

What is a success?

Horry County Disabilities and Special Needs is a private, non-profit agency. We run under the State umbrella but in order to make sure we have the funds to do what needs to be done, we also apply for various grants.

The different departments were asked to write about one or two people we serve who are “successes” for one of the grants for which we are applying. The following is a brief synopsis of the two success stories submitted for the grant.

BR is successful. BR started a small business that has grown and changed over the years. He had the help of two HASCI Rehab Supports staff to get started. BR has done the work needed to keep the business going. He continues to receive HASCI Rehab Supports to help him continue his growth. But, BR is responsible for how far he and his business have come.

JD is successful. JD had an accident that totally changed his life. He worked to regain his physical strength. But, he continues to struggle with language. JD is the first to volunteer to read. He has conversations with others in HASCI Rehab Supports. His words are difficult to understand but he communicates very well. JD has improved in his ability to say coherent words over the years. What makes him successful is JD’s drive to speak fluently and the fact that he never gives up.

Truly I could have written about any of the folks we work with in HASCI Rehab Supports or in the BI Support Group or in the agency in general. Everyone has succeeded in their own way.

The benefit of being at one job for a while and knowing some of the people in my group for as long as I have is that I get to see the progress.

MP is using longer, more complete sentences.

KT is great at drawing others into the conversation.

WP spends more time participating in group activities.

JR has become more outgoing.

JB is living on his own and working on improving his home.

KS has increased his work hours and is making competitive wages.

JS works to improve his reading and doesn’t quit.

TJ is doing better at finding his way around the building.

TS can find a coupon for anything.

MC is always willing to help.

In the end, your success, my success, or anyone else's success cannot be measured with the same measuring stick. But often we try.

So what is success? I think it boils down to these questions.

Are you trying? If the answer is yes, you're a success.

Are you growing personally and emotionally? If the answer is yes, you're a success.

Do you make your days count? If the answer is yes, then you're a success.

Did you get up, get dressed and show up? If you answered yes, then that may be your success today.

Celebrate YOUR successes. Enjoy YOUR successes. And don't diminish them by comparing them to someone who has not walked your path.

Brain Injury Support Group

BISG Minutes

January 21, 2016

In attendance: Tom Culbert, Tracy and Wanda Stevens, Carolyn and Phillip Pollock, Michael Lynch, Kevin Strickland, Joe Santiago, Michael Chumas, Ellen Leftwich, and Jennifer Frettoloso. We had a small group today as some of our members are either in recovery or under the weather. Ellen opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming out in the very chilly weather. We then went around the table giving updates on how we're doing. Everyone said they had a good holiday and so far the New Year is going well. Tom is helping out some baby turtles, keeping them safe and well fed. Michael L informed us that he will be moving back to Massachusetts as soon as the weather warms up some. He and his wife have family up there and are looking forward to the move (although they will miss us all.) Kevin continues to be doing a great job at Goodwill. He has been there almost nine years and has become a great asset. Joe stated that his son is doing very well in school and is already focused on the path to becoming a doctor. Ellen announced that if she receives enough RSVP's, HASCI will be holding a Super Bowl party on Sunday, February 7th. Everyone is invited, but PLEASE let her know if you are interested in attending. Jennifer let everyone know that the Stockings for the Elderly project was a great success. Not only the residents of the nursing homes were excited, but the staff were very appreciative. They were able to give everyone in need a wonderful Christmas gift. Thank you to all who offered support and donations! HCDSN is selling candy bars at \$1.00 a piece to raise money for the agency. Anyone that would like to buy one (or 20) please contact Ellen or Jennifer. You can also pay \$60 for a box of 60 and take it to a local function or social gathering and sell them to help out. During lunch and after, there was a great deal of socialization. The group threw out ideas about locations and activities of upcoming meetings during the warmer spring months. We will continue discussing these as the time nears. It was decided by vote and the next meeting will be held at New Horizons.

Emotions alter Relationships after Brain Injury

We all know relationships can be very challenging. This does not just refer to relationships with spouses, but relationships with family, friends, coworkers, and even acquaintances. Add a brain injury into the mix, and these relationships can become even more stressed. In fact, relationship problems are one of the most frequently reported long-term and devastating consequences after brain injury. In the last decade or so, researchers have slowly started to realize the impact of social challenges on an individual's quality of life and well-being. Scientists are trying to understand the different sources of relationship problems after brain injury and figure out ways to address them. An area that researchers are very interested in now is emotion. Reading and responding to needs and emotions of other people. How well we interact depends a lot on being able to read and respond to other people's needs and emotions,

while effectively communicating our own. For the most part, people don't always tell us what they need or how they are feeling. Instead, this information is subtly expressed through facial expressions, tone of voice, or body language. Recent studies show that as many as 50% of people with a brain injury have a harder time correctly reading other people's needs and emotions. They may not pick up on these subtle cues or inferences, and only pay attention to the words that the person actually says. Research has shown us that after a brain injury, people may tend to see no emotion when there is one, or mistake one emotion for another. If a person sees no emotion when there actually is one, the person won't respond to another's emotional need because it is not recognized. If the person mistakes one emotion for another, such as assuming someone is angry when someone is actually sad, the interaction is more likely to be confrontational rather than supportive. It's not only important to be able to read the emotions of others, but it's also important that we accurately and appropriately express our emotions to others. After brain injury, we often see exaggerated expressions of anger or sadness. People who express a lot of anger are often feeling other emotions, such as fear or sadness. However, they may act angry because they don't know how to express or deal with their sadness or fear. In cases where the person is feeling angry or sad, they may take out these emotions on people who were not responsible for causing these emotions. In instances when they are angry with the person they are interacting with, they may be verbally or physically aggressive because they may not be able to handle their emotions rationally and/or not know how to communicate these feelings in a calm way. The bottom line is that relationships are built on emotional exchanges that result in shared emotional experiences and the understanding of one another's feelings. We must tune into the emotions of others and make sure we are kindly expressing our own. These are skills that often become more challenging for individuals after brain injury. The good news is that it appears to be a skill that can improve with treatment.

