“Brain Injury Survival Kit is an all-in-one resource for people with TBI and their families. Cheryle Sullivan, MD continues to provide tips for healthy living through her own personal experience and professional training. Easy-to-read, usable and essential for all.”

Terry Chase, MA, ND, RN, Patient & Family Education Coordinator, Craig Hospital, Englewood, CO

“The many concrete suggestions and resources provided are absolutely ‘on target’ for people with cognitive challenges.”

M. Elizabeth Sandel, MD, Chief, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Napa Solano Service Area, Director, Research and Training, Kaiser Foundation Rehabilitation Center, Vallejo, CA

“Dr. Cheryle Sullivan elegantly defines and presents the ‘to-do’s for an organized and easier life for the brain injured person and their family members. A must-have guidebook, cutting to the chase for support, systems, strategies and tricks to ease and accelerate the recovery process.”

Gail Denton, PhD, author of Brainlash: Maximize Your Recovery From Mild Brain Injury

Brain Injury Survival Kit: 365 Tips, Tools, & Tricks to Deal with Cognitive Function Loss

365 Tips, Tools, & Tricks to Deal with Cognitive Function Loss

Brain Injury Survival Kit: 365 Tips, Tools, & Tricks to Deal with Cognitive Function Loss gives brain injury survivors, their families, and loved ones the strategies they need to improve brain function and quality of life. The book is a compendium of tips, techniques, and life-task shortcuts that author Cheryle Sullivan has compiled from her personal experience. Readers will learn successful approaches to:

- Communication tools
- Compensating for impaired memory function
- Locating things that have been put away
- Word finding
- Concentration exercises
- Balancing a checkbook
- Using medication alarms
- And much more!

From basic principles to unique solutions for saving time and energy, this book is packed with helpful information for those coping with the special challenges of a brain injury.

About the Author: As a brain injury survivor and a physician, Dr. Cheryle Sullivan offers a unique perspective on neurologic damage and the resulting functional impairments.
Brain Injury Survival Kit

365 Tips, Tools, & Tricks to Deal with Cognitive Function Loss

Cheryle Sullivan, MD
Success is best measured by how far you’ve come with the talents you’ve been given.

Anonymous

This book is dedicated to my mother, Mary Lou Sullivan. Her legacy is the fact that she raised six children to be upstanding, contributing members of their communities. She worked hard, always with pride in what she did, and contributed to the lives of many people. She made a difference with her life. I hope I can say the same when my time comes.

My mom left my life too early, just prior to her retirement, at age 61. She practiced a healthy lifestyle and should have lived a long life. Instead she died on 10/20/97 as the result of a traumatic brain injury, caused by a fall on stairs in her home. She was never able to do all the things she said she’d do “someday.” Her death, more than my own brain injury, pushes me to try to make a difference for other brain injury survivors, to work to increase awareness of this “silent epidemic,” to get the word out about the importance of preventing traumatic brain injuries and to advocate within the health care system and the community for persons with disabilities.
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Foreword

If you are coping with a brain injury — either personally, within your family, or among your friends — you have just opened the right book.

*The Brain Injury Survival Kit* is unique in the world of self-help literature. It isn’t written by just another doctor who likes to write, or by a brain injury survivor who likes to share, it is a combination of the two — and you are the beneficiary.

Cheryle Sullivan, MD, knows brain injury — BI — and she knows it intimately. Before her own accidents, she dealt with BI in her immediate family, so the road has been long and hard, but instructive. As a physician, she thinks scientifically, making the kind of connections between neurology and everyday reality that escape most of her peers, and virtually all of ours. She has walked the walk and now she is talking the talk — to you.

The *Survival Kit* is a practical approach to living every day (every single day, since it provides 365 tips, tools and tricks…) with a brain injury. The severity of the impairment will, of course, dictate the utility of what you learn, but there is clearly something for everybody in this great collection of helpful hints.

Those of us in the field of education, prevention, and treatment understand that, historically, brain injury has been a hidden epidemic, plaguing the world for centuries, without its due notice. Unless a head injury resulted in obvious surgery, facial alteration, or physical impairment, most brain dysfunctions were invisible to others. Injuries resulting from falls at home or collisions on the football field had been dismissed as mere “concussions,” where the survivor was merely “knocked out.”

