

# Understanding the Key Tenets of Heidegger's Philosophy for Interpretive Phenomenological Research

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## Abstract

Martin Heidegger's phenomenology provides methodological guidance for qualitative researchers seeking to explicate the lived experience of study participants. However, most phenomenological researchers apply his philosophy loosely. This is not surprising because Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy is challenging and the influence of his philosophy in shaping the conduct of interpretive phenomenological research is broadly debated. This article presents an exploration of *Dasein*, a key tenet of Martin Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology and explicates its usefulness for phenomenological research. From this perspective, we present guidance for researchers planning to utilize Heidegger's philosophy underpinning their research.

## Keywords

Heidegger, interpretive phenomenology, *Being and Time*, *Dasein*, being in the world

## What is Known

The influence of Heidegger's philosophy in shaping the conduct of interpretive phenomenological research is broadly debated with application of his philosophy sometimes loosely applied in research.

## What This Paper Adds

This paper discusses how a theoretically frame utilising Heidegger's key phenomenological tenets such as lived experience, everyday ordinariness, *Dasein*, being in the world, being with, encounters with entities, temporality and the care structure, can serve to expose the meaning of everyday ordinary human existence as part of conducting interpretive phenomenological research.

## Background

Martin Heidegger's, *magnus opus*, *Being and Time* (1927/2011) represents his ontological focus in exploring what being means (Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2007). However, his philosophical treatise is recognized as being incredibly difficult to understand (Cerbone, 2009; Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2007; Sheehan, 1998).

Despite the inherent challenges of understanding Heidegger's philosophical writings, his influence in shaping interpretive phenomenological research is clearly recognized and

utilized (Benner, 1984, 1985, 1994; Benner & Wrubel, 1989; Churchill, 2002; Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998; Garza, 2007; King et al., 2008; Taylor, 1995; Todres, 2007; Walters, 1995). The imperative to both understand and reflect on the manner in which Heidegger's central tenets shape interpretive phenomenological research methodology and method has also been debated (Crotty, 1997; Holmes, 1996; Paley, 1998, 2005). This critique proffers the argument that in essence the intention within Heidegger's philosophy was not necessarily the development of a method for research (Crotty, 1997; Holmes, 1996; Paley, 1998, 2005). Albeit, while this critique is valid, Heidegger's philosophical tenets paved the way with regard to the development of interpretive phenomenological research methods that facilitates explication and understanding of the human lived experience (Benner, 1994; Caelli, 2001; Eatough & Smith, 2006; Friesen, Henrikson, & Saevi, 2012; King et al., 2008; Koch, 1996, 1999; Omery, 1983; Rae, 2000; Rae &

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Carswell, 2000; Van Manen, 1997). For this purpose, this article presents for the intending researcher firstly a brief explanation of Heidegger's key tenets presented in his work, *Being and Time* (1927/2011), and secondly considers their application with regard to interpretive phenomenological research methods.

### *Heidegger's Interpretive Phenomenological Development*

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) initially a student of Edmund Husserl (1909–1911) and later as his assistant at Freiburg University (1919–1923) is viewed as the successive “intellectual pillar” in the phenomenological movement following Husserl (Dowling, 2011; Healy, 2011). His publication *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1927) challenged existing Husserlian phenomenological ideals, arguing that it was predominantly descriptive, espousing the essential structures of consciousness. Heidegger thus advocated the ideals of his own phenomenology as one of interpretation of experience and explication of “the meaning of being” (Cerbone, 2009; Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2007; Healy, 2011; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009; Moran, 2000). Heidegger rejected the notion of the human being/subject as a spectator of objects espousing that both subject and object were inseparable. For Heidegger, “being” was thus the descriptions or accounts that “*Dasein*” (being there or man's existence) provided of their everydayness or ordinary existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 38). Heidegger thus asked from a philosophical stance “what does it mean to be?” (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

One of the central tenets of Heidegger's philosophy acknowledges existence as “being in the world,” understood as embeddedness and inseparability from the world (Cerbone, 2009; Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2007; Heidegger, 1927/2011; Moran, 2000). From this stance, Heidegger rejected Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction and his view of the transcendental ego (Cerbone, 2009; Dreyfus & Wrathall, 2007; Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Heidegger put forth a broad array of key tenets within his phenomenological philosophy. These tenets include the concept of being, being in the world, encounters with entities in the world, being with, temporality, spatiality, and the care structure. The discussion presented here focuses on his conception of *Dasein*.

