

1. **Acknowledge diagnosis of the brain injury.** In viewing brain injury as a disease process know that there are complicating factors, just as there are to disease processes such as diabetes, and heart disease. And in this accept that life has changed since the brain injury – and may be considerably different than before the injury. But life goes on, and can be meaningful, successful, and prosperous.
2. **Recognize that successful rehabilitation requires a strong foundation** that includes proper rest, sleep, nutrition, physical exercise, and taking medications as prescribed. The importance of this key cannot be understated. This may be the “master key” the “skeleton key” that opens all the doors.
3. **Take inventory of your strengths.** Successful rehabilitation builds on your strengths. Celebrate progress and accomplishments large and small. Use your strengths and accomplishments to build momentum and to continue success.
4. **Be aware of your deficits to be able to work on solutions.** However, do not dwell on errors - it increases anxiety, which can lead to more mistakes.
5. **Nurture relationships that mean the most to you.** Be patient with those closest to you. Supportive family and close friends are important indicators of a positive prognosis for recovery.
6. **Commit to “Single Tasking.”** “Multi-tasking” is over-rated, and can be largely ineffective, and distracting from accomplishing anything. Stay focused.
7. **Create structure.** Recurring time for appointments and tasks (in the day, week, and month) creates predictability of routine to improve recall, and reduce stress / anxiety related to memory.
8. **Create quietness.** Take a break from thoughts in your head or mental-to-do-lists through quiet rest, meditation, music, prayer, worship services, deep breathing, and yoga.
9. **Accept help from others.** Prioritize what is important to complete yourself, and what you can accept help with. There is no weakness, nor failure in accepting help from others. We all depend on help from each other to succeed.



PATIENT EDUCATION SERIES:
12 Keys that Open Doors
Neurorehabilitation After Brain Injury
Page 2 of 2

10. **One day at a time.** Set goals for the future – but commit to one day at time.

11. **Disclosure of brain injury is a personal decision.** Having a simple, “go-to” phrase that you have rehearsed for how to disclose your injury can reduce anxiety when it does come up with family, friends, in job interviews, etc.

12. **Commit to continue to learn and grow.** The scientific evidence of neuroplasticity continues to demonstrate that brains can grow new neural pathways when stimulated with new learning and new activities.