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No more. Between America’s professional sports and the mid-East wars of the new century, awareness has risen. People are beginning to wear helmets when skiing, riding bicycles or playing on skateboards. Schools and teams are collecting baseline data for annual comparisons to monitor the status of basic brain functions. Emergency rooms are doing follow-ups on the most minor of head injuries. Intensive Care Units and Rehab centers are saving lives and brain function with new drugs, machines, and techniques.

Knowing about all of this progress, Dr. Sullivan has stepped forward to serve the cause. I first met her at a Brain Injury 101 class that she was teaching in Colorado Springs, at Penrose Hospital, where I served as Director of Rehabilitation Services. I was (and am) President of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of Colorado (BIAC), whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for survivors of brain injury and their families, and BI 101 is one of our community classes.

Beyond her vast knowledge of the neurological basics of BI, I was struck by Dr. Sullivan’s common-sense approach to daily life, and, of course, her vibrant sense of humor. She was amazingly direct and transparent about her own impairments, often laughing at herself when a word escaped immediate recall; she would calmly capture the moment and use it as an example of impaired brain function. Such spontaneous honesty made her more human and approachable to the audience — many of whom were also survivors.

Increased awareness and advanced technology have created the greatest population of known brain injury survivors in the history of the world, so Dr. Sullivan’s book is a timely and valuable contribution. If you are living with or near brain injury you
will immediately recognize the physical, mental and emotional challenges cited in this book, and you will appreciate the experience-based solutions offered. I am proud to recommend it.

Gary A. Morse, MA, MS
Vice President, Human Resources,
Penrose-St. Francis Health Services,
Colorado Springs, CO
This is a sample from Brain Injury Survival Kit
Buy Now

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Preface

It is hard for me to believe that it has been 10 years since my mom’s death from a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and 5 years since the TBI that changed the course of my own life.

I was one of the 20% of mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) survivors who were fortunate to receive cognitive rehabilitation services. Through work with two cognitive therapists, several neuropsychologists, and my physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, I was able to maximize the use of cognitive “orthoses.” I also had the benefit of my past experience as a family physician, physician manager, and general aviation pilot. In these activities, I had learned to use many tools and strategies to maximize my abilities to deal with the ordinary, as well as the unexpected.

Many other conditions exhibit cognitive problems similar to those resulting from TBI, including brain injuries from other than traumatic causes, learning disabilities, developmental disabilities, stress, and the aging process. Many people living with cognitive challenges don’t have the benefit of having developed the skills necessary for coping and overcoming these obstacles. One of my goals, in Brain Injury Survival Kit, is to provide those who have had brain injuries and those with cognitive function loss due to other factors with some new tools and strategies to help deal with the mental challenges they face every day. This information will relate to memory, time management, organization, as well as other areas that effect cognitive function. In addition to dealing with specific tools and strategies, I will cover
some general health issues that impact cognitive function, including illness, stress, exercise, diet, relaxation, and sleep. How we take care of our general health has a great impact on how well we function cognitively.

The ultimate goal of Brain Injury Survival Kit is to have all readers—those living with brain injuries and those living or working with someone who is dealing with cognitive problems—gain from it some readily usable strategies to maximize their cognitive abilities.

Do not wait; the time will never be “just right.” Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.

Napoleon Hill
Acknowledgments

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

Vincent van Gogh

To Denise Kiepe, RN, Senior Care Coordinator at the Longmont Kaiser Permanente Facility, who was there for me when things were too much for me to handle. To Julie Stapleton, MD, one of the most caring and compassionate doctors I’ve ever met. She really “gets it” about the way it is for those of us dealing with MTBI, and goes above and beyond what a typical doctor does for her patients. She is a real advocate. To the Mapleton Rehabilitation Center team who supported and guided me along a path I didn’t always want to take, to a place where I could then take up the journey on my own again. To Don Gerber, PhD of Craig Hospital, who listened, helped problem-solve, gave of himself and his time, and really cared.

