

# **Empowering Future Leaders in Brain Injury Recovery and Rehabilitation to Empower Self-advocacy in Individuals Living with Brain Injuries**

## **Presentation**

**Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live**

### **Background Insights**

Let me first say that in 1967, when I sustained the open skull fracture, right frontal lobe damage, a severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement, little was known about brain injury.

Brain injury or brain injury rehabilitation. So once my external wounds healed, the impact of the injury to my brain went invisible. Consequently, I was essentially on my own to find my way.

On my own to navigate living my life with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability.

See my Autobiography. Although I was not expected to succeed beyond high school academically, I went on to obtain my undergraduate degree in 10 years and my graduate degree in 3 ½ years.

I obtained my master's degree in rehabilitation counseling and my national credentials as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

### **On my Own**

I did not have Dr.'s; of any sorts, to help me. I had to figure things out on my own.

But, based on what I have figured out and what I share with you, is what I believe would have helped me. Helped me in my ongoing brain injury recovery process. What I share will help you to gain insights into how to help empower people who are living with a brain injury.

### **Lessons Learned**

“It is not as important, what happened or happens to us, but how we respond to what happened or happens to us.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA.

“In my experience I have found that adversity is what has made me successful, because I refused to give up because of adversity.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

“The process of living with the impact of a brain injury and an invisible disability involves a journey of steps. The good news is that once we take that first step and keep walking, before long we will be able to look back and see how far we have come. How far we have come because we did not give up.” Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA

“I was told over and over again that I would never be successful. That I was not going to be competitive and the technique was simply not going to work. All I could do was shrug my shoulders and say, “We’ll just have to see.” Dick Fosbury (inventor of the Fosbury Flop and winner of a gold medal in the Olympics

## What I Share

What I am about to below, I share more extensively in my 21 zoom presentations. Presentations that I have developed and share around the United States. Let me know if you would like me to share one or more of these presentations with your group or organization.

**I look forward to being of service to you and the individuals you empower.**

### 21 Presentations Designed to Empower the Individual, not the brain injury

Among the places where I have spoken: Cleveland Clinic, Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital, Penn Presbyterian Hospital, Overland Park Rehabilitation Hospital, Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital, Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, Encompass Rehabilitation Hospital, Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital, Carolinas Rehab, Colorado Department of Education, University of North Dakota, University of North Carolina — Chapel Hill, Harvard University, University of California at Berkeley, Columbia University and Synapse National.

### Public Speaking; Craig J. Phillips MRC, BA Second Chance to Live

#### **Advice for Current and Future Leaders in Brain Injury Recovery and Rehabilitation to Encourage Self-Advocacy in an Ongoing Process**

Every one is susceptible to a brain injury. **Treat People** like you would like to be treated.

Learn about the **Grieving Process** – denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Good place to start is Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's book, **On Death and Dying**

Encourage people you work with to **grieve** what they are powerless to change. **Powerless to Change** so that they can create their new normal.

Help the people you work with to change perspectives -- From **“Why Me?”** to **“Why Not Me?”** and from **“What Isn't”** to **“What Is?”**

Ask a **High Power”** to guide you through your recovery and rehabilitation process, one day at a time. And don't give up!

Start a program of **Neuroplasticity** – creating new neural pathways and brain reorganization – as soon as they are able after their brain injury. Do so through repetitive mirrored movements.

Get the people that you are working with tested to find out how they learn best. **Learning Styles** Whether they are visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners or a combination of these styles.

Encourage, model and empower people living with brain injuries to **Advocate** for themselves. Advocate for themselves in their ongoing brain injury recovery process.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to remember that recovery is about a **Process** and a **Journey not a Destination**. A process and a journey through patience and persistence.

Encourage people with living with brain injuries to see their brain injury as a **Change in Direction**, not a **Stop Sign** to living their best lives.

Encourage and empower people living with brain injuries that they can **Create Hope** in their lives. **Create hope** in their lives, a day at a time in their mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to realize that they have **Genius**. That they can explore the possibilities to develop their genius through their gifts, talents and abilities.

**Empower the individual** living with a brain injury, **not their brain injury**. Focus on what they can do with their time and energy, not what they can't do because deficits and limitations.

Encourage people living with brain injuries that they can **Create Hope in their Lives**. A little at a time. One day at a time through combining skills and skill sets

Encourage people living with brain injuries to not buy into the **Limitations of Labels, Stereotypes or Stigmatization**. They are not their brain injury.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to consider the **Vastness of Possibilities**. Vastness of possibilities through using their gifts, talents and abilities in ways that work for them.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to **THINK outside the "box"**. To think outside the box of a diagnosis, prognosis, label, stereotype and stigmatization.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to understand **That They are Not Limited** because of their brain injuries, deficits or limitations. They just have to find a way (s) that will work.

Encourage people living with brain injuries to **Advocate for Themselves**. Advocate for themselves in their mind, body, spirit, soul and emotions in their ongoing process and journey.

**Teach them how to Advocate for themselves beyond the world of billable hours.**

Encourage people living with brain injuries to **See Beyond a Diagnosis and a Prognosis**.

Encourage people to understand that there are no **Silver Bullets or Magic Potions** to speed up brain injury recovery and rehabilitation. **Recovery and Rehabilitation just takes time.**

Encourage people living with brain injuries to understand that success is measured by one skill at a time. **One Skill and One Skill Set at a Time**. Celebrate small successes.

Encourage people to realize that they are not a **Victim of their Brain Injury**. Their brain injury was only an event that happened. That they are more than a survivor of a brain injury.

Encourage people living with brain injuries that they can create a **Good Life for Themselves**.

Encourage people to realize that they do not **Deserve to be Discriminated or Patronized**. Discriminated or patronized by anyone. **Professionals included.**

Encourage people living with brain injuries to realize that although they may be **Minimized, Marginalized, Dismissed and Discounted, they have Great Worth and Value.**

Encourage individuals living with brain injuries that **They Can Have a Profound Impact** upon their ongoing brain injury recovery and rehabilitation process. Encourage individuals living with brain injuries to **NOT GIVE UP**. More will be revealed with time.