Full article at:

<http://www.lapublishing.com>

Brain Injury Support Group

February 18, 2016

12 noon

At the

New Horizons

Center

150 Waccamaw Medical

Park Court

Conway, SC

This meeting is potluck, so please bring a dish to share!

Spinal Cord Injury Information Corner

Progress is being made

Major approaches to paralysis currently under development include: **Reducing secondary damage:** An advanced area of research relates to treatment options for patients in the early stages after a spinal cord injury. Several pharmacological interventions are currently tested in clinical phase I/II studies. These pharmacological therapeutics are reported to reduce additional tissue damage resulting in a better functional recovery of the patients. **Eliminating growth inhibitors:** After a spinal cord injury, there is a lot of cell debris in the spinal tissue which can significantly limit the regeneration of nerves. Various types of cell debris send signals to nerve fibres saying: "Stop. This is a dead end." For example, one of the stop signs responsible is

known to be the protein Nogo. A substance to counteract the effect of Nogo is already being tested in a clinical study for patients in the early stages after a spinal cord injury (Prof. Dr. Martin Schwab, Nogo antibody study by Novartis). In a model for those living with a spinal cord injury as an ongoing condition, Prof. Dr. Stephen M. Strittmatter and his research team have succeeded in blocking several of these stop signs simultaneously and as a result saw marked functional improvements. **Axon growth:** Nerve cells in the central nervous system lose most of their ability to regenerate as they mature. Therefore, researchers focus on “switches” that would overcome this challenge. For example, the research group working with Zhigang He at the Children’s Hospital in Harvard has identified that it is possible to trigger regeneration of axons to a previously unknown extent by eliminating two molecular stop signs within the nerve cell.
Wingsforlife.com

Setting Goals

It seems there are so many things to do and remember. Take pills, drink fluids, bowel programs, skin releases, a person could wonder where is the time to live? It is easy to think you are the only one with constraints but as we age or collect health problems, there is more and more to do and demands on our time. After paralysis, we still have to do the same activities, they may take more time and extra effort in planning.

Probably one of the key qualities for success is not in the activity or obtaining the latest equipment, but in attitude about the situation. Everyone performs activities of daily living. If you remember, that you would be toileting anyway, catheterization is just another way of toileting. It might take a few minutes longer but the activity would still be accomplished. As you increase your skills, the task becomes routine. This is easy to write, it is much more difficult to accomplish. Everyone has difficulty dealing with tough situations. Recognizing that you are still the same person who just does some daily activities a little differently is helpful. Make the activities a part of your life, not the consumption of your life. Become active in something that interests you. Read a different book than your normal selections, watch a different television program, or meet some new people. It is very easy to become overwhelmed with change. You have already had the experience of a huge change with paralysis. There are so many things to do and adapt. Pick just one activity and try to do it the best you can.

Exercise of any kind is a great mood enhancer. Activity releases chemicals in the brain that makes us feel good. There are many new therapies that are excellent for increasing movement. It is difficult to participate now because not everyone has access but this is quickly going to change. If you do decide to increase your activity, start simply. Move your extremities in all directions the joints normally move or have someone do it for you. Be gentle with body parts for protection but especially if you have not moved them for a while. Inspect your skin often and carefully. Incorporation of a new routine, be it personal care or activity, is hard for everyone. This is why gyms are filled in January but empty by February. To reach success, pick just one activity to review a month. If you add activity, pick a time to carry it out and stick to it. Tell your friends and family what and when you are going to do it so they can offer you support not tempt you away from your goal. We should all move forward with confidence. This should be a great year for advancement toward personal success.

~ this is an excerpt from www.spinalcordinjury-paralysis.org Nurse Linda~

**It is better to give
others a piece of your heart than a piece of your mind.**



February is American Heart Month.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States; one in every three deaths is from heart disease and stroke, equal to 2,200 deaths per day.

Prevention starts with everyone. Protect yourself and your loved ones from heart disease and stroke by understanding the risks and taking these steps:

- ~Get up and get active by being physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- ~Ask your doctor if you should take an Aspirin every day.
- ~Find out if you have high Blood pressure or Cholesterol, and if you do, get effective treatment.
- ~If you Smoke, get help to quit.
- ~Make your calories count by eating a heart-healthy diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium and trans fat.
- ~Take control of your heart health by following your doctor's prescription instructions.

Important Dates to

Remember:

- 2-2-16 Groundhog's Day
- 2-5-16 National Wear Red Day
- 2-14-16 Valentines Day
- 2-15-15 President's Day
- 2-29-16 Leap Day



Jokes

*The closest I've been to a diet this year is erasing food searches from my browser history.

*Q: Why did the tofu cross the road?

A: To prove he wasn't chicken.

*My friend thinks he is smart. He told me an onion is the only food that makes you cry, so I threw a coconut at his face.

*An elderly couple are in church. The wife leans over and whispers to her husband, "I just let out a long, silent fart. What should I do?" The husband replies, "First off, replace the batteries in your hearing aid!"