### *Heidegger's Concept of Dasein*

Heidegger's concept of being involved reformulating the question of being that had proved a challenge for earlier philosophers by challenging the concept of being as a dualism. His challenge of Cartesian dualism is especially evident in his critique of Husserl's phenomenology rejecting the notion of the human being (subject) as a spectator of objects espousing that both subject and object are inseparable (Heidegger, 1927/2011). In presenting being as inseparable, Heidegger introduced the concept of *Dasein*.

Heidegger introduced the concept of *Dasein* reflecting the notion of a “living being” through their activity of “being

there” and being in the world (Cerbone, 2009; Heidegger, 1927/2011). *Dasein*'s central activity is their enquiry into being and in particular their ability to question and focus on personal existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Thus, Heidegger put forth the thesis that “understanding of Being is itself a definitive characteristic of *Dasein*'s Being” presenting *Dasein* as “ontically distinctive in that it is ontological” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 32).

In making this ontological distinction, Heidegger depicts *Dasein* as an entity that has an understanding of their own Being and possibilities. Thus, Heidegger advocated laying “bare a fundamental structure of *Dasein*” as being in the world by exploring “average everydayness” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 65).

In exploring *Dasein*'s fundamental structure of Being, that is, being in the world, Heidegger highlighted that this phenomenon (being in the world) is unitary and “must be seen as a whole” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 79). In presenting the “worldhood of the world,” Heidegger critiqued Husserl's notion of reduction, that is, the attempt to explore consciousness separate from the world in which the person is situated. Instead, Heidegger put forth the argument that understanding is achieved through worldly activity. Heidegger argued that *Dasein*'s understanding of their being and the being of other entities encountered through concerned average everyday interactions is what serves as the point of departure in investigating *Dasein*'s being (Cerbone, 2009; Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Heidegger presented the world in two contexts: one of the common and the other of the subjective world. He therefore depicted the phenomenon worldhood of the world as the interconnectivity of these defined worlds. Thus, Heidegger developed the analytic of *Dasein* via their encounter with entities in the world.

To operationalize this exploration, Heidegger introduced the concept of “equipment” as a means to distinguish entities that *Dasein* encounters in the world from “mere things.” Heidegger highlighted that in order for an entity to be considered useful (ready to hand) the entity would firstly have to be understood as (present to hand). *Dasein*'s activity, while seemingly an unconscious act does not imply unintelligibility but rather highlights how aspects of *Dasein*'s everyday engagement with the world are not couched by theory. Therefore, Heidegger challenged metaphysical understandings of Being proffering that these “unnoticed activities present a rich ontological categorical structure” missed by Western philosophy (Cerbone, 2009, p. 38).

Heidegger at this point of the analytic had revealed *Dasein*'s encounters with entities as “ready to hand” in the world. The project now was to reveal the “who” of being in the world revealing the analytic of *Dasein* through encounters with “others,” these others being other *Dasein*. In exploring the entity that is “the who” in the world, Heidegger explored “the self” with regard to average everyday existence through interaction with others. Thus, Heidegger contended that to continue the analytic of *Dasein* one must explore being in the world in the context of “being with others” (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Within this everyday existence Heidegger put forth the structure of “being with,” that is, *Dasein*’s existence is not one of “being alone” but of “with world,” that is, being with others (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 152).

Heidegger’s depicted *Dasein*’s existence of being with influenced and shaped by the “they” (das Man) (Heidegger, 1927/2011). By the they (das Man), Heidegger is presenting an impersonal entity that reflects what *Dasein* views as their social reality understood by encounters with equipment (ready to hand useful things), nature, and others (other *Dasein*). Heidegger argued that in investigating the who in the world what must be initially explored is *Dasein*’s existence with others (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 155). However, in using the term others, Heidegger does not mean every other human except *Dasein* but reflects the identification of *Dasein* with others of similar characteristics, beliefs, norms, and values. Heidegger put forth the argument that *Dasein* in being with others assumed a passive role in accepting without question the collective norms and value of the they (das Man). This existence he posited absolved *Dasein* of personal responsibility, decision-making, and choice (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Within this passive role, Heidegger depicted existence as being inauthentic or “fallen.” By inauthentic existence, Heidegger presented *Dasein* as an entity that conforms unquestioningly to societal norms and values, thus losing selfhood. In presenting the alternative to an inauthentic existence, Heidegger presents authentic existence by revealing *Dasein*’s authentic self.