To my dad, who put up with my lack of memory and navigating ability during our trip to Ireland without complaint. You were a great tour guide. I hope this book will offer you tips to help you deal with the consequences of your own 2005 TBI. To Earl and Henrietta Tilford, friends who were there for the long haul, for all the transportation help I needed, as well as mor-
al support. They taught me the importance of accepting help when offered, and more so, of asking for help when I needed it. To Bethel Barger, who invited me to her home for weekly knitting sessions. You taught me to knit and shared the wisdom and common sense of your 90+ years of healthy living. To Joel Kiester, who took me flying when I couldn’t fly myself and kept my spirits up. To Melanie Shaha, who gave time she didn’t have to spare to edit my writing. To the Brain Injury Association of Colorado, and specifically Peggy and Theodora, for supporting my need to spread the word about TBI.

Last, to all the brain injury survivors who have offered me support as well as information, transportation, and companionship. It is so much easier to talk to someone who really knows what dealing with brain injury is all about.

*Life breaks everyone, but some people become stronger in the broken places.*

*Ernest Hemingway*
CHAPTER 1

Put Your House In Order:
Strive for a Healthier Lifestyle

What is important is not what happens to us,
but how we respond to what happens to us.
Jean-Paul Satre

All of us, those with brain injuries or not, know how hard it is to concentrate and think when we are tired, hungry, upset, or distracted. To maximize our cognitive abilities (the way we think, understand, and process information), we have to take care of ourselves, both physically and emotionally. Throughout my career as a family physician, I actively spoke on health-related issues, in my exam rooms and in my community. When I spoke on almost any subject, such as preventing heart disease, staying healthy during cold and flu season, or dealing with menopause issues, I always talked about the basic foundations of health. No matter what specific topic I was discussing, I always spoke of certain common elements. These are: diet, exercise, rest, and stress reduction.

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These concepts run throughout every aspect of our health. We cannot always control what happens to us, but we can make our bodies as healthy as possible to better withstand physical and emotional stresses placed on them. These same elements are vitally important in successfully dealing with the consequences of brain injury.

**Diet**

I have heard or read the expression many times: “You are what you eat.” Besides leading to premature health problems, a poor diet can lessen our ability to handle stress. Here are some basics that I have found of benefit over the years, and especially more recently when dealing with the after-effects of my own traumatic brain injury (TBI):

♦ **Don't skip meals.** Skipping meals can lead to hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. People who have hypoglycemia feel sluggish and lack energy. Many studies over the years have shown that school children perform much better when starting their day with breakfast. You cannot run a car without gas, and it is hard for your brain, as well as your body, to run well without food for fuel.

♦ **“Graze,”** especially when stressed, exercising, or trying to accomplish more than usual. Grazing is eating more frequent, smaller amounts throughout the day. By taking breaks to eat snacks or small meals, an added plus is that you give yourself needed rests from continued cognitive activity.

    — When performing physical activity, make sure to take along and eat healthy snacks. This helps keep energy
up and prevents fatigue, which tends to worsen cognitive function. Snacks to take along include nuts, dried fruit, granola, or energy bars and, of course, something to drink.

— Always pack a granola bar or two and a bottle of water in your backpack when away from home, as well as have some stashed in your vehicle.

♦ Garbage in, garbage out. I have heard this expression used in many ways, but I know it applies to our diets. If we spend every day eating potato chips and French fries, and drinking soda, we cannot expect our bodies and brains to perform very well. I believe an occasional excess, eating too much or the “wrong” things, is not a big deal. But, we need to consider what we eat day in and day out and work toward a goal of eating in a healthier fashion.

What Is a “Healthy Diet?”

Many healthy—and some not so healthy—diet recommendations are made by all kinds of “experts,” real or not. I will only tell you what seems important to me, and what I try to follow:

♦ Eat reasonable amounts. The answer to maintaining a reasonable body weight is to eat the amount of calories your body burns or, if you want to eat more, burn more calories with exercise and activity. Skipping meals actually slows your metabolism, as the body goes into a “conserves” mode when it does not see enough fuel in the system.

♦ Measure your food. One of the best ways to eat the right amounts of food is to actually measure your portions. Most
recipes and packages of food tell you how many they serve, and what amount is a portion size. If a dish says it serves four people, divide it into four portions and, if eating alone, freeze the extras for meals at later dates. If something says a half-cup is a serving, measure it out. You will be amazed at how much (or little) this actually is, compared to how much you usually serve yourself.

