

# **Phenomenological Study of Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors**

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## **Abstract**

The number of traumatic brain injury (TBI) cases continues to increase each year and it becomes a leading cause of death and disability worldwide. Therefore, this study aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of TBI survivors utilizing a qualitative phenomenological design. Key informants in the study were nine TBI survivors, ages 23 to 59 years old, who had sustained TBI for more than a year. To generate the needed information, a series of in-depth interviews utilizing semi-structured, self-developed open-ended questions, was employed. Findings showed that the survivors experienced a wide range of physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual changes. These changes affected their independent living, work, and relationships and they struggled to reconstruct their lives by coping with the changes. The physical change commonly reported by the survivors is headache. The mental changes are impaired memory and total memory loss where the survivors have to make checklists, relearn, and observe. The most reported emotional changes are increased anger, increased irritability and depression. However, for social changes there was a marked disruption and reduction of the social world that attributed to the breakdown of their relationships. Lastly, with the spiritual changes, the survivors experienced positive and negative changes such as increased faith and religiosity and loss of faith. Coping strategies of the TBI survivors were identified. However, the strong self-motivation and courage as the survivors' physical, mental, and emotional coping resources had further alleviated their sufferings. These findings offer insight on how to deal with TBI survivors and what coping strategies can be introduced for faster recovery.

**Keywords:** Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors, coping strategies, phenomenology