

Supporting social opportunities for people living with an acquired brain injury

15 years of the **ROCK** Club in Northamptonshire



The Plan

- (1) Why support social opportunities?
- (2) Why the ROCK Club?
- (3) Building the model
- (4) Early events & learning
- (5) Today's ROCK Club
- (6) The future; ROCK Clubs elsewhere?

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> Why support social opportunities?

Social isolation is a common problem after a brain injury, and Headway's own research shows that more than 70% of brain injury survivors have seen deterioration in their social life.

(Headway UK website 2023)

We might think that for people with brain injury who are living in residential or long-term services that the isolation problem is solved. But experience suggests that this may not be necessarily so.



the brain injury association



> Why support social opportunities?

Psychosocial and emotional sequelae of individuals with traumatic brain injury: A literature review and recommendations.

Morton & Wehman (1995) *Brain Injury*, 9(1), 81–92

Identified 4 key themes

- (1) Post severe TBI high risk of decrease in friendships and social support
- (2) Lack of opportunity for establishing new social contacts
- (3) Decrease in leisure activities
- (4) High levels of depression and anxiety, associated with loneliness and poor social support

> Why support social opportunities?

Morton & Wehman (1995) *Brain Injury*, 9(1), 81–92

“ ... recommended that injured individuals be assisted to establish and build up their social networks following injury. They also stressed helping the injured individual to become active with peer groups ... the initiation of new strategies and techniques specifically designed to mobilize social support”.

> Why support social opportunities?

Social and psychological influences on satisfaction with life after brain injury

Objectives

The current study examined personality characteristics, unmet needs, and psychosocial risk factors in survivors of brain injuries.

Methods

In this cross-sectional online study, 592 brain injury survivors completed questionnaires to assess psychological variables associated with their current life situation



**Proctor, CJ & Best LA (2019),
Disability and Health Journal
Volume 12, Issue 3**

> Why support social opportunities?

Results

47.6% of participants reporting moderate or severe levels of depression and 41.2% reporting suicidal ideation

Increased engagement in leisure activities, higher emotional stability ($p < .001$) and sociability ($p < .01$) coupled with lower depression ($p < .001$) and romantic loneliness ($p < .001$) significantly predicted satisfaction with life.

These results could aid in the development of policies and procedures surrounding the discharge of patients that includes a plan for increasing social leisure activities within the community and providing ongoing support for survivors when formal rehabilitation ceases.

> Why support social opportunities?

Implementation of a leisure reintegration programme for people with acquired brain injury in a community rehabilitation programme: a feasibility study

The feasibility and effect of a leisure reintegration group programme within a community rehabilitation service.

Method:

Three cohorts of a semistructured leisure group programme were offered, each conducted over eight sessions within 4 weeks. The Nottingham Leisure Questionnaire (NLQ) and Leisure Satisfaction Measure (LSM) were used as primary outcome measures. Measures of acceptability, including adherence, and a post-intervention participant survey were also completed.

(Alves-Stein, S, George, S, Lannin, NA, & Jolliffe, L (2022), Brain Impairment, 1-13.)

› Why support social opportunities?

Overall, demonstrated that providing a leisure reintegration group programme within a community rehabilitation service may be an effective means of addressing leisure participation and the unmet need of leisure participation interventions for an ABI population who are receiving services in a typical community rehabilitation service.

This was supported by high attendance rates and positive feedback from participants and staff. Despite a small sample size, there were some improvements seen in leisure satisfaction, however, there is insufficient data to comment on the significance of this improvement. A larger study is recommended to further investigate the efficacy of this programme and determine if it can produce significant improvements in both leisure participation and leisure satisfaction.

(Alves-Stein, S, George, S, Lannin, NA, & Jolliffe, L (2022), Brain Impairment, 1-13.)

> Why support social opportunities?

Social and recreational activities
Having a social life and pursuing interests make life worthwhile and are important to consider following brain injury.

One of the most frustrating aspects of brain injury is that people often find themselves cut off from their previous life; unable to do the things they love or keep up with the social life they once had. As with other aspects of recovery, there are ways around these challenges. Although it may not be possible to return to life as before, it is important to seek ways to stay socially connected and find activities that are rewarding and fun.

Synapse, Australia's Brain Injury Organisation
<https://synapse.org.au/>

**SYNAPSE
RECONNECTIONS**

Support Groups



> Why the ROCK Club?

The Northamptonshire Effect

Concentration of services

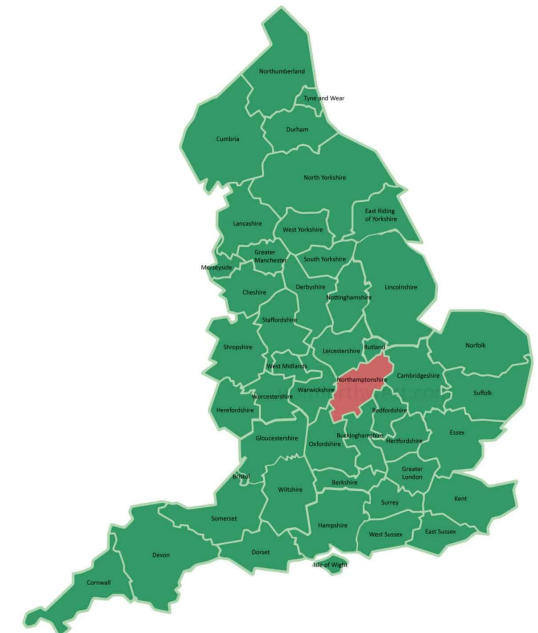
Northampton:

- (i) Kemsley, St Andrew's
- (ii) Christchurch Court
- (iii) Richardson Partnership
- (iv) Oakleaf Care
- (v) St Matthew's

Nearby:

- (i) Grafton Manor
- (ii) Thomas Edward Mitton House
- (iii) Badby Park

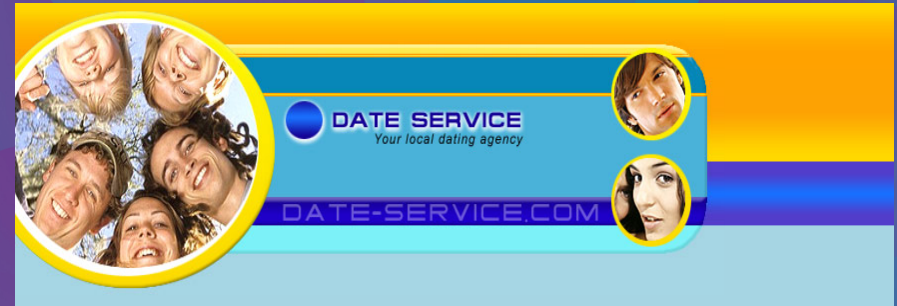
Interconnectedness of brain injury professionals



> Building the model

In late 2007, I was discussing these issues with an Assistant Psychologist colleague. As ever we rehearsed the unmet needs of people with an acquired brain injury seeking relationships. My colleague had seen a TV programme about a dating agency for people with a learning disability, for a moment we were inspired

Finally, the more practical idea emerged. Many people live in and around Northampton in different services that offer them support because of an acquired brain injury. Why couldn't we get together with them to provide new opportunities for people to meet up, and perhaps become friends?



> Building the model

And another inspiration

Phab Clubs

Phab inspires and supports disabled and non-disabled children, young people and adults to make more of life together - breaking down community barriers, reducing social isolation, and creating opportunities for all involved to enjoy the same activities and challenges side by side.

<https://www.phab.org.uk>



> Building the model

January 2008,

After asking the boss

☺ Then get the organisations to buy into the idea. Lots of telephone calls later

☺ A meeting of staff from different services to talk about what we might do

☺ A meeting with people living in or attending the different services and their staff

Building the model

**Expanding Social Networks in
Northamptonshire for People Living After
Brain Injury (Meeting at Kemsley, St Andrew's
Healthcare, 30th January 2008)**

- (1) Introductions**
- (2) Outline of idea regarding 'social network'**
- (3) Discussion**
- (4) Practicalities:**
 - (i) User involvement**
 - (ii) Venues**
 - (iii) Activities**
 - (iv) Staffing**
 - (v) Risk**
 - (vi) Insurance**
 - (vii) Finance**
- (5) Action plan**

> Why the ROCK Club?

Well, actually nothing to do with rock,
which can occasionally be a surprise or
disappointment to some 😊

R ichardson Partnership

O akleaf Care

C hristchurch Court

K emsley

It's the original services team that set
the ball rolling



> Early events & learning

A quiz night (in a ordinary village hall/Primary School)

Chairs too small!

A disco (in an ordinary pub!!)

Worries about alcohol availability

A games evening (in another village hall)

Discovered the ideal venue

The Parsons Hall, Great Houghton



> Today's ROCK Club

Well we're 15 year's old and we have done around 100 events!

These have included:

- Quiz Nights
- Discos
- Live music
- Race nights
- Bake off
- Summer day time event
- Easter egg hunt
- ROCK Club Olympics
- Magician show
- Animal experience
- Film night
- Karaoke
- Talent night
- Fancy Dress
- Christmas Lunch at the Marriott Hotel



> Today's ROCK Club

And don't forget the food!

- Hot dogs
- Fish 'n chips
- Pizza
- Cakes
- Barbecue burgers
- Pumpkin Pie & Pumpkin Soup
- Hot & cold buffet
- Ice cream (from Ice cream van)
- Bottomless tea, coffee and soft drinks

- Three course Christmas lunch, table service and access to (alcohol excluded) bar



> Today's ROCK Club

And don't underestimate the power of a raffle, both good and very occasionally, not so good

Relying on volunteers to keep things going, from 'Master of all Trades', Alistair, to ex-colleagues, current students and Alistair's 'crew'



> Today's ROCK Club

What about outcomes?

- No 'standardised measures'
- People attend again and again and
- Reconnecting with peers that have moved on locally
- Romance? Nearly
- It's all about the atmosphere

> Today's ROCK Club

Some challenges

- Keeping up with organisations and their staff changing
- Maintaining finances and low cost events (usual charge is £5 to cover hall hire, food, drinks)
- Coming up with new ideas for events
- Re-invigorating co-production of events

> The future; ROCK Club elsewhere?

Are there any other places that could capitalise on their own 'Northampton Effect' of services in close proximity working together??

ROCK Club as a Charity or Community Interest Company (CIC)??

> The future; ROCK Club
elsewhere?

Thank you for
Listening!



Any questions for now ??????

Or later, kjenkins@stah.org