



# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Brain Injury Conference

February 9, 2024 | Marriott Downtown at CF Toronto Eaton Centre

## Poster #: 9

**Abstract Title:** Individuals with acquired brain injury' and program facilitators' experiences in virtual ABI community support programs: A qualitative study

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## **ABSTRACT:**

**Abstract Theme:** Mild - Moderate Brain Injury

**Topic(s) of Interest:** Clinical Research

**Purpose of Project:** The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of program facilitators and individuals with ABI who are respectively facilitating and attending virtual ABI support programs.

**Methods, Procedure, Results/Outcome, Conclusion:** Methods: Researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with individuals with ABI and program facilitators who respectively attended and facilitated virtual support programs.

Procedure: Participants provided informed consent to complete semi-structured interviews by telephone or on Zoom. Interview questions focused on the experiences in virtual support programs such as, perceived benefits and challenges, and suggestions to enhance the quality of programs. The interviews were transcribed and inductively analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: Fourteen virtual support program attendees with ABI (three attendees were also program facilitators) and 2 virtual support program facilitators without ABI participated in the study. Our analysis generated three themes: (1) "Perceived benefits of the virtual ABI community support programs" describes benefits such as, peer support, improved access to knowledge and information about ABI, (2) "Perceived challenges related to virtual ABI community support programs" highlights interpersonal (i.e., barriers in communication), intrapersonal (i.e., side effects from technology) and environment and contextual (i.e., privacy concerns) challenges, and (3) "Considerations to improve the quality of virtual ABI community support programs" describes suggestions to improve participation (i.e., creating a safe environment, improving accessibility of virtual support programs).

Conclusion: The results may be used to enhance virtual support program quality, ensuring they are accessible, inclusive and safe.