

## Healing What Others Can't See: A Deeper Path to Recovery from Brain Injury and Trauma

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I'm sharing a trauma-informed, holistic brain injury recovery resource that I created from lived and professional experience.

Feel free to distribute it to your students, clients, or team.

By Craig J. Phillips, MRC, BA – Founder of Second Chance to Live

### **You Look Fine. But Inside, Everything Feels Different.**

Imagine waking up every day knowing something's different inside your brain, but no one else can see it. You look "normal." You sound "fine." But inside, you're working twice as hard to process, to keep up, to feel safe, and to be understood.

This has been my journey for over five decades of living with a traumatic brain injury and the effects of an invisible disability.

After a severe brain injury at age 10, I faced not just physical challenges but emotional isolation, misjudgment, and stigma. Despite appearing fine on the outside, I carried a hidden disability that impacted every area of life. And for years, I blamed myself.

Until I discovered: real recovery goes deeper than what people see.

### **Brain Injury Recovery Is Not Just Physical — It's Emotional, Relational, and Lifelong**

Healing from brain injury and trauma isn't a one-time event or a rehab checklist. It's a lifelong journey of recovery that requires engaging the whole person:

- Body
- Soul
- Spirit
- Mind
- Emotions

This holistic recovery model is often missing from medical treatment plans. But at Second Chance to Live, it's at the heart of everything I offer.

## **A Holistic and Trauma-Aware Framework for Healing**

Over the past 18+ years, I've created resources to support long-term recovery after brain injury that is:

- Holistic – addressing the emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and relational aspects of healing
- Trauma-aware – grounded in psychological safety, validation, and empowerment
- Peer-driven – built on lived experience and shared wisdom

This isn't just theory. It's built from my own journey — paired with a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling and years of advocacy, writing, and speaking.

## **A Message to Survivors, Professionals, and Supporters Alike**

If you're a survivor: you are not alone.

If you're a caregiver: your support is sacred.

If you're a professional or student: you can foster healing environments by leading with presence, patience, and empathy.

This article is for anyone seeking to better understand or support:

- Brain injury survivors
- People with invisible disabilities
- Mental health and rehab professionals
- University instructors and student leaders
- Support groups, nonprofits, and trauma recovery advocates

## **Key Principles That Guide a Whole-Person Recovery**

- Safety First – Healing begins in emotionally safe and respectful environments
- Empowerment – Choice, voice, and purpose help survivors reclaim their lives

- Peer Support – Shared experience reduces isolation and shame
- Whole-Person Healing – True recovery includes mental, emotional, relational, and spiritual renewal

## Download and Share

Want to share this trauma-informed resource with your students, clients, or support group?

[Click here to download the printable PDF version \(you're reading it now!\)](#)

## About the Author

Craig J. Phillips, MRC, BA is a traumatic brain injury survivor, rehabilitation counseling professional, and founder of SecondChanceToLive.org. For over 18 years, Craig has shared peer-led, trauma-aware, and holistic resources with individuals, caregivers, clinicians, and educators.

Through more than 2,000 articles, videos, eBooks, and illustrated posters, Craig empowers people to recover with dignity and purpose.

## Explore More Resources

- [Why Trauma-Informed Care Matters in Brain Injury Recovery](#)
- [Brain Injury and the Nine Pillars of "I CAN"](#)
- [Finding Freedom from Feeling Alone After Brain Injury](#)

## Let's Stay Connected

Visit SecondChanceToLive.org for daily encouragement, invisible disability support, and tools for long-term brain injury recovery.

Together, we rise.

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

Visit <https://secondchancetolive.org> for more resources.