INDIVIDUALLY BUT TOGETHER: COUPLES EXPERIENCES OF RETIREMENT

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Background

- Older couples and holistic services
- Need for more support and counseling to families
- Family therapy
Qualitative method

Research question:
What is the couples experience of retirement and it´s influence on the marriage
Participants and data collection

In-depth interviews with five couples who were retired, aged 68-75 years

Couples were interviewed separately – 10 interviews in all

The Vancouver School of doing Phenomenology
Analytical model
Key findings

• Individually but together

• Retirement has varied impact on the marriage

• Positive experience related to long married life

• Quality of the relationship
The Individual
(internal factors)

Freedom

When you stop working then freedom comes ...
... and my opinion is that every person should be able to do what he wants when he wants as long as it does not change anything else ... and that's what I think is most wonderful about retirement.
The Individual (internal factors)

Preperation - difference between gender

I could say that I had been determined for a long time, two or three years, to have a part time job ... kind of taking the retirement in steps ... that was my plan.

I chose my birthday ... It just happened to be a good day to take the step...I was not letting go because of my age ... I just made a decision to quit working ... I had been thinking about it for some months before I resigned.
The Individual
(internal factors)

Self-esteem

Example of a man

What I felt was strange that in the morning not having to go out at the same time as always. Maybe I'm an A person because I always wake up early ... and I felt strange if I did not go out before noon ... I felt a very peculiar feeling and I did not want to let anybody see me walking downtown and not being at work ... I found it a bit difficult to start with
The Individual (internal factors)

Self-esteem

Example of a woman

*It is strange that I’m the oldest ... it’s so odd ... if I look in a mirror I see nothing really but a little girl ... just a little bit more mature [laughter] what you think you are*
The Individual (internal factors)

**Independence**

To be able to be alone with one self

Do activities like before and also in a new way

Take time to find yourself in the new role, that is, not being at work
The Marriage (Internal factors)

**Working together**
The role changed in the household and depended on if the spouse was sick or which one of them retired earlier

**Equality**
Respect, independence, give each other space, doing activities together

**Friendship**
*We have had a long time together ... we are different personalities but we have enjoyed being together all this time*
The Marriage – (Internal factors)

Being together

We met when we were 17 years old ... and by the way ... we have a lot of common experience and know each other very well ... maybe you're impatient about something because you know things too well ... but then you know that good friendship and caring is very important ... so ... I feel lucky to experience such a warmth
Security (external factors)

Family  Friends  Finances  Health
Conclusion

• Quality of a longtime marriage

• Need for more research on couples and retirement with different variables

• Need for research on older couples in relation to the whole family

• Educational material