Feeling Anxious, Feeling Blue: What the Heck am I Going to Do?

TBI Forum
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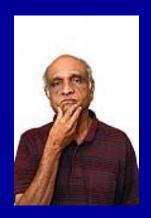
Feeling



Feeling



What the Heck Am I Going to Do?



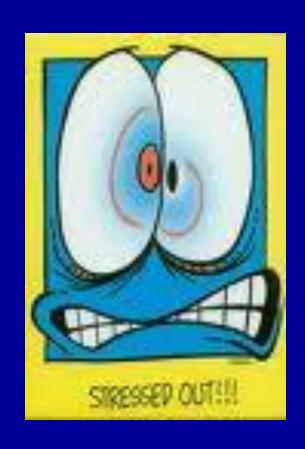
What We'll Cover

- Stress and anxiety
- Depression
- What you can do to feel better
- Where to go for help if the problem persists

The First Step

 Recognize and acknowledge the feelings you have

 There is nothing strange or shameful about feeling anxious or depressed after a life-changing event like brain injury



What Is Stress?

- Stress is the way the body reacts to signals
- Brain and body go into "ALERT!!"
- Healthy stress is protective
- Happens when threat is interpreted as being real

Stress

Normal to feel stressed after brain injury

Stress can build up and lead to anxiety

What Is Anxiety?

- A feeling of nervousness or fear that is out of proportion to the situation
 - Can be general
 - Can be related to a specific stimulus or situation

Symptoms of Anxiety

- Heart racing or pounding
- Feeling as if you can't think
- Stomach distress
- Feel hot
- Feel tension/tightness in muscles

How Does Brain Injury Contribute to Anxiety?

- Difficulty concentrating, thinking, reasoning can make it hard to do things, so person feels stressed
- Stimulus overload (noise, lights, activity, crowds) can make one feel stressed
- Too many demands, time pressure can result in stress

What Makes Anxiety Worse

- Trying to do too much
- Expecting perfection
- Pattern of avoiding things that make you anxious

Some medications



What Is Depression?

More than feeling sad

 Persisting low mood and negative outlook

Symptoms of Depression

- Depressed mood
- Difficulty enjoying anything
- Negative thoughts
- Low energy
- Feel bad about yourself
- Hard to concentrate

Why Does Brain Injury Contribute to Depression?

Changes in brain chemistry

Not being able to do the things you used to do

Loss of your life as you knew it

What Makes Depression Worse?

- Stress
- Isolating yourself
- Staying in bed all day
- Some medications
- Not taking medications as prescribed

How Can I Deal with All of This?

Coping is not...



What Can You Do to Feel Better?

- The basics
 - Eat healthy food
 - Avoid or limit alcohol
 - Reduce or stop smoking
 - Get out of bed and stay out of bed during the day
 - Get some exercise

- Manage Stress
 - Take breaks
 - Relaxation breathing
 - Meditation
 - Listen to a tape with guided imagery
 - Listen to relaxing music



- Get moving
 - Go for a walk
 - Play with your dog
 - Find a volunteer activity
 - Go fly a kite
 - Take yoga

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

- Do something you enjoy
 - See a movie
 - Watch something funny on Youtube
 - Engage in a hobby

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- Connect with other people
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Support group
 - Peer mentor

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture

- Share your feelings
- --the good and the notso-good--with a good friend

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

- Have a schedule
- Set a goal for the day or for the week
 - Make it reasonable
 - Make it specific
 - Cut yourself some slack if it doesn't go perfectly
 - Revise if necessary
 - Try again

- <u>Decrease</u> your negative thoughts
 - Become aware of negative thoughts by monitoring them...write them down
 - Challenge your negative thoughts
 - Try to find a more positive way to look at the situation

Quick Time™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

- Increase your positive thoughts
 - Notice positives in your life
 - Write down 3
 positive things you did, thought or felt each day
 - Review them often



- Look for triggers for anxiety or depression
 - Notice when you feel anxious or depressed
 - Write down the situation
 - Look for patterns

- Plan ahead for triggering situations
 - Plan how you will cope
 - Get rest beforehand
 - Use relaxation strategies
 - Focus on positive or neutral thoughts

When You Need Additional Help

- Talk to your doctor
- Consider counseling
 - Psychologist
 - Family therapist
 - Social worker
 - Mental health therapist
- Consider medications

Counseling Therapies

- Systematic Desensitization
- Exposure Therapy
- Problem-Solving Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Systematic Desensitization

- Anxiety is incompatible with relaxation
- Teaches relaxation skills
- Develop hierarchy of increasingly anxiety evoking scenes
- Visualize the scenes, starting with easiest, until feel anxious, then relax
- Repeat each scene until comfortable

Exposure Therapy

- Re-experience the anxiety evoking event by writing or talking about it in the therapy situation
- Often gradual
- May involve "re-writing" the event

Problem-Solving Therapy

- Learn to identify and assess problem
- Generate several solutions without judgment
- Pros/Cons of each possible solution
- Pick the best and try it out
- Evaluate results

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Based on idea that thoughts and perceptions trigger emotions
- Teaches recognizing and monitoring thoughts
- Challenging thoughts
- Generating more adaptive positive thoughts/perceptions

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

- Learning to be aware of thoughts, images, emotions, and memories as just thoughts, images, emotions, and memories
- Letting them to come and go without fighting them
- Being aware of and open to the present
- Discovering what is most important to one's true self
- Setting goals according to values and carrying them out responsibly

Final Notes

- Recognize your failings
- Recognize your strengths
- Change doesn't happen right away
- It isn't always easy
- Sometimes you'll mess up. We ALL do
- If at first you don't succeed.....TRY, TRY again

Resources

King County Crisis Clinic
 206-461-3222
 Toll Free: 1-866-427-4747

 Snohomish County crisis line: 425-258-4357

Pierce County crisis line:
253-396-5180

Resources

Hopeline (National Crisis Line):
 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
 1-800-273-TALK (8255)





