Living a Lie: The Biographical Disruption of ICU Survivors

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The Power of Story
Research Question:
What are the stories of people who have been discharged from ICU during the first five months of recovery following a critical illness or event?
Methods

Diaries
Face to face interviews
Memos
Field notes
Data analysis

• The researcher interpreted the meaning of the diaries with the participants
• Analysis of interviews with participants (Etherington, 2012)
• Kucera et al. (2010) seven step framework
Findings

- Lives had all irreparably changed for all
- Turmoil between surface and inner worlds
- Diaries enabled reflection on progress and coherence to the experience
- Unsupported by health care professionals
Benefits of Storytelling During Recovery

• Created space for thought
• A safe way to disclose
• Articulate inner thoughts and feelings
• Unique view through the lens of the survivor
Conclusion

I came out and everyone was just talking like you’re alright, we won the FA cup, you know they were all talking to me about football and I’d just lost a child (in my head). Oh you’re doing alright about it they said … People have no idea what you’ve been through. You’re all sorted, you’re all fixed up, they’ve no idea what’s really happened or what’s really going on underneath. When I first went back to work there was so much information coming in, overload, but I just couldn’t remember anything. I’d come out of a meeting not really taking a bullet point, not really following everything up, not being organised and not being the person that I normally am. I just almost needed to get these pictures down about how I was thinking. I’m 38, I don’t want to be a liability and I felt like a bit of a liability. I can’t share what’s going on in my head; every so often, I throw a few of the funny ones [delusions] out to people and tell them stuff that goes on in there but it’s pretty disturbing you know (Sam’s verbatim transcript).
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