

Discharge Advice

Progress

Take baby steps in recovery with achievable (realistic) goals, giving you the potential to hopefully exceed expectations. Don't consider recovery as a journey to how you once were, instead try to focus on being content with progress in relation to where you started your recovery from. Recovery is non-linear (not a straight line): for example you may have three good days followed by a very poor one - it's important not to feel you are back at square one.

Rest

The importance of rest cannot be stressed enough, don't be *embarrassed* by needing sleep during the day. Sleep is just as important as diet and exercise in contributing to your wellbeing.

Diaries

Get used to 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.)

Perhaps use a simple scoring system for how you feel, an example may be to record 1 (good) to 5 (bad). The diary enables evidencing of positive trends over a period of time rather than focussing on *one bad day* - which inevitably happens. It can be very easy to be focussed on a recent low feeling rather than a longer term positive trend. A diary is also a useful record to facilitate discussing something 'concrete' when attending medical appointments to review progress. There is an Apple / Android app named "AfterTrauma" which can do much of the categorising and organising for you, see information on www.aftertrauma.org.

Return to Work Anxiety

Volunteering might be an excellent opportunity to make you feel useful if you don't feel up to returning to your previous work role yet. Volunteering experience helps avoid potentially long out-of-work gaps on your CV and can be a great thing to discuss during any potential 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, and focus on positives. Volunteering can often be a very satisfying and enjoyable experience.

Miscellaneous

- You might gain re-assurance of your intact cognitive function by using apps / games such as simple quizzes, crosswords, etc.
- Coping strategies are so important in your recovery, when a consultant makes suggestions, be open-minded and try them.
- Accept that you may now be a little different - you're still normal, maybe you have a *new normal*.

Support Organisations

The Samaritans

www.samaritans.org Helping people at a difficult time.

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk Assistance in benefits and work.

Headway

www.headwaynorthstaffs.org Supporting people with head injury, and their families.

Age Concern

www.ageuk.org.uk Assisting older people.

Royal Voluntary Service

www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk Supporting people in need.

Volunteering Opportunities

www.do-it.org An index for searching volunteering opportunities in any given area.

Brainline Organisation

www.brainline.org All about brain injury and coping with it.

After Trauma Organisation

www.aftertrauma.org Supporting survivors and their families after trauma.