By presenting *Dasein*’s existence as having two modes, that is authenticity and inauthenticity, Heidegger was drawing distinctions between the concept of the “they self” that is (that which is not mine but is part of the they (das Man) and “selfhood” or “self-understanding” that which is mine). Albeit, while Heidegger made these distinctions he was keen to acknowledge that one mode of existence did not preference the other. Rather, both modes of existence revealed existence in the context of being in the world through encounters with entities, nature, and others.

Thus, at this point of the analytic, Heidegger had revealed *Dasein*’s being in the world as represented by the relational processes of “Being alongside the world” (*Dasein*’s circum-spective concern toward entities), Being with others (*Dasein* manner of being with others solicitude), and “Being one’s self” (the who in the world) (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 169). Heidegger continued in his analytic of *Dasein* to explicate a more primordial understanding of being in the world from the perspective of *Dasein*’s being there in the world.

Heidegger highlighted that only by *Dasein*’s existential existence in the world can “the being of the there” be exposed. In explicating the “there” of being in the world, *Dasein* was presented as an entity located in the world by individual personal there as opposed to an objective place or space in the world. Heidegger demonstrated that *Dasein* was directional, that is, the person’s concern was always directed toward the entity brought proximally closest through circum-spective concern and actions (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 144).

Heidegger continued the analytic to reveal how understanding contributed toward *Dasein*’s capacity to interpret their

world. Heidegger presents “interpretation” as a concept closely intertwined with “understanding” in “making explicit that which was already implicitly present in understanding” (Cerbone, 2009, p. 62). Heidegger presented two key structures linked with the process of interpretation; these being: the “as structure” (meaning the interpretation of an entity “as” something for something) and the “forestructure” (revealing the prior knowledge of *Dasein* about entities in their world). With regard to the ‘as’ structure, *Dasein*’s circum-spective interpretation was projected toward entities ready to hand (useful things) revealing their purpose or function and the totality of involvement associated with this entity. “The ‘as’ makes up the structure of the explicitness of something that is understood, it constitutes the interpretation” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 188). By revealing the capacity of *Dasein* to interpret their world Heidegger demonstrated that interaction with entities was not presuppositionless but was guided by the familiarity of everyday interaction. *Dasein* was thus presented as having preexisting knowledge or “fore structure of understanding” of their world (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 191).

At this point in the analytic Heidegger presented *Dasein*’s capacity to have preunderstanding and demonstrated that any act of interpretation was never from a purely neutral stance.

*Care: “the structural totality of being in the world”.* Heidegger explicated the care structure as “*Dasein*’s primordial totality of Being” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 227). Heidegger argued that “*Dasein*’s being reveals itself as care” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 227). Through the explication of the care structure Heidegger prepared “the way for the problematic of fundamental ontology- the question of the meaning of being in general” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 227). Heidegger thus presented the structure of care as the “existential totality of *Dasein*’s ontological structural whole” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 237). In its most simplest form, Heidegger’s care structure exposes what is of most consequence or importance to the human being. It exposes what the human being is concerned with or cares about. In Heideggerian terminology, it exposes the human being’s circum-spective concern and angst. In particular, this is exposed through the human being’s future directionality or indeed their future aims, goals, desires, or ambitions. This care structure was presented in the context of three temporal primordial notions representing the past, present, and future aspects of *Dasein*’s existence. However, while these were presented in a clockwise sense of chronological time, Heidegger did not intend for this sense of *Dasein*’s temporal existential time to be interpreted in this mode. Heidegger presented the care structure as that of future to past to present (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

In this manner of presentation Heidegger acknowledged *Dasein*’s temporal existential time as ‘being ahead of itself’ (future), ‘already being in a world’, (past) and finally ‘being alongside’ (present) in the world (Heidegger, 1927/2011, pp. 236–237).

