

Abstract

THESIS: Understanding Moments of Romantic Relationship Turbulence as Women
Manage Inflammatory Bowel Disease

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This study explored how women experience and negotiate romantic relationship turbulence related to managing IBD. This study used the Relational Turbulence Model as a framework for further understanding the ways uncertainty; intimacy and partner influence are experienced rather than testing their predictability. Three themes emerged from the 11 interviews conducted, themes include: Strategies and Phases of Disclosure, Experiencing Uncertainty, and Individual and Relational Identity. Themes were comprised of subthemes that all worked to answer the overlapping research questions driving this study. The overall findings suggest, first, that turbulent moments can be individually experienced. Additionally only two clear phases of disclosure occurred rather than multiple disclosures upon different life changes. Finally, women emphasized an accelerated sense of relational identity with their partner.