

# Lived Experience of Suffering Through the 2010 Haiti Earthquake

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## BACKGROUND

- Worldwide disasters are occurring more frequently and becoming increasingly deadly.
- In just the past two decades, earthquakes accounted for more deaths than all other natural hazards combined (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), 2016).
- On January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced a 7.0 magnitude earthquake causing between 222,750 to 316,000 deaths and approximately 310,928 wounded (IFRC, 2014a).
- The 2010 Haiti earthquake serves as a stark reminder of the “inequality and the disproportionate price that poor people living in low-and-middle-income countries pay regarding human suffering as a result of earthquakes and climate-related hazards” (UNISDR, 2016, p. 3).

## PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

Purpose: To explore the lived experience of suffering through the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Objectives:

- Examine the phenomenon of suffering as a lived experience in natural disaster and specifically through the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.
- Explore how suffering as a lived experience informs emerging global health issues.
- Explore aesthetics to co-create meaning in nursing & advance caring science.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Katie Eriksson’s Theory of Caritative Caring

- This caring encounter becomes the catalyst by which suffering can yet again be understood as bearable, a means by which the nurse can bear witness and acknowledge the suffering as a uniquely individual experience.
- Alleviation of human suffering is the heart of all forms of caring, the motive for care for nursing (Eriksson, 1992).

## DESIGN & METHODS

Design: Phenomenological Qualitative design was adopted for this study and approved by Florida Atlantic University’s Institutional Review Board

Sampling\*: Purposeful sample of Haitian English language speakers who experienced suffering through the 2010 earthquake in Haiti were invited by key informants

Sample: Thirteen interviews were conducted over a four-day period in July of 2015 in both Leogane and Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Procedure:

- Approval obtained from Florida Atlantic University IRB
- Semi-structured interviews using broad, open-ended questions initiated discussion with participants about their experience of suffering through the 2010 Haiti earthquake

## DATA ANALYSIS

- Audio-recorded interviews transcribed using a professional transcription service.
- Once transcribed, the researcher listened to the digital audio-recordings to ensure that each transcript had been transcribed verbatim.
- Based on the Heideggerian interpretive tradition, a seven-stage process of analysis of narrative texts was used (Diekelman, Allen and Tanner, 1989)

Participant’s stories are richly contextualized and deeply profound. Accurate articulation of the participant’s lived experience, calls for a more nuanced language of expression in the form of artistic and aesthetic presentation (Eriksson, 2007).

Everything the researcher understands is in contexts; whether physical, emotional, political, cultural or historical (Freeman, 2014). Contextual features are not employed to organize our seeing, but rather we see within the multiple spaces that come alive in the complexity of existence.

## PRELIMINARY FINDINGS



Experiencing the Unimaginable

Adapting to a New Reality



Being Changed

Suffering through the 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Fearing Condition for Loved Ones

Moving through the Experience

Losing Everything that Meant Something



## CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- Katie Eriksson (2006) suggests that all categories of professional caregivers may unconsciously cause suffering in caring as a “result of an absence of reflection and lack of knowledge of human suffering” (p. 89).
- Findings of this research will contribute to the theoretical knowledge needed by nurses to care for persons suffering through the experience of a natural disaster and generate global dialogues necessary to advance caring science within the disciplinary practice of nursing.
- Johnston (2013) suggests the praxis of suffering in nursing will first require a “profound understanding of the phenomenon of suffering itself” (p. 230).