

CASE STUDY

PETER'S STORY

(Peter is not the real name of the person in this case study)



Peter sustained a traumatic brain injury at aged 14, following an assault whilst out with friends. He sustained a severe head injury which has left them with a severe brain injury. Following discharge from hospital Peter received a small amount of physiotherapy at home and a couple of psychology sessions with a Trainee Psychologist that was overseen by a Clinical Psychologist. Unfortunately, this treatment ended abruptly when the trainee's placement finished. Peter was therefore left with no further treatment and his family were extremely worried.

After Peter was discharged to home, we completed our brain injury screening assessment with Peter and his parents. This highlighted a lot more issues that had been perceived by the hospital staff but addressing all these issues were essential to Peter having a positive long-term outcome and ensure he had the most appropriate support at school.

Health

The ABI Support Worker funded by BBC Children in Need, enabled MATRIX to help Peter during the most important phase of his early recovery. Had our ABI Support Worker not been in place, this child would have received very little support from the NHS.

The parents were also coming to terms with a couple of other traumatic events that had occurred and were only just coping with everything. They felt very left down by the NHS and they were extremely concerned about Peter. They were very relieved when we were able to step in to help.

The ABI Support Worker completed some detailed assessments on Peter to fully understand the needs of the child and the effects the brain injury was having. The assessments highlighted a number of significant cognitive difficulties that had not been previously identified or recognised.

A second assessment confirmed the child had significant difficulties with a range of skills in the domains of attention, visual processing, memory, executive functions and information processing which were causing problems with learning and day-to-day life.

Had our ABI Support Worker not been in post, this child's difficulties would not have been identified; nor would they improve independently; thus, leaving them with poor long-term outcomes. Even worse the child and the family, would have not understood how to help the child or know what to focus on.

Using all the information gained from the assessment process, the ABI Support Worker has worked with the child and the family to create an individualised Therapy Programme and Homework Programme, to start to treat some of the difficulties he still has. These were prioritised in order of personal goals, severity and life impact.

Education

Our brain injury screening assessment helped the school to apply for an EHC Plan for Peter. He also received 1-1 SEN support; however, he could not study his complete timetable. He was therefore only completing 3 subjects and attending for limited hours per day. By the time Peter left school, he still had



the same cognitive difficulties we identified at the outset. We therefore progressed to supporting his move to college.

Since the assault Peter also suffers with significant neurological fatigue; particularly when cognitive skills are in high demand such as in college. As such he was struggling again and has fallen behind. When David is fatigued, his speech becomes slurred, and Peter needs to take a 'brain break'. Despite receiving SEN Support at school, the staff are not trained in brain injury and the needs of brain injured young people, so do not know how to effectively support Peter and mitigate the high risk of neurological fatigue or help to facilitate neurological recovery. The role of SEN staff is simply to help students with disabilities to achieve their qualifications; not deliver neuro-rehabilitation therapy. As such Peter's neurological impairments will continue to have a significant effect on his life' regardless of what qualifications he receives.

Peter has also struggled to come to terms with the life-changing injuries he now lives with; however, with our therapeutic support and through the assessment process and supporting planning process he is slowly adjusting and accepting what has occurred. This is a significant step forward for Peter.

Outcomes

Since May 2019 Peter has received 47 sessions of Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy from us, with each session lasting for 45-60 minutes. **This is part-funded by BBC Children in Need and other small grants; and not the NHS.**

Since the therapeutic intervention commenced, the ABI Support Worker, Peter made significant progress with improved focussed attention from his baseline assessment. The final programme assessment for Focussed Attention showed Accuracy to be at 83% and Ability at 90%; however, it is crucial that this is maintained to ensure this function is secure. This is the first positive step in a long list of challenges that Peter has ahead of him.

Sadly, since September 2019 Peter has made slower progress because he has only been able to receive 1 session of therapy per week due to timetabling problems and delays with gaining access to the college to continue with the second weekly session. It is not feasible to deliver this after school due to the significant neurological fatigue Peter experiences at the end of the school day.

Access has now been agreed and we are continuing to help and support Peter by delivering his therapy both in school and at home.

Family Views

The family recently told MP's:

"Matrix took over Peter's cognitive rehabilitation therapy treatment after a trainee NHS practitioner left suddenly. Peter was left with nothing. MATRIX stepped up and their ABI Support Worker is now doing more sophisticated work and are getting rewarding results from the incredible work they are doing! They are a professional organisation and we are so lucky to have Matrix in the Middlesbrough area. They are a unique charity and as a family going through this journey, I couldn't recommend a better place to be."



