

## ABSTRACT

Despite a wealth of knowledge that demonstrates middle-aged and older gay men experience substantial health inequities when compared to heterosexual men, little information is available pertaining to the health and illness practices of gay men.

This dissertation includes three research objectives from the overarching aim of exploring middle-aged and older gay men's health and illness practices. Data were collected via conversational interviews with 25 men who self-identified as gay. Data analysis was informed by grounded theory methods as per Charmaz (2006) to enable appreciation of how contextual circumstances potentially influenced health and illness practices. The first objective, examining how middle-aged and older gay men developed resilience over the life course to promote health and wellness, provided essential context for the second research objective: to describe the processes by which middle-aged and older gay men manage their health. The third objective was central to understanding health and illness practices: how middle-aged and older gay men experience mental health and the strategies they employed to mitigate the deleterious effects of mental health challenges.

The findings demonstrated that resilience was developed over the life course by: (1) building and sustaining networks, (2) addressing mental health, and (3) advocating for self. Men enacted resilience to overcome adversity, the core process to health management, via three overarching and interrelated processes: (1) advocating for health needs, (2) knowing about health issues and treatments, and (3) engaging in health promoting practices. Mental health was central to health and illness practices as men experienced and addressed mental health challenges by: (1) gaining new perspectives of mental health over time, (2) reaching out to formal health services for support with mental health challenges, and (3) engaging in practices to maintain and improve psychological well-being.

These findings highlight the influence of age, experience, historical and ongoing discrimination and capacity to health and illness practices. Consequently, meaningful and effective health services must be developed with recognition of men's strengths and capacities amidst discrimination. Potential approaches to health service development and delivery to improve health outcomes include equity-oriented primary health care, trauma-informed care, social public health approaches and peer-based services and resources.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Place of Birth: New Westminster, Canada

Academic Studies: MSN University of British Columbia, 2011  
B.ScN University of Toronto, 2006  
B.Sc. McMaster University, 2003

Current Position: Ph.D. candidate, UBC  
Nurse Educator, Camosun College

## GRADUATE STUDIES

Field of Study: Nursing, Health Inequities

### Courses (500 level and above) for example:

NURS 502	Ethics and Politics of Nursing
NURS 504	Research and Evidence-Based Practice
NURS 505	Statistical Literacy in Nursing
NURS 511	Theoretical Foundations of Nursing
NURS 512	Leadership in Nursing
NURS 540	Qualitative Methods & Analysis
NURS 549	Quantitative Research Methods
NURS 552	Education Methods in Nursing
NURS 553	Advanced Qualitative Methods
NURS 554	Advanced Research Methods
NURS 556	Advanced Statistics for Nurses
NURS 580	The Philosophy of Evidence
NURS 581	The Philosophy of Evidence II
NURS 590	Directed Study
NURS 600	Doctoral Seminar

### Instructors

Dr. H. Brown
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Dr. W. Hall
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Dr. C. Konishi
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## AWARDS

2016	Irene Goldstone HIV/AIDS Social Justice Scholarship
2014	University of British Columbia 4 Year Fellowship (4YF)
2013	Inductee Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing
2012	CIHR Doctoral Award - Doctoral Research Award - Priority Announcement: Health Services/Pop. Health HIV/AIDS Research
2011	Doctoral Entrance Award
2010	Flora S. Musgrave Scholarship in Nursing
2009	UBC Graduate Entrance Scholarship



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## Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

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### PUBLICATIONS

Bungay, V., Handlovsky, I., Phillips, J.C. & Prescott, C. (2017). A scoping review of the literature on nursing practices with persons seeking care for sexually transmitted infections. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 26(1), 33-48.

Clark, N., Handlovsky, I. & Sinclair, D. (2015). *Using reflexivity to achieve transdisciplinarity in nursing and social work*. In Greaves, L., Poole, N. & Boyle, E. (Eds.) *Transforming Addiction: Gender, Trauma, Transdisciplinarity* (pp. 120-136). New York: Routledge.

Handlovsky, I., Bungay, V., Johnson, J. & Phillips, J.C. (2013). The process of safer crack use among women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). *Qualitative Health Research*, 4, 142-162.

Handlovsky, I., Kolar, K. & Bungay, V. (2012). Condom use as situated in a risk context: women's experiences in the massage parlour industry in Vancouver, Canada. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 14(9), 1007-1020.

### PRESENTATIONS

Handlovsky, I. (2017). Overcoming adversity: a grounded theory of health management amongst gay men aged forty and over. Presentation conducted at the University of British Columbia Graduate Students in Nursing Association Symposium, May 3, 2017 Vancouver, BC.

Handlovsky, I. & Shahram, S (2013). Critical public health: conceptualizations and implications. Presentation conducted at the University of British Columbia IMPART seminar, January 14, 2013 Vancouver, BC.

Sinclair, D., Clark, N., & Handlovsky, I (2012). Critically examining the intersections of 'race', class, & gender: methodological and epistemological implications. Presentation conducted at the University of British Columbia IMPART seminar, December 12, 2012, Vancouver, BC.

Handlovsky, I. (2012). The process of safer crack use amongst women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). Presentation conducted at the Institute of Gender and Health Conference, October 29<sup>th</sup>, Montreal, QC.

### SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

List the names of the entire supervisory committee here

Dr. Victoria Bungay

Dr. Joy Johnson

Dr. John Oliffe

## **PROGRAMME**

The Final Oral Examination  
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
(Nursing)

## **INGRID HANDLOVSKY**

MSN University of British Columbia, 2011  
B.ScN. University of Toronto, 2006  
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Thursday, February 15, 2018, 9:00 am  
Room 203, Graduate Student Centre  
*Latecomers will not be admitted*

**“An Exploration of Middle-Aged and Older Gay Men’s Health and  
Illness Practices”**

## **EXAMINING COMMITTEE**

Chair: To be completed by G+PS

Supervisory Committee:

Prof Victoria Bungay, Research Supervisor (Nursing)  
Prof Joy Johnson (Health Sciences)  
Prof John Oliffe (Nursing)

University Examiners:

Prof Alison Phinney (Nursing)  
Prof Gerry Veenstra (Sociology)

External Examiner:

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