



**nurse
anna**

Feeling down after an ABI

First thing's first, everyone will feel down from time to time. There can be lots of things that make you feel down, even the weather can make you feel sad! Some things you feel down about will be to do with your brain injury, other things are part of growing up.

If you are a teenager, your hormones (chemical signals in the body that make you grow and feel good) are all over the place. Feeling 'hormonal' can make you feel down. You might find this is better on some days and worse on others. If you are a girl you might find you feel more hormonal around the time of your period.

You can feel 'down' when you have lots of problems on your mind. There can be so many different things to worry about after an ABI, and you can feel down quite a lot. This is all totally normal and you will find that you start to feel differently about things over time. Whenever we are stressed or feel down about a situation, we usually find a way to cope in the end. Here are some things people often find difficult:

- Flashbacks to when you first hurt your head or went to hospital
- Having nightmares about what happened in hospital
- Wondering why you feel so different
- Wishing that your ABI would go away and that you could go back to how you were
- Your parents and family driving you nuts
- Maybe not being able to do the things you used to
- Maybe your body is not working properly and you are finding it hard to walk or pick things up
- Finding it harder to speak and understand things
- Finding school stressful and not wanting to go anymore
- Your friends seeming different.

Join a support group

Some young people find it really helpful to join a support group after their ABI. Support groups are where people with the same medical condition meet together to help each other by sharing what they are going through. Often groups of young people go out and do fun activities, like adventure weekends or cinema trips. Try an organisation such as The Child Brain Injury Trust (CBIT) to see what they have going on in your area. Also take a look in the Contacts section of this website as many other organisations run support groups too. You can





ask an adult to give them a ring and see what they offer. Some organisations also offer support for your parents and brothers and sisters.

What can you do when you feel so down?

Feeling down can become a real pain if we don't find some way of helping ourselves cope with it. We all have things that make us feel happy. Ask someone to do the following exercise with you. Ask them to write your answers down and maybe put them on a big piece of card so that you can remember the things that make you feel good.

What are the things that make you happy?

Write your answers down and maybe put them on a big piece of card so that you can remember the things that make you feel good. This will help people to know how to help you too.

- 1. Why do you feel down?** Think about the things that are making you down at the moment. Tell your parents or a friend and see what they say.
- 2. What would help you to feel better?** Think about how you would like to feel. What sort of things make you happy?
- 3. What are the things you can do now to start to feel better?** This can help a lot as you can think of things to do to help. You may be feeling better already by talking to someone but if not think of things you can do to change how you feel.

Here are some things that some people do to feel better:

Talk to someone: If you can't talk to your family or friends, ask if there is a counsellor at your school or hospital

Listen to music: Music is really good if you feel down

Read a book: This can be hard if you are having problems reading but maybe you have someone who can read with you. Comic or picture books are good because you can see what is going on in the story by looking at the pictures without having to read

Watch the television or a DVD: Watching your favourite film can make you feel better. You might feel very different after watching a film

Go for a walk. Maybe get some quiet time and go for a walk. Gentle exercise can sometimes pick you up when you feel down.