In this care for their future potentiality *Dasein* in their present existence finds itself in a state of “thrownness” that is

existing in a world into which they were born with already existing norms, values, and culture. From this standpoint of thrownness, *Dasein* is “already in a world” which Heidegger demonstrated as representative of *Dasein*’s past. In unifying both *Dasein*’s future and past existence within the care structure, he demonstrated that *Dasein* in being is “ahead of itself already being in a world” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 236). In already being in the world, Heidegger was demonstrating *Dasein*’s being with other *Dasein* as reflected in their solicitude toward others. Within the context of ‘being with’ Heidegger explicated *Dasein*’s choices of being ahead of itself with regard to their individual care in enacting a potentially authentic, inauthentic, or undifferentiated existence. Here Heidegger was demonstrating the fallenness of *Dasein* already being in the world and being with other *Dasein*. In this fallenness, *Dasein* demonstrates care in choosing their possible potentiality.

What Heidegger achieved in unifying *Dasein*’s potentiality, thrownness, and fallenness was to demonstrate factual existence. From a factual stance, *Dasein* through both understanding and interpretation acknowledges encounters with entities through circumspective concern, solicitude, and care as purposeful. This reveals the human being’s purpose, that is, “for the sake of which” and “in order to” with regard to their future potentiality. Thus, within the tautology of concern, solicitude, and care *Dasein*’s being in the world was exposed as one of “essentially care” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 237). In explicating *Dasein*’s care structure, Heidegger was demonstrating the life pathway of *Dasein* from a temporal stance. In the context of temporality, Heidegger exposed *Dasein*’s existence “from its beginning to its end . . .” (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 276). Heidegger exposed the hermeneutic circle of interpretation that involved an ever evolving interpretation of *Dasein*’s future, past, and present. This circle of interpretation represented Heidegger’s method of interpretation.

*Heidegger’s “method”*. Heidegger put forth an “existential analytic of *Dasein* which must remain the first requirement in the question of being” (1927/2011, p. 37). Heidegger’s focus on both understanding and interpretation provided the opportunity to conduct this analytic, acknowledging interpretation as a way of accessing *Dasein* that facilitated this entity to “show itself in itself and from itself” (1927/2011, p. 36). Within Heidegger’s forestructure of understanding he provided the opportunity for interpretation to explore *Dasein*’s existence through the structural moments of forehaving, foresight, and foreconception from the emic perspective (Heidegger, 1927/2011). From this position, Heidegger explicated the concept of interpretation as being an integral part of being in the world acknowledging presupposition as a concept that formulated part of *Dasein*’s existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Heidegger opened the ontological Pandora’s Box of interpreting being, depicted as *Dasein*’s “understanding of its being” (Heidegger, 1927/2011). His ideals of phenomenological description, discourse, language, interpretation, and understanding have paved the way in the development of hermeneutical phenomenology which includes both the

hermeneutical art and science of interpretation of written text (Ezzy, 2002; Gadamer, 1975; Ricoeur, 1976) and the phenomenological exploration of being as understood through lived experience (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

Albeit, while Heidegger did not make clear a method for phenomenological research, his focus on interpretation has facilitated a variety of interpretive research methods to reveal and express the human experience (Benner, 1994; Caelli, 2001; Conway, 2003; Crist & Tanner, 2003; Diekelmann, Allen, & Tanner, 1989; Koch, 1996, 1999; Omery, 1983; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009; Van Manen, 1997). One of these approaches (Benner, 1994) was the focus of strong criticism from Crotty (1997), Cash (1995), and Horrocks (2000). Cash (1995) argues that Benner does not utilize Heidegger’s philosophy directly but as a second hand interpretation of Dreyfus’s interpretation of Heidegger. However, it is important to highlight that Benner was using Heidegger’s philosophy primarily to help explain her theory of nursing expertise.

