

A Phenomenological Study of Lived Experiences of Aging Network Care Managers of Working with Older Adults During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The study sought to understand the lived experiences of Care managers employed by aging networks and the role they played during the Covid-19 pandemic to help older adults living in the community maintain their independence. The Covid-19 pandemic propelled care managers to navigate new challenges by developing innovative ways of providing services to older adults. Purposive sampling was used (n=15) to recruit Care Managers to participate in focus groups. Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo-12 software. Five themes emerged from the data: Older Adults with Mental Health, Emotional Distress, Challenges Accessing Resources, A Shift to the Care Management Role, and Support from Management. The essence of the experience was that care managers who work in the aging network play a significant role in the lives of older adults living in the community by providing community-based long-term services and support. During Covid-19, the role of the care managers was amplified with care managers providing psychological and emotional support to older adults due to the shortage of mental health providers. Working with limited resources, care managers were able to identify innovative ways of providing services during this public health crisis.

Keywords: Care Managers, Covid-19, Mental Health, Older Adult, Home Care, Aging Networks