♦ Eat at the right times. We need to eat when our body needs the energy, so the calories are burned rather than being stored. We then will also have enough fuel in our system throughout the day to prevent hypoglycemia. For me, especially since my last TBI, I am the most active physically and cognitively in the morning. I am often physically active in the afternoons, although with less cognitive activity. In the evenings, I am usually neither physically nor cognitively active. That means I need the most fuel in the morning, less in the afternoon, and the least in the evenings. This is very different from most people's dietary habits, when they skip breakfast, eat a light lunch or none at all, and eat a large supper, often later in the evening.

— Even if you do not have the time or inclination to eat a large breakfast, moving more calories to earlier in the day by increasing what you eat for breakfast or adding a mid-morning snack at the expense of a large supper will be beneficial.

— Taking away some of your supper calories and adding a mid-afternoon snack also helps.

♦ Eat the right kinds of food. This is where things get controversial, especially when talking about weight loss. There
are diets promoting every type of eating, from high-protein, low-carbohydrate, all-grapefruit, low-protein, and on and on. Similar diet programs seem to surface over the years, with new names attached. I am not going to discuss the pros and cons of these different diets, but will give you some basics that I try to follow.

— Limit meat intake. Many studies over the years have shown a link between diets high in meat and cancers, especially colon and breast cancers. I try to limit my meat intake, and I try to eat mostly poultry and leaner cuts of red meat.

— Measure portions. Meat consumption is another area where measuring portions helps you be aware of how much you should eat. A good tip is that a meat serving is about the size of a deck of cards, or the palm of an adult’s hand.

— Preparation makes a difference. A serving of broiled, boiled, or grilled meat has less fat than the same serving deep-fried, fried, or baked in the meat’s own juices.

♦ Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, as these have been show to help lower our cancer risk. They are also rich in antioxidants, nutrients that protect our brains and bodies from free radicals, the unstable molecules that are thought to diminish brain function and overall health. Fruits and vegetables also make good grazing foods although, as with everything else, portion size is important. Too much of a good thing is still too much, as far as calories and weight gain are concerned. Fried okra, zucchini, French fries, or onion rings do not have the same health benefits as the same vegetables raw, or an

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orange, or a handful of blueberries. And it is much better to eat fresh fruit than to drink fruit juice. The juice has more concentrated sugar and less fiber than the fruit and for many does not seem as filling. With juices, it is also easy to exceed portion sizes. This is especially true when a bottle contains two to two-and-a-half servings but can be easily finished in one sitting. Read the juice bottle label to see how many servings it contains.

♦ Eat foods high in fiber. Not only is fiber filling, helping you limit overeating and maintain a reasonable weight, it also helps regulate your bowel and manage conditions such as constipation and irritable bowel syndrome. When eaten regularly as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, soluble fiber has been shown to help lower your cholesterol and may also help reduce the risk of diseases like diabetes and colon and rectal cancer. Because of eating so many processed foods, Americans tend to get much less than the recommended amounts of fiber in their diet.

♦ Eat fish. Research shows that eating oily fish containing omega-3 fatty acids is linked to better health, particularly lowering your risk of death from coronary artery disease. These fatty acids are concentrated in the brain and are associated with cognitive function. Omega-3 oils may also be of benefit in preventing some of the effects of brain injury. These fats count as “healthy” fats, protecting against high cholesterol and inflammation in our bodies. Sources of omega-3 include cold-water fish (for example, salmon, trout, tuna, halibut, mackerel, and herring), flaxseed and flaxseed oil, and walnuts and walnut oil.
Supplements

As with many medical conditions, much is made of dietary supplements for helping memory and other cognitive issues after brain injury. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate these supplements. The dietary supplement manufacturer is responsible for ensuring that a dietary supplement is safe before it is marketed. The FDA is responsible for taking action against any unsafe dietary supplement product after it reaches the market. Generally, manufacturers do not need to register their products with the FDA nor get FDA approval before producing or selling dietary supplements. Manufacturers must make sure that product label information is truthful and not misleading. Many are sold based on personal testimonials to their effectiveness rather than any evidence from scientific studies. They usually have statements on their labels saying they can make no claim to have medical benefits. Please consult with your medical team before taking any of these. Nutrients work best when they’re consumed in the foods we eat, so try to eat a well-balanced, healthy diet.

