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Men, sport, spinal cord injury, and narratives of hope

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Abstract

Drawing on data from a life history study of a small group of men who have suffered spinal cord injury and become disabled through playing sport, this article explores the meanings of hope in their lives. It focuses upon the life stories of 14, white, predominantly working-class men, aged 26–51. The most common kinds of hope used by the men were shaped by three powerful narrative types that circulate in Western cultures. These were ‘concrete hope’™ (the most common form), shaped by the restitution narrative; ‘transcendent hope’™, shaped by the quest narrative; and ‘despair’™ or loss of any kind of hope, shaped by the chaos narrative. The implications of this dynamic process for their identity reconstruction as disabled men are considered.



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Keywords

Spinal cord injury; Sport; Narrative; Hope; Disability; United Kingdom

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