

# Synapse National Conference: Future Leaders in Brain Injury

## Brain Injury Recovery Panel Questions and Answers

04/22/2023

- What advice do you have for future professionals in this field<sup>1</sup>? – **Be open-minded. There are more avenues of help than the mainstream medicine and it is not “one path fits all” for recovery.**
- What kind of healthcare professionals (for example, rehabilitation specialists, neurologists, speech therapists) have been most impactful in your recovery? – **Osteopathic/ Chiropractic combined with Cranio-sacral plus my own experience working for 15 years with brain injury. This was done with regular checkups by a neurologist.**
- Why should students consider a career in Brain Injury? **It is a field in which there is great opportunity for improvement. From my experience as a healer, only 20% of the brain trauma is properly diagnosed and treated at this time, hence a lot of brain bruises go undetected with the injured person performing slightly under their capabilities, only to create problems later in life. Old brain injuries cannot be connected to the original trauma!**
- What role do you think aspiring healthcare providers can play in advocating for the needs of individuals within the brain injury community? **The brain injury associations are already doing advocacy. The best help would be to visit brain injured people and ask them what they need, as we tend to shy away from others seeing our disability. Somebody who can say: “I saw this before and I saw them recovering” is a tremendous help.**
- What’s one thing healthcare providers can improve in their care of individuals with brain injury? What’s one thing you think they already do well? **Typically, people who get into this field are caring individuals which is very important. The improvement: be open to other help avenues of recovery and leverage people with good recovery history as a morale-booster.**
- What do you wish more healthcare professionals knew about living with a brain injury?
  - **People with brain injury continue to recover well past the 1-1.5 years. It took me 12 years to remember anything from my childhood!**
  - **Pushing too much to do “more” for a brain-injured person results in going backward.**

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<sup>1</sup> Brain injury treatment

- Every person has his/her own recovery pace.
- Rest – doing activities that relax the brain and sleep are the best recovery tools by far.
- Fast walking is an important brain recovery tool because it oxygenates the brain.
- Cooking is a very important recovery tool both for direct brain recovery (organizing, sorting, sequencing, healthy eating) and as a morale booster.
- Quietly celebrating every small achievement is another recovery booster.

People with brain injury want to be “NORMAL”. The best help is to guide the brain-injured person to start from the “new normal” and quietly celebrate every new recovery step. Luckily we do not know how badly we are impacted until we actually recover the function.

In my own recovery, in addition to defining a new normal, the goal of using my recovery and my previous knowledge of helping people with brain injury recover as a tool for helping others was a great incentive to fight my way back. My goal became reality 18 years later with the books: *Heal Your Brain, Reclaim Your Life* and *Cooking after Brain Injury: Easy Cooking for Recovery*.

Resilience is the most important personal quality for a brain-injured person!