PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR PEER HELPERS TO MONITOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to tell the story of how four peer helpers within the Unisa Peer Help Volunteer Programme managed their portfolio development processes to monitor their growth and development which took place as a result of their involvement in peer helper activities.

The epistemological framework of this study is interpretive and involved in-depth interviews with four peer helpers who rendered volunteer services at the University of South Africa and have been developing their career portfolios over a period of time. Hermeneutics was the method used to analyse the data.

The stories of the four participants were transcribed and retold by the researcher in the form of themes that emerged. This study contained the stories of how the participants initially struggled to understand the concept and purpose of portfolios; how they took charge of the process; and how their attitudes changed from uncertainty and confusion to viewing the process as worthwhile - thus enabling them to commit themselves, to varying degrees, to the development of their individual portfolios. Recurring themes present in all four stories were described in the researcher's story of the participants' stories.

The information generated by this study could serve as guidelines for not only peer helpers interested in developing their own portfolios, but also for project leaders involved in the management of peer helper groups and who plan to implement portfolios in their programmes.

Key words: Peer help/ing, peer counselling, peer helper/counsellor, portfolio management, portfolio development, career portfolio/s, South African and international contexts, interpretive methods, qualitative research, hermeneutics, stories.

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