♦ Take your vitamins. Do consider adding a good multivitamin/mineral supplement to your daily regimen. The best multivitamins for memory should include 100% of the recommended daily allowance of vitamins B6, B12, and folic acid, as well as zinc and boron. The B vitamins, especially B6, B12, and folic acid, protect the brain by breaking down homocysteine, an amino acid that is toxic to nerve cells. They also are involved in manufacturing the red blood cells that carry oxygen. The best sources for these nutrients are dark-colored, leafy greens such as spinach, and broccoli, as-
paragus, strawberries, melons, black beans, soybeans, and other legumes and citrus fruits.

♦ Get more antioxidants. Vitamins E and C and beta carotene, all known antioxidants, help fight off free radicals. Free radicals are by-products of normal oxygen use by our body’s cells, and they are linked to disease and aging. Antioxidants also improve the flow of oxygen through the body and brain. Scientific data suggest that antioxidants help retard the aging process, maintaining memory function in the process. Sources of these antioxidants include blueberries and other berries, sweet potatoes, beets, red tomatoes, spinach, broccoli, green tea, nuts and seeds, citrus fruits, and liver.

♦ Limit caffeine intake. A little may perk you up, but too much can be distracting. Caffeine is contained in many energy supplements and drinks, as well as in coffee, tea, cocoa, and chocolate.

**Exercise**

As a family physician interacting with my patients, I often recommended some type of regular exercise as part of the treatment for many health concerns. The many benefits of exercise include managing weight, helping with stress and insomnia, treating and preventing arthritis and other musculoskeletal problems, improving the odds of preventing cancers, and increasing the possibility of living longer and with better maintained physical and mental functioning. Research has shown that exercise aids in the recovery of people who have had brain injuries. What types of exercise are best?
Mix it up. Most of us are best served with a mix of aerobic exercises (brisk exercise that makes your heart and lungs work harder) and weight training. Aerobic exercise increases circulation—the flow of blood and oxygen to the brain—and helps us perform better mentally. It also increases our metabolism, helping to control weight, which lowers the risk of developing diseases that worsen brain function. Weight training helps with balance, endurance, and muscle strength.

Pick an exercise routine you enjoy. If you hate what you are doing, you will have a hard time maintaining the program. Healthy diet and exercise regimens should be considered life-long practices, as the benefits of both are quickly lost if not continued.

Stretch. Stretching maintains joint flexibility and helps prevent injuries while exercising. The best exercise routine is to: stretch, warm-up, exercise, cool-down, and stretch again. Warm-up and cool-down periods involve a few minutes of doing a particular exercise activity at a slower pace, or by taking a slow walk before and after playing a game of tennis, golf, or another activity. Warm-up periods allow your muscles to warm up, so that they are less likely to tear with excessive stretching during the exercise activity. After activity, the cool-down allows fatigued muscles a chance to recover. The stretching before and after are also very important to prevent injuries. Maintaining joint flexibility is important in maintaining and protecting joint function. You can learn stretching routines from books, online web sites, at health and fitness clubs, and from your health care professionals.

Join up. Many people find it easier to exercise consistently if they do it with a friend or take a class. You can swim, do wa-
ter aerobics, walk, jog, bike (please wear a helmet), dance, or choose from many other activities. Many can be done with little or no equipment or cost, and can be done from home or while traveling. For seniors or those with health problems, many community recreation centers offer programs specifically tailored to your needs (such as the Silver Sneakers Program in my community). Chair-based programs (in which the exercises are performed while seated) are available on videos or DVDs.

♦ **Write it down.** Keeping a log or diary of exercise goals and actual practices helps maintain a consistent routine. Set a goal to exercise most days of the week, usually planning to miss one or two days at the most. Each day, write what you did and, if you missed unexpectedly, why you missed, so that you justify to yourself that you had a good reason.

♦ **Count your steps.** Wear a pedometer, so you have an idea how active—or sedentary—you are throughout each day. By monitoring your steps during the day, you can see if you need to pick it up as the day progresses to get to your minimum goal. (The American Heart Association goal is 10,000 steps a day.)

♦ **Walk more.** To increase your steps in a day, simple things like parking farther away at a store, using a portable telephone in your home, walking in the house while talking, and getting rid of the TV remote control and getting up to change channels all contribute to more activity.

