

A hermeneutic phenomenological exploration of women British Army veterans who experienced more than one trauma and their lived experience of transition and post service support

Introduction

Aim:

To conduct an in-depth exploration of the lived experience of women British Army veterans who have experienced more than one trauma and who have made the transition from the British Army to civilian life and the post transition support on leaving the British Army.

Objectives:

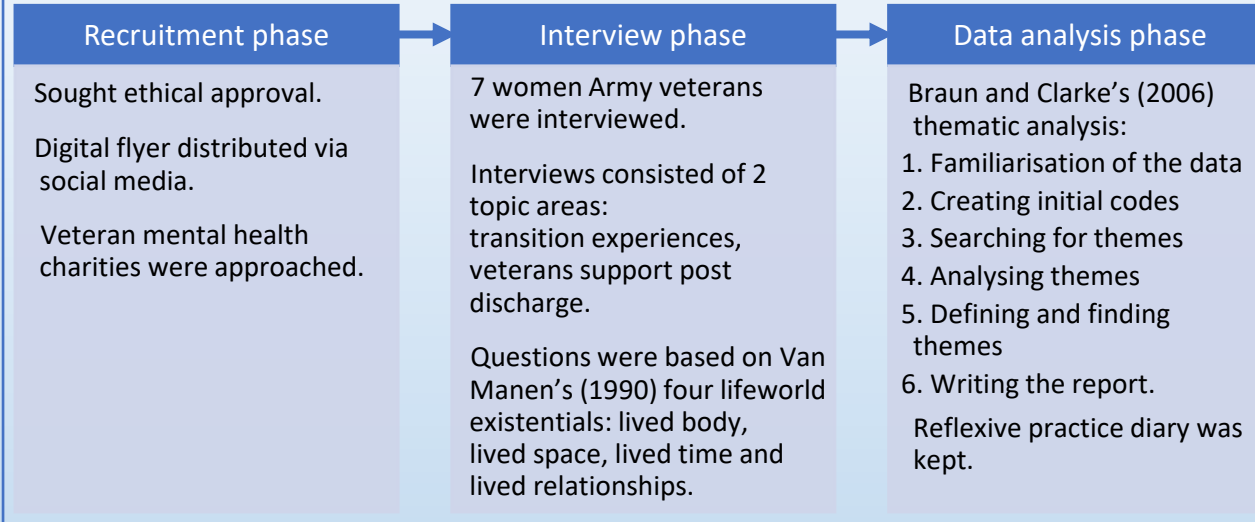
1. To understand what existing research suggested about the transition and support of women Army veterans via the scoping study literature review.
2. To explore the transition and support experiences of women British Army veterans.

A scoping review revealed current views on women veterans' transition to civilian life are described as 'feeling underprepared for civilian life', 'living two lives' and having difficulty 'coping with PTSD symptoms' (Burkhart, 2015). When leaving the Army, it is thought that seeking support is a sign of 'weakness' (Brunger et al., 2013).

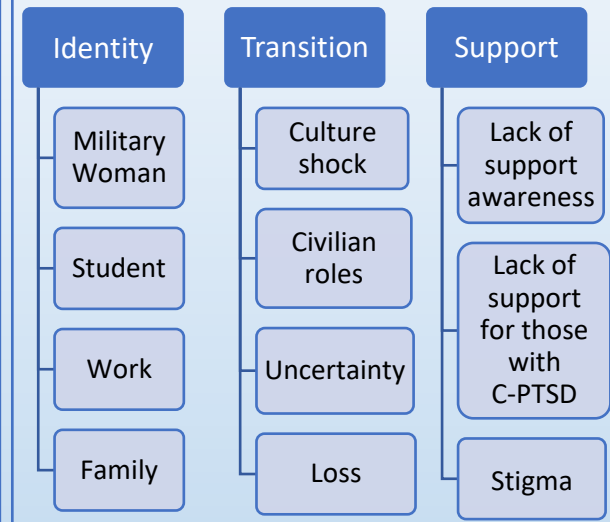
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Methods



Key themes



Preliminary results



Jessica "...there's other women out there, and yeah, they feel totally alone because there are so few as being female veterans, that we don't really feel seen."

Joanna "...I have to say my transition had to happen with my identity, so I had to kind of become the student nurse first..."

Nicole "I left the army and there was no sort of check-in afterwards to say 'oh how are you getting on? Are you alright?' I was gone, there's no longer military, so it's no longer thought about."

Conclusion

A scoping review was used to search in breadth and depth for existing research. This revealed a lack of research within women Army veteran transition and support. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with 7 women Army veterans were undertaken. The interviews identified key themes including identity, transition experience and support.

The impact of this research is to improve current support and create an awareness. Benefit: the ambition to increase an understanding and insight into this population and their experiences of transitions. Limitation: results cannot be generalised to the general population.