



You Share We Care: Compliments, Complaints, Observations & Inspirations

Dear Jan . . .

Dear Jan, A lovely lady who is awaiting your letters filled with questions, suggestions, advice, compliments, and quotes about brain injury. Anything goes, and you just might see your letter spotlighted here in our newsletter!

Send a Message to Jan Email: info@hbia.ca or drop it off at our clubhouse in the suggestion box
All messages will remain anonymous unless otherwise stated

Hello friends.

I hope you all got through the winter months without too much anxiety and can now enjoy the wonderful weather.

I have to say this time I got some rather challenging questions. I really had to put my thinking cap on. I relied on research, as I always want to give you the best possible suggestions.

Having said that, I would like to remind everyone, I am your friend. I am not a doctor, or a therapist. I am someone you can ask questions too or sound off too, who will do her best to come up with the best possible answer I can.

Jan

Dear Jan,

How long will my headaches last? Will they ever go away?

*Signed,
Painful*



Dear Painful,

I feel so bad for you. Headaches can be one of the worst possible pains imaginable. No one except those of us who suffer from bad headaches can truly understand just how restricting, life altering and challenging they can be. My heart really goes out to you.

From my own personal experience with headaches, particularly migraines, I asked my doctor to go to a Pain Specialist. I felt I needed someone other than a regular family Doctor to deal with this type of pain. In my case I was right. A Pain Doctor has more specific knowledge to offer great suggestions and help to reduce the pain. Instead of giving me an all-around pain medication he gave me a medication that deals only with Migraines and nothing else. The medication is called Rizatriptan. It is very expensive although I am sure it must be covered under some plans. The important thing is it works! I take it and my migraine is gone within 10-20 minutes.

It was also recommended that I change my diet, eat less sugar, cut back on caffeine and if you are a smoker, try to quit. I was a smoker and I will tell you since I have quit, I get 90% less headaches.

Now this is just my experience with headaches and for me, it was the best solution. Some people and articles on the internet may tell you to try meditation, cut out meat, etc. etc. There are many, many suggestions. Personally, I think the best answer is to go to a specialist, someone who has the expertise.

I wish you all the best and I hope to someday soon answer your question that, yes, your headaches will eventually go away.

Sincerely,
Jan

You Share We Care: Compliments, Complaints, Observations & Inspirations Dear Jan . . .



Dear Jan,

How can I help my family understand that I have a brain injury? They don't see any difference on the outside but on the inside I do have challenge! I feel like they put a lot of expectations on me and don't understand.

*Signed,
Invisible*



Dear Invisible,

This is what I would do. I would remind them in a gentle loving way. I would either bring it up to them all together or do it individually. Here is a sample of what I would say:

"However long ago, something happened to me, I acquired a brain Injury. Because of this, my brain no longer works the same. It would be the same as if I had a leg amputated, I could no longer walk or run like you. Please take a minute to fully comprehend that. Now, because of my invisible injury, I may have some challenges that make me see, hear, process and understand things a little differently. All I am asking is that you please be patient and wait for me to "get it" just like you would wait for me to catch up if I had only one leg. There are some things I just cannot do now that I could do before because I have an ABI, so please accept that. But remember I can still do a lot, and there are some things about me that are better now, so accept that too"

I found when I said this to my family and friends, they seemed to understand my ABI a lot better. I really hope this helps, if not there is always the other option of them coming out to one of your support groups or caregiver support groups, the dates and times are on the calendar.

I hope this helps good luck!

Sincerely,
Jan



You Share We Care: Compliments, Complaints, Observations & Inspirations Dear Jan . . .

Dear Jan,

*I can't work anymore but would still like to
"giveback". Is there a good place to
volunteer or help?*

*Signed
Wanting to Help*



Dear Wanting to Help,

Tons of places! Volunteers are always needed. And it is so rewarding. The best thing to do is to first ask yourself what type of volunteering you would like to do.