More recent developments in phenomenological research have attempted to highlight how Heidegger’s philosophy guides method. These include the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) movement which has helped in emphasizing Heidegger’s discussions on interpretation within the context of phenomenology as an interpretive endeavor. IPA researchers stress the central role of Heidegger’s view of interpretation and his argument against a presuppositionless approach to phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009). With IPA, the researcher “brings their fore-conception (prior experiences, assumptions, preconceptions) to the encounter, and cannot help but look at any new stimulus in the light of their own prior experience” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 25). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) further clarify that the “fore-structure is always there, and it is in danger of presenting an obstacle to interpretation. In interpretation, priority should be given to the new object, rather than one’s preconceptions” (p. 25). However, it is also important to highlight that the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon being studied is based on their “having particular ‘fore-conceptions’” (Finlay, 2008, p. 27).

Reflexivity therefore plays a central role in the researcher’s attempts to keep a check on their preconceptions. “The challenge for the researcher is to remain focused on the phenomenon being studied while both reining in and reflexively interrogating their own understandings” (Finlay, 2008, p. 29). This involves the researcher bringing to the fore their understanding of their position in terms of personal values, beliefs, motivations, culture, ethnicity, and so on (Clancy, 2013). Similarly, Dahlberg, Dahlberg, and Nystrom (2008, p. 130) introduce the term “bridling” to warn the researcher not to avoid reaching an understanding “too quickly, too carelessly, or slovenly.” While van Manen (1997) uses the term “openness” to warn researchers not to reach a premature understanding of the phenomenon being studied. On a practical level, reflexivity should begin at the outset by teasing out influences that prompted the research question in the first place. Reflexivity during the interview process involves

bringing to the fore experiences and knowledge that may block appropriate exploration with the study participant or facilitate a deeper exploration. Finally, reflexivity during data analysis aims to avoid reaching an interpretation prematurely.

Some researchers undertaking interpretive phenomenology clearly illuminate Heidegger's philosophy only as their guiding philosophy. This is challenging and brave as it uses Heidegger's tenets firsthand. However, the direct application of Heidegger's philosophy can be a powerful tool in phenomenological research. This is illustrated in the first author utilization of Heidegger's philosophical tenets to inform the development and conduct of a PhD study that explored the views and experiences of teenage parents as service users of universal child and family health care services (Horrigan-Kelly, 2015). The research questions shaping this study questioned

- What is the lived experience and meaning of being a teenage parent service user of universal child and family health services?
- What affect has engagement with child and family services had on the teenage parent as a service user?
- How can child and family health care services work effectively with teenage parents as service users?

From the outset of the research study, the theoretical framework shaped by Heidegger's philosophical tenets reflected an epistemological stance of inductively generating theory. This stance offered a means to inductively reveal the meaning participants ascribed to their lived experiences of being a teenage parent service user with their emic perspective contributing to theory generation (Creswell, 2007; Pascal, 2010). This reflected the viewpoint that from a phenomenological perspective theory is not the starting point in research (Creswell, 2007; Pascal, 2010).

Underpinned by Heidegger's interpretive philosophy, a qualitative hermeneutical interpretive phenomenological approach facilitated the exploration of teenage parent participants' ( $n = 28$ ) views and experiences from their emic perspective. From this vantage point, emphasis was placed on the notion of being and the "nature of human existence" (Heidegger, 1927/2011, p. 28). This reflected Heidegger's philosophical stance that human beings are part of the world in which they exist and are in essence inseparable from that world (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Heideggerian ideas that informed the initial development of this study's theoretical framework included lived experience, everyday ordinariness, Dasein, being in the world, being with, encounters with entities, temporality, and the participants' care structure.

Echoing Heidegger's views that human beings exist in their world on an instinctive everyday ordinary familiar level, the study aimed to expose the meaning of this everyday existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). This aim was grounded in one of Heidegger's key goals of phenomenology, that is, to reveal or uncover everyday ordinary existence as he argued, it is here that meaning of this existence resides (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Lived experience as part of the theoretical framework of this

study therefore focused on making explicit the emic perspective of the participants who have lived or were currently living through the experience of "being a teenage parent service user." In making explicit the participants' lived experience, the aim was to understand the meaning these participants had with regard to their existence as teenage parent service users.

