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Title: USING NARRATIVE ANALYSIS METHODS TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO LIVING WITH BRAIN INJURY

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Abstract: In an exploratory study into lived experience with traumatic brain injury, a survivor took photographs of living with her condition and the people and circumstances that have helped and slowed her recovery, and spoke with the author about her photographs. The analysis of her images and interview text used three narrative analysis methods—looking at the details of an individual image, as suggested by Becker (1986); structuring the accompanying interview into its discourse units, as modeled by Gee (1991); and grouping her series of photographs into plot categories representing problem, action, and resolution, as inspired by Mishler (2004). Looking closely at an image brings out insightful metaphors on the working of a survivor’s brain. The discourse analysis provides a moving glimpse of the impact of a brain injury on an individual’s perceptions of self, her feelings of connection (and disconnection) with others, and her reflections on using a photograph to articulate living with brain injury and sum up her experience. Grouping her photographs and text excerpts into plot categories brings out movement in the participant’s healing over time and reveals her hopes for the future—information that is not gleaned by looking at one photograph and narrative frozen in time.

References

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