Do you like working with young people or the elderly? Do you like a hospital atmosphere or are you more into administrative?

Next question: Do you have access to a computer? If yes, go to the website and type in "volunteering in Hamilton" or the specific place you would like to volunteer. A database will come up with an application giving you options of what areas of volunteering you would like and what areas of town. If you do not have a computer, come to the clubhouse and anyone like me or Adria will be more than happy to help you research, just ask.

There is also a number to call 905-523-4444. The address is 27 John St. N. Hamilton. L8R 1H1 If you want to visit or talk to someone about volunteering in Hamilton.

Or if you want, if you are really mobile, you can just go to places like to come see us at The Hamilton Brain Injury Association. Yes, we need volunteers! Especially at race time,

Good luck in your search.

Sincerely,
Jan



You Share We Care: Compliments, Complaints, Observations & Inspirations

Dear Jan . . .

Dear Jan,

I use to love going out with friends all the time, before my injury. Most of my friends have lost touch. Is there anywhere to meet new friends?

Signed,
Lonely



Dear Lonely,

Yes, there is! If you want to try to meet new people, I hear a great way is to join a group called "Meetup". It is a online based group, with different groups in different cities. If you have access to a computer just type in "Hamilton Meetup." If you don't you may use the one available at the clubhouse, during clubhouse hours. Just ask Me or Adria to help you, we would love to help and will respect your privacy.

These groups are not a set-up for dates. They are places for people who are wanting to meet others both male and female in the same age bracket (don't worry there are a lot of groups with different criteria), they get together to go to movies, dinner, bowling all sorts of things. It's a great way to meet friends.

I don't know if you have a computer but if you do, Facebook is also a good way to connect with old friends. Since I have joined Facebook, I have reconnected with friends from public school, my old neighbourhood, high school, old co-workers, it's fun. It's not for everyone though.

Remember though to always practice caution when meeting up with any one or new people, now a days you can't be too careful.

Good luck with making new friends.

Sincerely,

Jan



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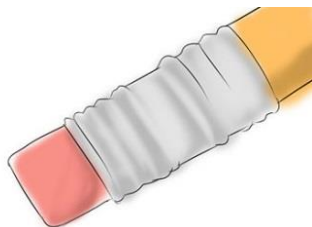
Dear Jan . . .

Dear Jan,

*Why When I have done something
hundreds of times successfully, then one
day, I will wake up to have no idea how
that this is done.*

Example: calling voicemail.

*Signed,
Confused*



Memory

Dear Confused,

Join the club! No seriously, you sound more severe than me, sorry. I know with me I suffer short term memory loss. Which sounds like the difficulty you are facing. I don't honestly know if there is a cure, but I do know you it can help if you exercise the brain to be stronger.

If I were you, I would definitely talk to my Doctor, case manager, OT or Rehab Therapist and describe to them what you are experiencing. They can rule out any other possible reasons for the challenge and offer you suggestions as to how to improve or strengthen your brain

You can also research memory strengthening articles on the internet. Try doing these memory exercises and adding them to your routine. Keep your brain active. There is even a game on Facebook about solving crimes, where you have to find things. Anything like that is so good for the brain and memory work. I have come to love these games, they challenge me and they are fun.

I also make lists. This helps me with my memory and keeps me from getting frustrated. I will make a list and then check off the task when I am done.

I will start a new list starting with the items I did not finish. Or you can find help from your support team, family, friends, or even here at the clubhouse to write out how to do certain tasks so you can review the process. This can help with memory too. Sometimes all you need is to repeat the task several times before your brain will remember.

Best Wishes

Sincerely,

Jan

Reminder to all Readers and Members: if you don't have a computer, there is one available at the clubhouse to use, during Clubhouse hours. Myself, or Adria, are available to help you with anything you need on the computer.

See you at the Race!

**Enjoy your Summer Everyone!
Jan**