

**“This is a good one, I mean this is my life story”: understanding the experience of narrative storytelling for adults with acquired brain injury**

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**Introduction/Rationale:** Storytelling is an everyday human experience. Following trauma or disruption to our life-narrative, sharing personal stories helps us regain coherence by integrating aspects of the past narrative within the context of the new. Despite evidence of the therapeutic value of narrative storytelling there is limited direct research in the context of acquired brain injury (ABI).

**Objectives:** This grounded theory study sought to better understand the experience and impact of narrative storytelling from the perspective of four groups: 1) adult storytellers with ABI who had participated in a storytelling workshop; 2) storytelling workshop facilitators; 3) close others of storytellers; and 4) the audience who had witnessed the stories. This presentation will focus upon the experiences of the storyteller participants.

**Method:** In-depth interviews were conducted with eight adult storytellers with severe ABI. All participants have significant cognitive and/or communication impairments, including some with severe dysarthria and use of assisted augmentative communication (AAC) devices. Each participant was interviewed at least twice and interview transcripts were analysed using constructivist grounded theory methods.

**Results:** Data analysis revealed several themes, including: sharing my story to help others; re-visiting memories; and releasing emotions through storytelling. The themes not only captured insights into the process of storytelling itself but also revealed the therapeutic potential of narrative storytelling to support positive identity construction for adults with ABI.

**Conclusion:** This study contributes to an emerging area of research and practice in brain injury rehabilitation. The findings present substantial implications for goal setting and intervention in brain injury rehabilitation.