

EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF SELF-TALK AS A COPING  
STRATEGY AMONG COVID-19 PATIENTS IN KENYA

by

Jeremiah Mumo Nganda

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APPROVAL

EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF SELF-TALK AS A COPING STRATEGY AMONG COVID-19 PATIENTS IN KENYA

Jeremiah Mumo Nganda

16-0150

In accordance with the Daystar University policies, this dissertation is presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kinya Mwithia, PhD,  
1<sup>st</sup> Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wilson Ugangu, PhD,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Emmanuel Wanyonyi, PhD,  
Coordinator, PhD (in Communication) Program

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Levi Obonyo, PhD,  
Dean, School of Communication

\_\_\_\_\_

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## DECLARATION

EXPLORING LIVED EXPERIENCES ON THE USE OF SELF-TALK AS A COPING  
STRATEGY AMONG COVID-19 PATIENTS IN KENYA

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeremiah Mumo Nganda  
16-0150

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
COREQ	Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
DST	Dialogical Self Theory
ISERC	Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee
HCWs	Healthcare Workers
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LMIC	Low-and-Middle-Income Countries
MA	Master of Arts
MERS	Middle East Respiratory Syndrome
MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOH	Ministry of Health
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
RA	Research Assistant
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SET	Self-Efficacy Theory
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO Africa	World Health Organization Africa

## ABSTRACT

This study considered self-talk from the context of COVID-19 because patients isolated from their usual contacts are likely to adapt measures to cope. The purpose of this study was therefore to explore experiences on the use of self-talk as a coping strategy among patients who were hospitalized with COVID-19 in Kenya. This was guided by Albert Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. The target population were patients who had been hospitalized and recovered from COVID-19. A sample size of 15 participants was drawn using a combination of both purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data was generated by interviewing the recovered patients and then analyzed thematically. Findings show that participants used self-talk which they described using various terms to imply conversation with the self. While the participants demonstrated an understanding of self-talk, there was a misconception regarding overt self-talk. In addition, mastery experiences were reported as contributing to the use of self-talk. In terms of content, the participants reported using questions and answers and referring to themselves with terms such as 'I', 'you' and even their names. Lastly, several benefits were associated with the use of self-talk as participants reported feeling better, less stressed and less lonely. Informed by these findings, we conclude that self-talk is commonly applied especially by people isolated from their social contacts, however, some people may not be self-aware of their use of self-talk. In addition, as reported by one participant, self-talk in the context of health communication can be described as 'me for me'. Implying how patients could contribute to their well-being through the words they tell themselves. One of the key recommendations of this study is that there is a need to increase awareness regarding self-talk and address misconceptions relating to overt self-talk.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all patients who were hospitalized with COVID-19 and those who may be currently suffering from diseases that require them to be isolated from their usual social contacts. The stress of being sick, the loneliness that comes with isolation, and the anxiety that comes with not knowing where one will be the next day can take a toll on someone. I hope the experiences shared here encourage you, and that in self-talk you will find meaning for yourself and a strategy to cope.

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