



## Be Pain Smart – My Role

### Adjusting to the new you

Having a brain injury and chronic pain changes your life. It changes how you move, think, act and feel. Many of these changes are long-lasting and can negatively affect your life.

When you have a big change in your life it can take some time to adjust or get used to the way life is now. When your life gets turned upside down unexpectedly, it can take more time to adjust and settle into your new way of living. You may need to grieve for your old life and the one you imagined for yourself in the future.

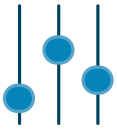
It can be helpful to identify your losses, but it just as important to focus on the ways you still see yourself as you and the new parts of your identity. When you focus on who you are, instead of what you can or cannot do, it will help you to adjust to the new you and manage your pain better.

To shift your focus to adjusting to your new life, it helps to think about what your values are and how you see yourself as a person.

#### Values first...

Your values help you to see what is important in your life. They are fairly constant, and add meaning to your life. Your values guide the way you live your life and help you make small and big decisions. For example, if you value being active, then you will make the effort to move each day. Sometimes when there are big changes in your life, it can be easy to forget what your values are and this stops you from using them to guide and direct your life and decisions. Take the time now to remind yourself of your values and how you can use them to manage your pain.

**What is most important to you now? What matters to you now?**



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What do you want for your future?

What are your priorities?

What are your values?

How do you stay true to your values?





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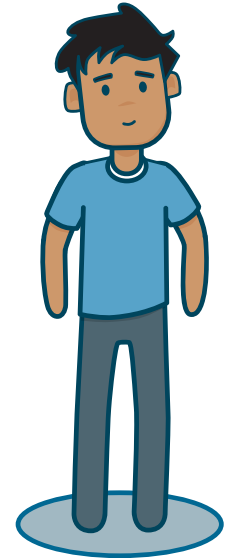
### Your identity

Brain injury and chronic pain can change the way you see yourself. Often you define yourself by what you can do and what you can achieve, but your injury and pain have changed these. You might feel lost or not like yourself anymore, which is understandable.

***Remember, it is not what you can do, but who you are as person that is important.***

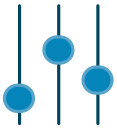
Take some time now to remind yourself of who you are, your strengths and supports so that you can use these to help manage your pain.

Ask yourself the following questions and write your answers below.



**How are you still you? How are you the same?**

**What are your strengths?**



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What are your challenges? What are the things you need to work on?

How can you work on these?

How do you see the new you?

How can you get there?



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Who can help you? Who can support you?

How will you use your values and strengths to manage your chronic pain?

### The power of “yet”

Sometimes all you need to do is put the word ‘yet’ on the end of a sentence to help you move forward with a goal. Look at the difference between these two sentences.

***‘I cannot walk for 30 minutes.’***

***‘I cannot walk for 30 minutes, yet.’***

Which sentence motivates you to keep trying?

Adjusting to life after traumatic brain injury is hard, but it does get better.