Understanding Long-Term Recovery

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Doctors have no clue about what happens after someone gets out of the hospital, and we've got to let them know."
from the VA statewide community based needs assessment

"In my accident three things were damaged: the utility pole, the car, and me. They didn't know what to do with the utility pole and the car. They didn't know what to do with me, and they still don't!"
from the VA statewide community based needs assessment

"I lost my friends because they didn't know how to deal with my injury. Neither did I."
from the VA statewide community based needs assessment

"Survivors don't get well and they still need services 10 or 15 years later."
from the VA statewide community based needs assessment

"Although my son is only six now, I won't be here forever. What will happen to him when my husband and I are gone?"
from the VA statewide community based needs assessment
Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems
Reported at One and Five Years Postinjury

Long-Term Somatic Problems
Most Commonly Reported by Relatives 4 Years Postinjury

Long-Term Cognitive Problems
Most Commonly Reported by Relatives 4 Years Postinjury

Long-Term Behavioral Problems
Most Commonly Reported by Relatives 4 Years Postinjury

Communication and Social Problems
Most Commonly Reported by Relatives 4 Years Postinjury

Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems
Most Commonly Reported by Survivors 7 Years Postinjury
**Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems**

**Most Commonly Reported by Relatives 7 Years Postinjury**

- deniers
- childish
- impatient
- fatigue
- trouble speaking

**Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems**

**Relatives and Survivors Reporting 7 Years Postinjury**

- memory
- concentration
- alcohol sensitivity
- disinterested

**Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems**

**Personality and Emotional Changes**

- family members reporting
- childish
- labile
- disturbed behavior
- irritable
- restless

**Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems**

**Neuropsychological and Neurological Changes**

- family members reporting
- memory
- concentration
- slowness
- fatigue

**Long-Term Neurobehavioral Problems**

**Psychosocial Changes**

- family members reporting
- withdrawal
- aspontaneity
- stress sensitivity
- disinterested

**an injured person's point of view ...**

"If someone had told me what the next four years would be like, I would have laid down and died."

from the VA statewide community based needs assessment
Important Notice

How can I live like this?

Important Notice

Brain injury is an unexpected, catastrophic event, often affecting survivors and family members’ lives for many years.

Important Notice

Learning about the normal effects of injury, adjusting expectations, learning from experience, and developing new skills helps make life better.

Understanding Recovery

- People differ greatly from one another
- Even professionals have a hard time predicting what will happen
- Disappointment comes when people are left with problems after six months
- Some people fear they’ll never get better

Basic Recovery Extension Principles

- Everyone has the ability to learn, do things better and more efficiently
- Mental and physical exercise helps you get better with practice and training
- Learn when and how to ask people for help

Recovery Extension Principles

- Develop more effective strategies for doing things
- Stop doing things that don't work
- Focus on primary goals, monitor progress, stick with plans that work
- Figure out what works for others and what doesn't
Recovery Extension Principles

- Listen to other people’s ideas
- Exercise your body and mind
- Learn from mistakes
- Ask people that care about you to give feedback

Well Adjusted Long-Term Survivors

- Focus more on what they have and less on what other people have
- Readily acknowledge personal limitations
- Learn to appreciate unpaid activities such as visiting, cooking, gardening, housekeeping, and hobbies

The National Resource Center for Traumatic Brain Injury
www.neuro.pmr.vcu.edu

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