial analysis, power and space, decolonization, rural spaces, urban spaces, African psychology, Critical Diversity Literacy