The impacts of Positive thinking after brain injury



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*Why positive thinking is important:*

* Positive thinking is a mental and emotional attitude that focuses on the bright side of life. It is seeing the silver lining in every cloud, and seeing a glass half full rather than half empty.
* Of course; it is easier said than done. We are not suggesting this is easy; and we are not suggesting that with positive thinking we have to be happy always. What we are suggesting, is to see a positive outcome in every situation.
* Research shows that people who think positively are more likely to find happiness and success! For example, if you attend a work interview thinking it isn’t going to go well you would come across differently to if you attend a work interview thinking it will go well and you’ll get the job.
* It is about changing the way we are thinking, avoiding negative thoughts which can cause anxiety and depression – and welcoming a new outlook on every situation.

*Leo Tarrant:*

* In 2011 Leo had a mysterious accident which left him fighting for his life in University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire.
* He was unable to function, he could not walk or speak and he was told it was very likely he would never be able to do anything again.
* Leo however through the power of positive thinking managed to turn this around and is left today only with a loss of sense of smell as a result of his brain injury!
* He came to talk to us in Coventry Headway and his story was incredible. Doctors and medical clinicians think his recovery was impossible as all the odds were against him and now they too believe it was down to his positive outlook.
* When he was told he wouldn’t be able to walk again, he wasn’t willing to accept it and with every bit of progress he made he would ask the doctors what could he try next.
* Leo also gave us some brilliant examples of negative outcomes of his ABI which he now thinks positively about for example;
* After his injury Leo told us his old friends treated him differently and it was difficult to deal with. – The positive of this situation was that he now knows who his real friends are and they really are the best friends imaginable.

*The ABC’s of positive thinking:*

It’s a tricky one to get your head around at first, but it works! It is useful to use this method in situations where you are upset or stressed to change the way you think about that situation.

**A** = **A**ction, event or situation

(*for example*: *a good friend has said something about my injury which hurt my feelings)*

**B** = negative **B**elief or thought which is a result of the situation.

(*for example: this friend isn’t a very good one)*

**C** = **C**onsequence of this thought or belief

(*for example: I felt hurt)*

***Alternative* B:** Go back to the **B**elief or thought and think about an alternative belief or thought that would result in a more positive consequence.

*(for example: my friend has misunderstood my injury)*

***Alternative* C:** a new thought or belief should lead to a positive **C**onsequence.

*(for example: I would like to help my friend better understand my injury)*

This wont work for everyone, but it is worth giving it a try. Below is space to think of some examples for yourself.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A**ction, event or situation | Negative **B**elief or thought | Negative **C**onsequence | Positive**B**elief or thought | Positive **C**onsequence |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **A**ction, event or situation | Negative **B**elief or thought | Negative **C**onsequence | Positive**B**elief or thought | Positive **C**onsequence |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Finally!

What are 3 positive outcomes of your brain injury? It might be difficult to do now and if so leave it and come back to it in your folder when you think of something!

Headway Coventry and Warwickshire’s TOP TIPS –



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For looking on the brighter side of life!

Sometimes it can be really difficult to see the positive side in a situation. These top tips will hopefully help a little.

* Smile more – it really works! Using the specific muscles in our face to smile sends a signal to brain indicating that you must be happy!
* Surrounding yourself with positive people – when you are stuck in a negative circle, talking to people who have a positive outlook on life can help you think differently.
* Change your thinking – instead of thinking “we are going to have difficulty adjusting to living with this situation” think “This will be hard, but we will find solutions to make it easier”
* Helping others – Giving is receiving! Being kind and nice to other people can increase your own happiness.
* Take control – remember you have control of your life, you always have the choice to make change happen if need be.
* Do more of what makes you happy – think about what activities make you happiest and do more of them!
* Exercise – yes as much as most of us hate it, exercise releases endorphins which make us happy.
* At the end of every day make a list of things you are grateful for and the positive aspects of your day.
* Always look for the silver lining – as difficult as it may seem.
* And remember; everything will be ok in the end. If it’s not ok yet, it isn’t the end.