



**Acquired  
Brain Injury  
Network**

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## **Conference Presentation Abstract ~ Poster**

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**Title:**

### **Clients' Perspectives on Occupational Re-engagement Following Brain Injury: A Qualitative Synthesis**

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**Summary:**

**Background:** The importance of incorporating client's perspectives in rehabilitation planning is well recognized. Yet, little is known about clients' perceptions on occupational re-engagement following brain injury.

**Objective:** In order to fill this gap, a systematic review and synthesis of the qualitative research was undertaken to answer the question: How do clients manage their occupational transitions following an acquired brain injury?

**Methods:** Searches of Medline, CINAHL & PsychInfo were conducted to identify qualitative studies that spoke to clients' perceptions and experience of occupational re-engagement (i.e. paid full/ part-time employment, homemaking, parenting, school, volunteering) following ABI. Inclusion criteria included studies using face-to-face/telephone interview and focus groups. Exclusion criteria included surveys and questionnaires. Ten studies met the initial inclusion criteria and underwent further evaluation of rigour by three independent researchers. Six studies met the rigour requirements and underwent further analysis. Verbatim quotes were extracted from these 6 articles and coded using thematic analysis.

**Results:** Five themes emerged that described the process clients engaged in when managing their occupational transitions. These included: 1) focusing on what's important in life, work and doing 2) giving myself time and space to try 3) re-discovering how to do and be in the world 4) learning how to use the ropes and rules of the road and 5) being open to receiving encouragement, assistance and peer support. Themes suggested an overall process of the clients "finding their way again"

**Conclusions:** Themes will be defined and discussed in relation to lessons learned for both clinical practice and program planning.

**Outcomes/Objectives:**

The objective of this synthesis was to understand from a phenomenological perspective what supports and resources clients drew upon to manage their work-based occupational transitions. Understanding clients' perspectives can assist service providers to view clients as active agents in their transition and focus on enabling clients to "find their way" again.