

Overcoming barriers following a brain injury: a survivor's viewpoint

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Introduction:

Who I am and my family background

What I did before my injury

How I acquired my brain injury

Barriers and limitations:

- Executive dysfunction: like losing the conductor of the orchestra
- Memory (particularly short-term)
- Planning (e.g. planning a journey)
- Maintaining / following conversations
- Physical issues and aches and pains
- Invisible disability: I appear normal

How I overcame the barriers:

- I enlisted the help of a case manager, physiotherapist, psychologist and occupational therapist
- Repetition helps me remember things
- I learnt the expression “self-talk”

How I overcame the barriers (continued):

My OT encouraged me to try:

- Golf: to help with physical challenges and planning
- Household chores (cleaning, cooking, and online food shopping)
- Making bread (though I didn't continue!)

Short term memory problems:

- “What to do next?”
- Routine is very important to help my memory
- Planning: my mantra - the 5 Ps:

“Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance”

Memory aids:

- iPhone
 - Google Calendar: which sends me alerts (useful for my wife as she can see what I have on)
 - Use of lists and notes
 - Whiteboard

How things are now:

- I understand my brain injury and I can relate to others
- I joined The Silverlining Brain Injury Charity:
 - Regular activities (in-person and online)
 - New community of supportive friends who understand and accept me for who I am and help with my rehabilitation

How things are now (continued):

- I help run a mum's and toddlers' group, 3 days a week
- Golf
- I run our family household (my wife works full-time)
- I enjoy attending BI conferences and meeting new people (especially fellow sufferers and professionals)

Thank you

Any questions?