

Title: Re-establishing a sense of coherence: A typology of brain injury survivor stories

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Author: L.S. Lorenz, Brandeis University

The life disruption of brain injury provides the conditions for creating stories to re-establish a sense of coherence and self. A qualitative research study of lived experience with brain injury has suggested a typology of three brain injury survivor stories. In the first story, the new (brain-injured) self dominates and feelings of hopelessness consume the teller. In the second, the new self and old self are in dialogue and both impairments and strengths emerge. In the third, a multiplicity of selves accepts each other and the teller narrates a range of selves, activities, and strengths as well as suffering. The suggested typology could support listeners as they give the gift of listening, and provide opportunities to note changes in the stories being told. Symbolic transformations of the typology provide simple visual models to support brain injury survivors as they reflect on their situations with support group leaders, clinicians, and peers.