



Speaking from Experience Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Transcript for chapter 5 of 10: Rehabilitation

Delia and Cassandra: A lot of hard work. I still consider that I'm going through rehab. I've said actually recently that I'm probably almost finished now. But I had to learn to walk and talk and feed myself. Although, food always got to my mouth [laughs]. With rehabilitation, it's a different journey for everyone.

Kerrie: I did actually stay in Footscray hospital, for approximately 8 or 12 weeks. Then they got me into Royal Talbot, which is a rehabilitation centre.

Igal, Anat, Illana: Anat was transferred to a rehabilitation hospital in Melbourne. She was there for about a year, just over the year.

Anita: The rehabilitation programme that I was on, I had an OT [occupational therapist]. I also had hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and also counselling.

Igal, Anat, Illana: When I came out, I think I could nod and shake my head. I couldn't talk. Later, I could say 'yes', 'no'. Much later, I could think a bit. I still have problems thinking deeply complicated material. I could read a little every day, a bit more. Now, I can read newspapers, and it's all gradual. But it's all helped thanks to these two [gestures to her parents].

Peter and Carol: Physically, they had to make all my food for me for quite a while. At one stage, I could only eat with one hand. That was quite a while before I was able to get this other arm repaired.

Kerrie: Now, it took me approximately two and a half years for me to progress from my wheelchair to actually walking, because that involved me undergoing an operation. A tendon-lengthening operation.

Delia and Cassandra: I was left with left-sided paralysis after the accident. I worked so hard on being able to walk without a limp. Finally, if I was on flat ground and I wasn't tired, I could walk without a limp – and my right hip went, and I had to have that replaced. Now my knee is going and I've got to get that replaced. I want to know how much metal you have to have inside you, before you qualify for a remote.

Anita: There are lots of times that I have set backs, it's quite frustrating in a way that my expectations are not fulfilled. I find that I often have to come into agreement that I cannot do this still, like I was hoping to. I thought that once I went home, I could go back to my study. The first term finished, and I still couldn't go. So, I went to the college and said that I would have to extend another term. Then it got to the point that I would have to give up totally.

Kerrie: One of the first major setbacks that I encountered was when I went home to Albury. That was when I'd graduated from my wheelchair onto my feet, and I took a tumble down my mum and step-dad's stairs in Albury, and I did actually break my ankle.



Peter and Carol: I have balance impairment and if I get on any slight angle, I lose my balance very quickly. Whereas, what they were doing in a safe manner, is to get you to walk on foam blocks. I still use cushions today, to help with my balance. It's easier to exercise and get your balance used to being a little bit out of the norm, rather than falling over and injuring yourself or injuring other people.

Paul: I could talk, but my speech was slurred. I had speech therapy. Balance; I had to have a walking stick. Some cases, I had a wheelchair. My determination overwhelmed all that.

Igal, Anat, Illana: I have physiological therapy and I have speech therapy; physio, about thrice weekly, speech about once fortnightly. Psychological and...

Igal, Anat, Illana: We are trying also to send her to some activities that are the initiative of mum and dad. Like doing horse-riding, that she will have this exercise of her arms. Drumming; that she will have the coordination between the hands.

Igal, Anat, Illana: She's also going to drama group and French group, a wellbeing group. We try to keep Anat very active every day. As much as possible.

Paul: I've painted things, made sculptures, cartoons, drawings. Your whole manner of reading a paper, back to front, once a week. Reading books; something I never did. And writing to people. People can't cope with the energy I've got.