

Hospital Discharge Advice Notes

Introduction

These notes were written by a TBI survivor, using hindsight following his recovery to *normality*.

Recovery Progress

Take baby steps with realistic (achievable) goals, giving you the potential to hopefully exceed expectations. It might help to NOT consider recovery as a journey to how you once were, instead focus on contentment with progress in relation to where you started your recovery from. Recovery is non-linear (not a straight line), you may have three good days followed by a very bad day - it's important not to feel you are back at square one.

Diaries

Get into a habit of keeping a daily diary record, possibly encompassing the following categories:

- Feelings of general wellbeing
- Sleep patterns and durations
- Specific condition (headaches / dexterity / localised pain, etc.)

Use a simple scoring system for each category, an example may be to record 1 (good) to 5 (bad). A diary enables evidencing of positive trends over a period of time, rather than focussing on inevitable occasional bad days. A diary is a useful tool when attending clinical appointments to review your progress and discuss your next steps.

Return to Work Anxiety

Volunteering can be a way to give you a fulfilling vocational purpose if you feel unable to return to your previous work role. Volunteering experience helps avoid potentially long gaps on your CV and can be a positive area to discuss during any potential future job interviews. Volunteering demonstrates a “can-do” mentality and may enable you to avoid talking extensively about the nature of your having been unable to work. Furthermore, volunteering is often a very satisfying and enjoyable experience.

Miscellaneous

- Coping strategies are very important in your recovery. If a consultant makes suggestions to you, be open-minded and try them.
- The importance of rest cannot be stressed enough, don't be embarrassed by needing sleep during the day. Sleep is as important as diet and exercise in contributing to your well-being.
- Accept that you may now be a little different - you're still normal, maybe you have a new normal.
- You might gain re-assurance of your cognitive function by using apps and games on a tablet or mobile phone. Reading BBC news online might help keep you in touch with what is going on in the world.

About The Author

David received a brain injury resulting in his being comatose for a month, he was hospitalised for a further three months. Twenty months after discharge, he returned to work.

Support Organisations

- **The Samaritans** Helping people at a difficult time. www.samaritans.org
- **Citizens Advice Bureau** Assistance in benefits and work. www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Headway** Supporting people with head injury, and their families. www.headwaynorthstaffs.org
- **Age UK** Assisting elderly people. www.ageuk.org.uk
- **Royal Voluntary Service** Supporting people in need. www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk
- **Volunteering Opportunities** An index for searching volunteering opportunities in any given area. www.do-it.org
- **Brainline** All about brain injury and coping with it. www.brainline.org
- **After Trauma** Supporting survivors and their families after trauma. www.aftertrauma.org