

ANNUAL NATIONAL AMPUTEE AWARENESS DAY - 11 JUNE

The role of the social worker is to provide information, support and counselling to amputees and their families.

The social worker can assist with applications for Centre-link payments such as Disability and Carer Benefits.

The social worker can assist with housing problems.

When leaving hospital, the social worker can make arrangements for eligible patients to receive support services and counselling within your community .

Useful Phone Numbers:

Carers Queensland 1800242636
Free call

Amputees and Families 07 32904293
Support Group Qld



Patient Assist Leaflet compiled and printed with the support of the Social Work Department, Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Queensland Amputee Limb Service - Nov 2008.

COPING WITH LOSS OF YOUR LIMB

Presentation by Margo Newman
Senior Social Worker - Social Work Department
to
Amputee Discussion Group
Bunya Ward

Geriatric and Aged Care Rehabilitation Unit
Princess Alexandra Hospital

SOCIAL WORK



FOLLOWING AMPUTATION

During your stay in hospital, the social worker: can support you and your family as you:

- Cope with your feelings of grief and loss after amputation
- Manage the stress from your emotional experience

Stress

- Everyone has stress
- Everyone needs some stress
- But too much stress can lead to tiredness and exhaustion
- So what you do with your stress is important

When stressed

- Your mind becomes sharp
 - Your muscles tense
 - Your heart beat speeds up
 - Your blood pressure rises
- } Gives you energy

But, when these changes continue for too long then your body reacts badly.

Causes of stress

Things that are difficult to change or cannot be changed:

- Changes in your health
- Admission to hospital
- Less personal control over day to day events
- Separation from close friends and family
- Worrying about your health
- Adjustment to how your body has changed and managing your daily activities
- Decrease in your usual responsibilities
- Less personal choices

Stressed Out

Your stress level is likely to get higher:

- After your amputation
- After a long stay in hospital
- Because there will be changes in your life

Warning signs of too much stress

- Problems concentrating and making decisions
- Constant worrying
- Forgetfulness
- Muscle tension
- Rise in blood pressure
- Increase in your weight
- Constant tiredness
- Interrupted sleep
- Frequent use of coffee and substances such as alcohol and medication
- Depression
- Loss of confidence
- Anxiety
- Urge to run and hide

Managing stress short term

- Medication
- Aggression and anger to release tension
- Using food as a stress reducing agent
- Behaviour—workaholic or possible withdrawal from contact with others
- Denial of your stress or avoidance of the situation triggering your stress
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Some short term relief may happen but long term ways of coping with stress are needed

Stress Management

Some of the ways to successfully manage stress:

- Remove the problem
- Change the problem a little
- Become use to the problem by changing lives around the problem
- Have some say over the problem

Stress Management Techniques

- Relaxation
- Meditation
- Thinking clearly and planning your priority
- Assertiveness
- Counselling
- Lifestyle change such as diet and exercise
- Sense of humour

Happy Feelings

Ways to help you live a happy life:

- Gratitude - Writing/thinking of list of what is good in your life
- Forgiveness - Forgiving those who are angry with you
- Love - Having close relationships with partners/friends. This also includes being part of a community
- Spirituality - Finding meaning in life which may or may not be religion based