ABSTRACT

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Master Thesis What are you saying when you are silent?
CARING SCIENCE Silence as an expression of suffering
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The aim of this study is to increase the understanding of silence and the relationship between silence and human suffering. The purpose is to understand silence as an expression of suffering but also as a phenomena in all caring. The first research questions is “What is silence?” and the second question is “How can we understand a patient's silence as an expression of suffering?”

The theoretical background in this study is based on the caring science tradition developed at the Åbo Akademi University by Katie Eriksson. The metodological approach is hermeneutical and inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer. The interpretation is based on 6 narratives written in the fall 2011 by nurses working in psychiatric care units.

The interpretation of the narratives is based on a hermeneutic dialogue. The dialogue is seen as a movement between questions and answers. The results describe silence as a phenomena. The study also indicates that silence can be an expression of suffering but also a suffering itself. The essence of silence is multidimensional and dynamic. The dimensions of silence are: a silent silence, a silence that creates silence, the unsilent silence, the protective silence, the silent community and silence as a playingcard. Silence can increase suffering, suffering can deepen the silence, silence can hide suffering and suffering can disappear in the silence. Silence can also alleviate suffering and can therefore be understood as a dimension of health.