

Emilia Ruiz

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Interview and Findings: Synopsis

For my presentation, I chose to interview my mother. Her name is Kelly Ruiz and she is the mother of nine children. She is a fifty-two-year-old, Caucasian woman. She was born in Houston, Texas and spent the early half of her adolescence there. Kelly admits that she did not have the perfect home life with an abusive mother and brother. She never knew who her father was and experienced confusion surrounding the topic of her family history. We spoke about the strengths and resilience perspectives. I felt that these perspectives would be very eye-opening for my mother.

These perspectives are very representative of Kelly's experiences. She confessed that stress played a big role in her life and it still does. She experienced high-level stress for such a long period of time that she no longer knows how to relax. Kelly admitted that her biggest fear is being alone. She thought that after her children had grown older that she would finally be able to relax. However, she found that she can only do that when she is in a chaotic environment.

When she was twelve-years-old, she left her home and spent the next three years jumping between houses and living on the streets. This instilled a level of stress in Kelly that she never wants anyone to experience. She was only a child and afraid of what her life would look like every day. She was forced to find someone to help her and that happened to be a man in his mid-twenties, whom she would have two kids by the time she was 16. She went on to have nine children from three different men, each worse than the last. However, she knew that she could

not be alone. Her biggest fear was to not have a home, food and necessities for her children, so she stayed in these abusive environments.

In her later years, Kelly experiences many regrets and fears for the future. She is currently terminally ill with stage four lung cancer, rheumatoid arthritis and a bone degenerative disease. The list seems to go on. Despite these tribulations, her biggest fear continues to be the fear of being alone. She values quality time with her children and grandchildren more than ever because that is all she has to give. Being a mother has taught her that you can not run from bad things because they will always come back up. She struggles with looking back on her younger life because it was not very happy. This has caused her to exhibit avoidant tendencies when she is triggered. However, she is making an effort to improve these habits for her family's sake.

Regarding my generation, my mother finds us bitter-sweet. She is overjoyed with the possibilities and opportunities that we have that seemed impossible in her day. Like many others, she finds social media fascinating and useful but dangerous at the same time. Recently, she has been more aware of mental health and this has caused her to realize the harms that social media presents to my generation and hers. This is surprising considering that she is very stuck in her ways, like much of the older generations. In particular, she agrees more with the constructivist perspective now that she is older, but would not have agreed when she was younger. Admittedly, she found most of these subjects very hard to talk about, but knows that it is a step in the direction of growth. Truthfully, these stories are hard for any person to hear, but her hope is that others can grow from her mistakes. Her final words to our generation were: "There is always someone who can help you, don't be afraid to ask like I was."

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No longer believes in running bio anis made her irrefragable

Why did you choose this individual?

She is 30 years older than me and has had a complicated life. She has had a fair share of hardships through childhood to adulthood. She is very interesting.

2. Who is this individual? Kelly Ruiz She is my mother.

52 years old. Grew up in Texas → Moved to FL → Moved to SC 9 children (3 spouses)

3. What questions did you ask to explore their cultural narrative? Why?

These questions let me grasp the tape of personality she has

Ethnicity/Race: Doesn't know father. Grew up surrounded by Hispanic people. Food, actions, environment. Left home at 12-years-old.

Mother was white, father hispanic? Only had saw understanding of family tree.

Sexual Orientation:

Straight but has never had judgement based on sexual orientation. No effect on views.

No resources to help children during her time

Gender: Extreme effect. Had child at 16. Life was all about her 9 children. She had to cook/clean. She believes that being a woman and child when she left home made her feel victimized, but she grew stronger with time.

Religion:

very confusing, raised baptist but no church (free daycare). Grew up Georgia/Florida. Read bible twice when in jail at 12 (stole car) because of dare from friends. Now sticks with catholicism but does not agree with everything

Stress:

uncomfortable around those with money.

Younger: Tried to fit in anywhere and did whatever they did (peer pressure).

Became responsible, house-wife when had first son

↳ Became stable (Husband was 24)

↳ visited home at 18 for first time

Too much stress at times

↳ Abusive brother and avoidant mother

↳ wanted a home but finally left

↳ confessions, forgiveness

Bury feelings

first son

Had norms that

She realizes are wrong

Communication is hard for her

Decisions were hard but finally thought she would have a break ↳ No break from children ↳ No bonds with children

Does miss the old times ↳ kids ↳ Preferred abusive house hold over being alone

Peer pressured into drugs / alcohol / partying (often for a safe-place to stay)
 Had moments of questioning past stress but still is able to reminisce
 Stayed in bad relationships for security
 2 kids → 4 kids → 3 kids
 Husband was not trusting (only one she married)
 Left my abusive father

4. Which theories of human behavior did you explore?
 Resilience: So much stress, always chaotic in relationships.
 Focused on having roof over kids head, food
 Food was always available, but little money
 Had all responsibility for children
 Always adapting for children, no time to think
 Had a habit of making it seem like life was perfect
 Strengths: No friends, only family
 First year alone (12-13)
 Stayed in relationships after that
 Still feels like she can't be alone
 ↳ Needs quality time from people
 Feels like strengths she had are failing her
 Feels lonely with age (likes chaos)

5. Has their cultural narrative changed over the years? How so?
 Yes b/c in early life she was more conforming and passive
 Now questions things more openly; loss of beliefs (especially religion)
 Does not agree with religion pushed on children
 No bias, freedom of choice.
 Confused with age.

6. How does the narrative of place formulate their narrative?
 • Texas as a child → Alone, homeless, partying, peer pressure
 ↳ Look back and is scared for her children
 • Florida → All relationships, bad times but all memories, blames self based on place that she put children in
 • SC → Wonderful moments but bad times too, had accomplishments

7. What are their thoughts/reactions to the cultural narrative of youth or your generation?
 Think that convenience is big now
 ↳ Tech, no imagination
 Kids have more leisure
 Lucky to have small things but that appreciation is lost
 Children/parent relationships are different (physical punishment)

8. What are their opinions about social media transforming the cultural narrative?
 80's → Had no landline or cell phones
 ↳ Family had just a little black/white TV
 ↳ Had to go outside to get entertainment
 ↳ No social media
 Social media is an amazing advancement allows for distant communication
 Harmful posting, fighting, addicting
 Social media is used to deflect feelings/situations

EMBARASSMENT

ALONE in experiences
 Does not like to mask feelings with drugs/alcohol
 ↳ against it
 Disability inhibits quality of life

MELEY
 Had A Good Romantic Relationship

Drugs/alcohol
 Looked in for hours, together
 Kids, repeating
 ↳ 20's, 30's, 40's, 19

Bonds with kids
 QUALITY TIME

Run from bad things
 moving
 No control over life

Kids have more opportunities
 Bittersweet but happy that they have these things

Realized reliance on children when they were teens +

9. What other concepts discussed in class will you include in your interview?

Hold up
Certainty
mindset

Thoughts on Constructivist Perspective: open-minded but stuck in her ways
Disagree because she has felt heavy influence throughout her life. However, with age she has stuck to her own perspectives and is able to still hear other people's constructs. Able to have own opinions (control things)

How important is the Empowerment Perspective?
Empowerment is important her internally. she lacks external empowerment because she is afraid of losing relationships over control. She feels a loss of control externally and respect. Struggle with internal b/c of the lack of external.

How much stress do you think a person can withstand? Personally had to just deal with her situation. Disability = reliance on others
↳ No independence

changed her life because of constant anticipation that something bad will happen. ↳ Biggest fear → ALONE (loss of children)

Became a shell walking through her life but got past it.

Stress can be harmful to anyone but everyone has a different capacity.