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Doctoral Dissertation Defense of
Penny S. Minor
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Counselor Education and Supervision

The Caregiving Experiences of Adult Children Who Were Primary Caregivers to a Parent with Dementia: A Phenomenological Study

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

TBD
Penny S. Minor

M.A., School Counseling,
Kent State University, 1988

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Penny is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor with a supervision endorsement (LPCC-S) in the state of Ohio. She has over 25 years of mental health counseling experience in a variety of settings, including community mental health centers, inpatient geriatric psychiatric units, schools, and home-based programs. She is employed as a psychotherapist in a community mental health center. Penny is a volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corp and is currently working toward her certification in grief counseling.

While pursuing her doctoral degree, Penny was a teaching fellow. She also was an adjunct instructor for the Counselor Education and Supervision Program and the Human Development and Family Studies Program at Kent State University.

Penny’s current research interests include caregiving for older adults, complicated grief, and innovative instructional practices in higher education.

The Caregiving Experiences of Adult Children Who Were Primary Caregivers to a Parent with Dementia: A Phenomenological Study

The purpose of this descriptive phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of adult children who were primary caregivers to a parent diagnosed with dementia. A descriptive phenomenological methodology was used to describe and illuminate the lived experiences of dementia caregiving. Eight co-researchers were recruited from Northeast Ohio through online and on-site advertisements. The following research question guided this study: What were the lived experiences of adult children who were primary caregivers to a parent with dementia? Two face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were utilized to collect data. During these interviews, the co-researchers were asked questions regarding their experiences as adult children who were primary caregivers to a parent with dementia.

Data analysis was conducted using Colaizzi’s descriptive phenomenological method. Additionally, NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer program, was used to organize the data. Five themes emerged from the data analysis consisting of prominent caregiving roles inherent throughout the co-researchers’ caregiving careers: (a) advocate/protector, (b) liaison, (c) decision maker, (d) direct care provider for ADLs, and (e) mourner/griever.