

| Significant statements | Stage 2: condensation of meanings | Stage 3: meanings for clustering | Stage 4: constituents |
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| “You have to move on ... They call me a Monthly Python man ... ‘Cause in that Life of Brian movie they’re singing ‘always look on the bright side of life’ ... You have to move on [from the surgery], right. I can’t just sit here” (I1). | It is necessary to accept the conditions set by the back post-operatively and focus on positive aspects of being in order to live a meaningful life. | Acceptance of the ‘new’ back is crucial for patients in order to live a satisfying and meaningful life. | Coexisting with the back |
| “I contacted the physiotherapist leading the [CBT] group because I felt so bad mentally after the surgery ... And I got great support. I think I’d felt completely lost without it. It’s important to know that what you’re experiencing is normal and okay” (I5). | Being part of a social support network entails an experience of not being alone, but being secure and safe. | Receiving support and recognition of the situation patients are in is necessary in order to feel secure. | Being in need of recognition and support |
| “One year, they say. Then you’ll know how it turned out. So, you’re just waiting ... You’re still in pain, but that’s normal they say ... You don’t know where you’re at on the success scale, and they can’t tell you. Only time will tell. That’s the worst part” (I2). | It is necessary to wait approximately one year in order to know the final result of the surgery. | Patients feel helpless and frustrated having to await the final result of surgery. | Awaiting the result of surgery |
| “I have to take those pills to exist, and to be able to do my job and those other things I’d like to do. ‘Cause it degrades my quality of life being in pain all the time ... It annoys me ‘cause I feel like I’ve got a lot of energy inside me I can’t use, because I’m in pain ... But I don’t want to eat pills all day either. So I don’t” (I6). | Analgesics are needed in order to get through everyday life, but at the same time a large consumption of analgesics is perceived negatively. | Analgesics cause ambivalence; they enable the patients to be active, yet patients do not want to take too many pills. | Ambivalence towards analgesics |