Ricoeur's theory of interpretation was the chosen framework used to analyze the data. The rationale in utilizing this analytical framework reflected Ricoeur's recognition of Heidegger's ideal that understanding incorporates interpretation (Heidegger, 1927/2011; Ricoeur, 1976). Within his theory, Ricoeur intertwined the epistemological process of interpretation with the ontological stance of the interpreter during the research process. From this viewpoint, Ricoeur gave recognition to intersubjective knowledge reflecting the researcher's interpretation of the subjects' interpretation. Building on Heidegger's ideal of the hermeneutical circle or indeed spiral of interpretation, Ricoeur put forth the ideal of the hermeneutical arc utilizing the analytical stages of distanciation, appropriation, explanation, understanding, and interpretation. These stages were utilized in this study to frame the analytical process employed to reveal the phenomenological findings. Distanciation involved viewing the text of the unstructured interviews as a co-shared discourse now fixed in writing. This co-shared written discourse was now opened up to the world of the reader. The reader (researcher) using self-reflexivity by acknowledging their forestructures or prior knowledge/understanding distanced this knowledge of themselves from the world of the text. Two key questions were asked of the text from this neutral stance. One being "what does the text say," this questioning reflected the initial stages of analysis in seeking initial explanation of the text. The second question asking "what does the text talk about" facilitated more depth exploration of the text in interpreting the phenomenon of being a teenage parent service user. Appropriation involved recognizing the world the text revealed as interpreted by the researcher. This "new" knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of being a teenage parent service user was developed from the interpreter's (researcher) interaction with the world of the text. From this interpretive process, the following key themes were identified: "being in the world of the teenage parent," "being supported and helped," and "encounters with service entities as a service user."

Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein focused on the human being's existence in their world as an individual and within their social context. Thus, from this stance being in the world as understood from a Heideggerian stance reflects a marriage of the human being's subjectivity and the objectivity of the world in which they exist (Heidegger, 1927/2011). From this stance, both world and being are viewed as inseparable. Meaning from this perspective therefore represents the co-constituted ideal of being with others in the world, in shared humanness and in shared interactions in the world (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Within the context of this study, "world" was viewed as the participants' expressions of being in the world as a teenage parent service user with other entities.

Participants' accounts of being in the world revealed their sense of throwness. This throwness revealed their sense of changed existence moving from that of carefree adolescent to teenage parent. In sharing their existence in the world as a teenage parent with broader societal others, they reveal how social norms associated with teenage parenthood shaped their existence. This changed existence was revealed in participants' accounts of "being different" and in also "being treated differently" because they were now existing as young parents.

This shared humanness was viewed as being with firstly other humans in participants' social world. However, this shared existence was also revealed in their "encounters with entities" in their world as health service users. In this study, these entities included health services as an institution and other Dasein, that is, professionals providing these services. These encounters revealed two contrasting experiences: one that revealed exposure to a ready to hand or indeed useful service entity that supported these young parents care structure in receiving a supportive, effective service that assisted them to be the best parents they could be to their young children. Conversely, participants recounted encounters with services entities that reflected unready to hand or unuseful service entities for their purposes. Within these negative encounters participants reveal services that negate their rights as service users. The subsequent quote from Participant 22 reveals their sense of perceived difference as a young parent. This quote also illuminates this participant's care structure with regard to the importance they place on their child's treatment and how they want their child to be viewed.

With my friends I'm a whole different person than I am with adults or health professionals but that's only because I don't want them to think "oh God, she's just a teen mother who had a mistake for a child, I shouldn't take her seriously". That's the last thing I want because first off it's unfair to me but it's also unfair to my child. Because if he's just treated "oh God, here's a mistake child" or something like that I feel he wouldn't get the same attention. As if he's not as important. Participant 22

In considering Heidegger's construct of 'being with', revealed in the study's phenomenological findings it was clear that these participants existed with other people, processes, and structures that had impacted on the meaning of their lived experience as service users (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Heidegger's phenomenology acknowledges the existence of the "They" or "Das Man" which he asserted had the potential to shape the opportunity of Dasein (in this instance, the study's participants) to enact an authentic or inauthentic existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Heidegger's concept of the They or Das Man is a particularly nebulous concept moving beyond interactions with others reflecting the practices, processes, and structures that both influence and shape the human being's existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Thus, from a Heideggerian perspective being with while acknowledging interaction with other human beings (Dasein) also acknowledges being with other entities that impact on Dasein's existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011).

