

The significance of blog writing in the psychological process of young cancer survivors

A discussion of two cases through semi-structured interviews

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Abstract

In light of the large numbers of Internet blogs written by cancer survivors, the objective of the current research is to clarify the significance of blog writing in the psychological process of young cancer survivors.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with two young (under 35 years) cancer survivors who write blogs about their struggle with cancer. Narratives extracted from verbatim records of the interviews were classified into following three categories: “inward,” “outward in the Internet world,” and “outward in the real world.”

As a result, by facing their situation and building relationships with others through their blogs, survivors reconstruct the meaning of life, which had been lost during the treatment. In addition, the relationships with other survivors in the Internet world developed into companionships in the real world. Survivors enhance their psychological recovery by developing more intimate relationships with coeval survivors in the real world, and, accordingly, gradually lose their dependence on their blogs. The survivors keep their blogs going even after losing their dependence on them in order to support other survivors.

The establishment of relationships in the real world ultimately has great importance for young cancer survivors. Blogs seem to mediate between bruised mental state and the actual world. In other words, the blogs serve as the “transitional object” propounded by Winnicott.