

Key themes of identity intervention for young people following a brain injury

Authors: Chatzisavva, Chara & Pickering, Andrea
Recolo UK Ltd, London, UK

BACKGROUND:

Identity is a key developmental process for young people (Erikson, 1968). It is identified as a common area of difficulty following a life changing injury, such as a brain injury (Ownsworth, 2014). Individual adults face challenges in understanding and redefining who they are and adjusting past aspects of identity (Ylvisaker & Feeney, 2002). However, there is scant published literature involving the adolescent population.

AIM:

The aim of this review is to identify key themes of intervention in published research that describe identity work in young people following a brain injury.

METHOD:

A literature search was conducted in three databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, and Web of Science) using keywords: identity, sense of self, self, brain injury, disability, children, adolescents, young adults, patients, paediatric neurorehabilitation. Data selection was described using PRISMA. Each paper was screened by one reviewer focusing on title and

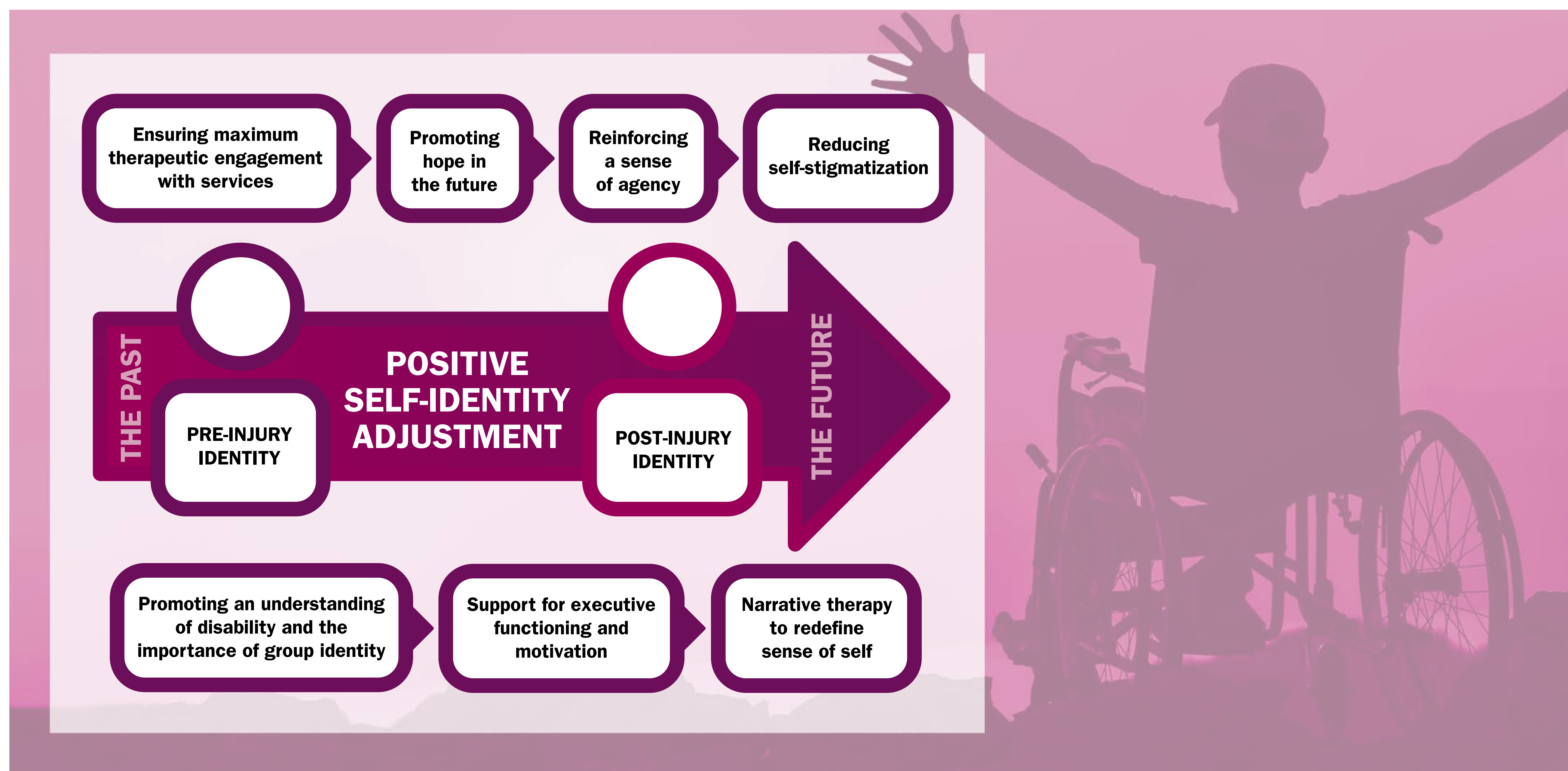
abstract and full text. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) tool was used to assess the quality of the research. Line by line coding was completed by two reviewers as the basis of the thematic analysis of the intervention (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

RESULTS:

The thematic analysis identified seven themes within interventions for young people to describe identity work following a brain injury. These included: promoting an understanding of disability and the importance of group identity; support for executive functioning and motivation; narrative therapy to redefine sense of self; reducing self-stigmatization; ensuring maximum therapeutic engagement with services; reinforcing a sense of agency; and promoting hope in the future.

CONCLUSION:

Young people present with identity difficulties following a brain injury. There is a need for intervention to support the process of adjustment and adaptation. This can be achieved through the key themes of intervention proposed in this paper. An evidence-base for young people with a brain injury is required to apply these findings with confidence.



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References:

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Correspondence:

Dr Andrea Pickering: andrea.pickering@recolo.co.uk