



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**JESSICA CUMMING**

BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

**“Young Women’s Experiences of Hospitalization for Anorexia  
Nervosa: A Narrative Study”**

Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Monday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018

3:00 p.m.

MacLaurin Building

Room A326

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Anne Marshall, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, University of  
Victoria (Co-Supervisor)

Dr. Natalee Popadiuk, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic (Co-  
Supervisor)

External Examiner:

Dr. Marie Hoskins, School of Child and Youth Care, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Danu Stinson, Department of Psychology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

Anorexia Nervosa (AN) is a serious psychiatric disorder marked by the refusal to maintain a healthy body weight and excessive fear of gaining weight or becoming fat. This eating disorder is most prevalent among young women. Most research on hospitalized AN patients has been quantitative, and the experiences and perspectives of young women struggling with AN are underrepresented in the literature. Using a social constructionist and relational cultural lens, the research question addressed in the current study was *What are AN participants' experience of helpful and not helpful factors in hospitalized care that affect recovery, motivation, and subjective well-being?* The study used a narrative approach, where eight young women aged 17-25 were interviewed regarding their stories of being treated in general or paediatric wards for AN. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify salient themes in the research interviews. The young women identified factors grouped into six main theme clusters that either helped or hindered their recovery during their time in the hospital, including: Staff Knowledge and Training, Treatment Experiences, Identity, Negative Treatment Impact, Abandonment, and Relationships. Implications of the findings for research, theory, and practice are discussed.