

## **Casting Off: Using narrative practices to co-research experiences of sight loss and visual impairment**

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Most research in the field of visual impairment and sight loss comes from medical understandings which place much emphasis on treatment, diagnosis and rehabilitation. I wanted to produce a different kind of research that would give insight into the ‘experience’ of being affected by sight loss, privileging personal knowledge and challenging the (sometimes) disabling practices of professionals in the field, enabling people with sight loss to have a voice, rather than to be talked about by experts. The paper is situated in the midst of a research process, starting from a point where stories from people affected by recent sight loss had been presented in various academic, visually impaired and international conferences. It documents (within a narrative account) the experience of research participants, those who had listened to the presentations and also includes (imbedded within the narrative text) some of the theoretical thinking influencing how narrative practices can be used to empower marginalised people. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: <journal@transformativestudies.org> Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2008 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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### **Prologue**

I work as a counsellor for a large UK charity that supports blind and

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