♦ **Lift weights.** Weight training can be as easy as lifting a can of soup or using stretchy bands or basic weights bought at any sporting goods or general merchandise store. You can
find recommendations for weight-based exercise programs in books, online, or from your health professional. Some simple weight-training routines can help maintain your ability to climb stairs safely, get up out of a chair, carry and put away groceries, and even better maintain your balance to avoid falls. Again, as with aerobic activity, start low and go slow. Increase the weight amount or the number of repetitions no more often than weekly and usually only one or the other in a week, not both. We want to see fast results when we start an exercise program, but when it comes to weight training, being a tortoise rather than a hare helps prevent injuries that could make us stop exercising.

Rest

Many people do not get enough sleep. This can lessen our ability to handle stress and make us function less productively and accurately. People who have had brain injuries often need even more sleep than those without brain injuries—as much as 10+ hours a night. This is especially true in the early post-injury period. We may also need frequent breaks or naps throughout the day. Your brain needs to rest in order to heal.

♦ Schedule sleep and rest. Set up a regular sleep and rest schedule. Allow plenty of time to sleep, as well as rest breaks during the day. The goal is to rest before you are overly tired. When you use up your energy reserves, you often cannot restore them with one night of good sleep—it may take days to restore them.

♦ Take your time. Don’t rush back to daily activities, such as
work or school. Consider returning for part of a day, maybe a few days scattered over the week. If you do not start a day as fresh as the day before, you likely did too much the previous day and are not ready to increase your activity level.

**Stress Reduction**

Stress is certainly not limited to those of us dealing with a TBI, nor to our families. Stress was a common complaint among my patients over the years. There are all sorts of methods recommended for stress management; pick what works for you and what you feel you can do and practice it. If you have a stress management tool, but never practice using it, when you are stressed, it is not likely to work very well for you.

♦ **Breathe.** In addition to providing the needed oxygen to the brain, taking a deep breath is relaxing, and many forms of yoga and meditation involve learning how to breathe to help with improved physical and mental function.

♦ **Do yoga.** Yoga helps with physical functioning by improving strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination. It also helps with emotional functioning by contributing to improved relaxation, sleep, and mental functioning. Yoga can be learned and practiced individually, using books, video tapes, and CDs available for instruction, or by taking a class.

♦ **Love your pet.** I would not recommend bringing a new pet into the home while trying to deal with the consequences of a recent brain injury, because you are likely to be overwhelmed already with your normal responsibilities. If you already have a pet, however, the process of caring for your pet can be relax-
Put Your House in Order

ing and stress-reducing. Your pet also provides companionship, which is important when you often feel socially isolated by your brain injury. Walking your dog, providing for your pet’s needs, and playing with and petting them are all things that help you stay grounded and relaxed.

♦ **Get a hobby.** I found that, after my TBI, with the extra time needed for sleep and the inefficiency and distractibility caused by my cognitive deficits, I would attempt to spend all of my waking hours doing productive work, trying to “accomplish things” each day. This was at the expense of those activities that were most beneficial to my health: exercise, eating, rest, and fun. I did not make time for hobbies early on. In addition to being fun, hobbies are stress-reducers and, in learning new things, we promote improved cognitive function and healthier living habits.

♦ **Sign up social support.** Having family support or a strong social network is important for good health, including reducing stress. It has also been shown to help people recover from cancer, and it is a factor in how well people recover from TBIs. In addition to providing needed care and services, your family and friends provide encouragement and can be partners in exercise and fun activities.

♦ **Join a support group.** According to scientific studies, women do better after breast cancer when they participate in support groups. Similar benefits are seen with other conditions. Brain injury support groups, accessed through your state Brain Injury Association offices, offer access to other people who are dealing with the same issues after brain injuries. In these groups, you can network with others who are living with brain injury, as well as with their family members.
♦ **Find spiritual support.** Research has shown that you generally have a healthier lifestyle if you include religion or spirituality. For many, prayer is a stress reliever. For those uncomfortable with prayer, meditation is an alternative.

♦ **Keep a positive attitude.** Our attitude has a great effect on how we deal with things, good and bad. It is one of the known factors affecting outcome after TBI. Depending on our point of view, something can be stressful or a challenge. We need to find ways to eliminate negative thought patterns and take on more positive, affirming thought patterns.

> *Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all.*

> *Dale Carnegie*