Both the effects and the severity of traumatic brain injuries vary widely, and the recommendations to improve services for and better accommodate the needs of college students with TBI would get a headache really, really quickly, and then I would lay down. Then that trouble concentrating, which was a really big thing. And when I did concentrate, I even moving off the couch. Getting up to make lunch made me tired. . . So I had anxiety gave me headaches, and I was really emotional. I couldn’t be social missing all of this school and not functioning like a normal person. And then my neuropsychologist every week, and it was just hanging out, saying what was on my mind. And it certainly made me feel better, in a way that I did, but she was really struggling. I taught her everything that I did. I learned a lot from her, but a lot of it I taught myself through figuring out what worked, doing research for tests, writing papers, sifting through the research sheets I do . . . she’s my pride and joy. She pulled a D to an A- after she used the things I taught her and now she’s doing so well. It’s fantastic.” – Melissa

“I think it helps with my anxiety to know that I have more time even if I don’t need it. But last semester, I needed it for a lot of tests and that was really helpful, and I’m going to request it again.” - Karen

“The last doctor I saw was a therapist because I got anxiety because I was coming up to weekends while still unlearning as well as any other person. So I’ve proved that.” – Melissa

“People who have disabilities and people who have traumatic brain injuries, [my disabilities services staff member] understands they’re different and she didn’t try to baby me or anything and I loved that. She understood that I wasn’t a vegetable, I’m fully functional.” – Melissa

“I’d just say to keep being open minded that every TBI is different. Like you’ve probably seen in these few different interviews where it’s not like ADHD or dyslexia where it can be baseline; everyone comes in at a different spot, so using other people’s cases, it’s nice to have an example, but just keep being flexible about each case.” - Karen

“Sometimes I’ll get more upset about something but there’s not really anything that could be fixed about that. I just have to know how to deal with it.” I guess anything, just having someone to talk to you. After the accident . . . they had me go to a neuropsychologist every week, and it was just hanging out, saying what was on my mind. And it certainly made me feel better, in a way that I did, but she was really struggling. I taught her everything that I did. I learned a lot from her, but a lot of it I taught myself through figuring out what worked, doing research for tests, writing papers, sifting through the research sheets I do . . . she’s my pride and joy. She pulled a D to an A- after she used the things I taught her and now she’s doing so well. It’s fantastic.” - Casey

**HIGHLIGHT OF FINDINGS**

**Effect of a Traumatic Brain Injury**

- Both the effects and the severity of traumatic brain injuries vary widely, and the extent and consequences of an injury can have a significant impact on a student’s ability to transition from high school to college.
- “So I had a little dentis, and fatigue was a big one. If I did any form of exercise, even moving off the couch, it made me tired. . . . So I trouble concentrating, which was a really big thing. And when I did concentrate, I would get a headache really, really quickly, and then I would lay down. Then that whole process would take like two hours because I would napping.” – Karen
- “The last doctor I saw was a therapist because I got anxiety because I was missing all of this school and not functioning like a normal person. And then my anxiety gave me headaches, and I wasn’t emotionally involved. I couldn’t be social because everything gave me a headache.” – Karen
- “Things were slower but also . . . it’s different from procrastination, but sometimes I totally have the motivation to do something, but it’s like the push to do it isn’t there. I know I need to do it, but sometimes I just don’t know how or just it doesn’t click. That’s the biggest struggle I guess.” - Casey

**Challenges Associated with Transitioning from High School to College**

- “It’s not a bad thing to ask for help at any time. [The institution] has the resources for you to succeed, and that’s all they want you to succeed for.” Although John’s experience was less positive, he nevertheless urged students with traumatic brain injuries to sign up with disabilities services. Even though it only helped a little, it still helped.” - John

- “Sometimes I’ll get more upset about something but there’s not really anything that could be fixed about that. I just have to know how to deal with it.” I guess anything, just having someone to talk to you. After the accident . . . they had me go to a neuropsychologist every week, and it was just hanging out, saying what was on my mind. And it certainly made me feel better, in a way that I did, but she was really struggling. I taught her everything that I did. I learned a lot from her, but a lot of it I taught myself through figuring out what worked, doing research for tests, writing papers, sifting through the research sheets I do . . . she’s my pride and joy. She pulled a D to an A- after she used the things I taught her and now she’s doing so well. It’s fantastic.” - Melissa

**Challenges Associated with Disabilities Services**

- “After that [first audio book], they gave me PDF files and gave me a website where I could download reading software. Something that could read PDF files, but it doesn’t exactly work that well. Honestly, I might as well be reading them myself.” - John

**SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

- The present study drove the recommendations of five undergraduate students with traumatic brain injuries to identify qualitative themes that may help disabilities services offices at colleges and universities better assist this population.

- The academic success of students who have suffered traumatic brain injuries depends on the quality and quantity of services and support offered to them by their various institutions.

- The narratives provided by the participants afford a view of how factors work and don’t work in the realm of accommodations.

- Certain accommodations are not always fulfilling. In John’s case, for example, though the school may have believed the audio books were fulfilling the student’s needs, the reality was far from successful.

- There are many critical skills these students need that cannot be provided through classroom accommodations, but are more effectively taught through one-on-one instruction. These skills can be conveyed and implemented through this type of mentoring program.

- As the participants in this study expressed time and time again, the circumstances and needs of each student who suffers a traumatic brain injury are vastly different from those of any other student. As a result, it can be very difficult to train staff to identify and provide the necessary accommodations for this population.

- Participants observed that it was helpful to be provided with a list of accommodations that others in their situation had found useful, allowing students to select the accommodations that best fit their unique needs.

- It’s also important that disabilities services staff be flexible and understanding, may provide the keys to fostering student success.