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A systematic literature review on socio-emotional experiences of those living with a disability in South Africa

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Abstract

The aim of this systematic review was to review existing and available literature on the socio-emotional experiences of disabled South African people regarding their disability. Relevant peer reviewed journal articles over a twenty-year period (2000-2020) were reviewed. Data collection was conducted by searching the following databases: EBSCO Host (CINAHL, MEDLIN, Psychology and Behavioural sciences collection), Sabinet and Sabinet African journals, PsychInfo, PubMed, and Taylor & Francis. Thematic synthesis was used to analyse data. Findings of this research revealed nineteen studies that fully met the inclusion criteria. Thirteen descriptive themes emerged including: positive experiences, need to motivate others, need to belong, the paradox of dependence and independence, negative emotions, constant fear of discrimination, shutting up, vulnerable, and the use of humour as a security to secure relationships. Furthermore, analytical themes that were further analysed from the descriptive themes produced four themes: experiences of various emotions, emotional needs in people with disabilities, disabled people finding themselves in unsafe environments, and taking back control.

Keywords: disability experiences; disabled; socio-emotional; systematic literature review; South Africa