Traumatic brain injury (TBI) may have changed your life. But, it doesn’t mean that your life is over.

This brochure contains a number of strategies to make everyday living easier so you can focus on the things that matter most, like spending time with loved ones, readjusting to a job, and enjoying favorite activities.

Maintain close ties with the important people in your life. Reach out and interact with other survivors, whether online or through local support groups: it may be helpful to talk with someone who knows what you’re going through.

Above all, be patient with yourself. Allow yourself room to make mistakes. While you may need to do things differently now than before your injury, there is more than one way to live a fulfilling life.

“Healing takes courage, and we all have courage, even if we have to dig a little to find it.”
-Tori Amos
Survivors may take the following steps to facilitate recovery in these areas of cognition that are commonly affected by brain injury.

**Attention**

*Reduce multitasking.* Concentrate on doing one thing at a time when possible. Also, practice alternating between tasks - for example, switching between preparing a meal and chatting on the phone.

*Go slow.* Start working on your attention span by focusing on an activity for a few minutes at a time. Check your understanding before increasing the time you spend on the activity. For example, ask a friend to watch a movie with you and quiz you every five minutes.

*Tune out the noise.* In some situations, you may feel distracted or overwhelmed by “noise.” When you can, make the situation as quiet as possible or find a quiet space.

*Keep a level head.* Frustration and other negative emotions may make it difficult to complete some activities. Try to work on harder tasks in a calm environment, when you are well-rested, and in a good mood.

**Memory**

*Set yourself up for success.* Maintain a daily routine and choose a few simple strategies to help you remember. Try to schedule memory-heavy tasks for when you will be well-rested and relaxed. If you feel comfortable, let others know about your memory difficulties so that they may help you.

*Make it visible.* Post a picture of your car keys by the front door so you remember them on the way out. Leave your contact lenses on the sink so you don’t forget to put them in. Write appointments down on a calendar and hang the calendar in a visible place. Place sticky notes in strategic locations to help you remember tasks or items.

**Problem Solving**

*Perfect the problem-solving process.* If you are facing an issue, write out a list of possible solutions, along with the positive and negative consequences of each option. Then, choose the best option based on what is most important to you (such as money, time, or effort). If you try this and it does not work, ask yourself why. Then, revisit your list and try another solution.

*Separate lengthy activities into steps.* Some tasks, such as getting ready for work or cleaning the bathroom, involve a routine set of steps. Create ordered lists of steps to help guide you through these activities.

*Explore different options for memory aids.* There are endless options - don’t be afraid to experiment to find what helps you remember best. Use color-coding or mnemonic devices. Create a to-do list and check off tasks as you complete them. Make use of timers and alarm clocks. Invest in a memory notebook so you always have important information on hand.

*If you have trouble finding things when you need them: reorganize.* Store your things in a way that makes sense to you so that you can find them easily. For example, you might separate items by function - plates in one cupboard and mugs in another.