A further consideration put forth in the context of the study's findings was the participants' sense of "being toward the future." Participant 27 clearly reveals their personal sense of future directionality in wanting to complete their educational goals in order to attain future financial security for themselves and their child.

I think it is really important that teenage parents know that life goes on. Like I'm doing this course here and I really would like to become a social worker. . . . But I really think you need an education and some type of qualification if you want to make a life for you and your baby . . . . That you have to keep interested in getting you and your baby sorted, you don't want to be living on welfare all your life. Participant 27

Heidegger's construct of "being toward" depicts Dasein's sense of what matters or what they care about reflecting the participants "structural totality of being in the world" (Heidegger, 1927/2011). From this stance, the meaning participants ascribed to what mattered to them or what they cared about as teenage parent service users revealed through their future directionality exposed their care structure.

Another vivid example of how Heidegger's central concepts connect with undertaking practical research is presented in Conway's (2003) discussion on the use of his philosophy in developing her "hermeneutical principles for research." Conway (2003) presents a comprehensive list of principles which guide a researcher undertaking interpretive phenomenology guided by Heidegger. For instance, the principles include ensuring that the researcher makes explicit the shared world of understanding between the researcher and participants and that the researcher engages themselves in the hermeneutical circle throughout the research process (Conway, 2003).

Wilson (2014, 2015) also clearly illustrates how Heidegger's philosophical tenets align with the interpretations reached. The fundamental dimensions of Dasein are aligned with Wilson's thematic interpretation of past, present, and future. Wilson (2014) also presents a clear discussion on how Heidegger's concept of *Dasein* and provides a framework to explore the experience of practice.

Other noteworthy examples are also evident in the literature (Berglund, 2014; Crowther et al., 2015; Guignon, 2009). Similarly, Jack and Wibberley (2014) provide explicit discussion of Heidegger's central tenets (such as understanding and authentic ways of being) in the context of the study findings. Moreover, Pascal (2010) demonstrates her use of Heideggerian phenomenology as a theoretical framework to explore phenomenology as an approach appropriate for research in the context of social work in explicating the lived experience of cancer survival. These studies are all exemplars of how Heidegger's philosophy can "purely" (and not second hand) be utilized in an interpretive phenomenological study.

## Conclusion

Philosophy "provides a fundamental perspective in terms of which pieces of the work of the social scientist can be put

together in a coherent unity” (Natanson, 1973, p. 31). The hermeneutical principles for research based on Heidegger’s philosophy (Conway, 2003) provide an excellent example of how a philosophy and its central concepts connect.

In making these connections, there is an opportunity to theoretically frame interpretive phenomenological research utilizing Heideggerian concepts such as lived experience, everyday ordinariness, *Dasein*, being in the world, being with, encounters with entities, temporality, and the care structure. From this vantage point, there is an opportunity to explicate one of the key goals within Heidegger’s philosophy, which is exposing the meaning of everyday ordinary human existence (Heidegger, 1927/2011). Heidegger’s philosophical analytic focused on the human being’s existence in their world as an individual and within their social context. From this standpoint, both world and being are viewed as inseparable. Meaning from this perspective therefore represents the co-constituted ideal of being with others in the world, in shared humanness, and in shared interactions in the world (Heidegger, 1927/2011). This exposition of everyday ordinary existence provides the interpretive phenomenological researcher with the opportunity to inductively reveal meaning from the emic perspective. This is arguably interpretive phenomenology’s greatest asset in that the opportunity to illuminate the “. . . ordinary, taken for granted living as something more layered, more nuanced, more unexpected and as potentially transformative when something is revealed of the extra-ordinary” (Friesen et al., 2012, p. 33). However to do this, attention must be paid to Heidegger’s view of interpretation and his argument against a presuppositionless approach to phenomenology. From this standpoint, the role of reflexivity throughout the researcher’s endeavor remains to the fore in an attempt to interpret the meaning of the phenomenon being explored.

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