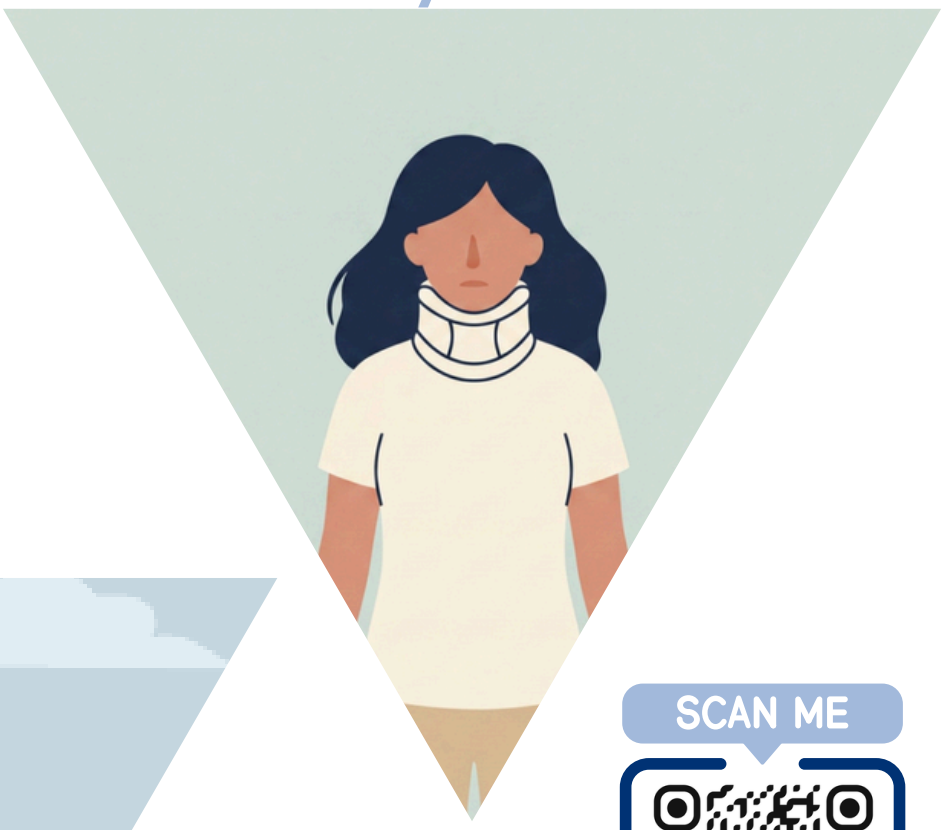
MAJOR PHYSICAL TRAUMA

Coping with systemic stress & beyond





SCAN ME

for an audiobook version

SCOTTISH TRAUMA NETWORK

Fife Health & Social Care Partnership
Supporting the people of Fife together

NHS Fife

Clinical Health Psychology

This booklet is here to give you extra support after a serious injury or traumatic event.

We know that life can be difficult after an injury. You may be coping with changes to your health, daily activities, relationships, work, or home life.

This booklet aims to help you understand these changes and find ways to cope with them.

Whether you are still in hospital or have recently gone home, this booklet can help you find information and support. It includes ideas to support your health and wellbeing. At the back of the booklet, you will find details of local services and organisations that may be able to help.

This booklet also includes useful websites and apps.

A good place to start is the Community Compass app. It can help you find support, activities, and services in your area. Many people find it helpful when adjusting to life after an injury.



If you would like to speak to someone in person, help is available. While you are on the Major Trauma Pathway, you can contact your Major Trauma Co-ordination Team.

If you have been disharged from the trauma pathway contact your GP.

the community compass

CAN BE FOUND HERE!

CONTENTS

- Managing Systemic Stress: 4
- Coping with Uncertainty & Setbacks: 5
- Financial Stress: 10
- Navigating the Legal Process: 11
- Managing Isolation: 12
- Navigating Relationships: 13
- Local Resources: 14
- National Resources: 16
- Further Information: 18

MANAGING SYSTEMIC STRESS

Life can feel difficult after a long stay in hospital. Keeping up with appointments and recovery can be tiring and confusing. Some days may feel easier than others, and setbacks can happen.

You may also notice changes in how you feel, such as:

- Feeling sad or low
- Anxiety or worry
- Stress
- Difficult memories or feelings about what happened
- Grief and loss
- Sleep problems
- Low confidence
- Feeling very tired

Sometimes it can feel as though you are caught in a web of different challenges, as shown in Figure 1.





Figure 1: Navigating the system

COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY & SETBACKS

Anxiety symptoms in the body

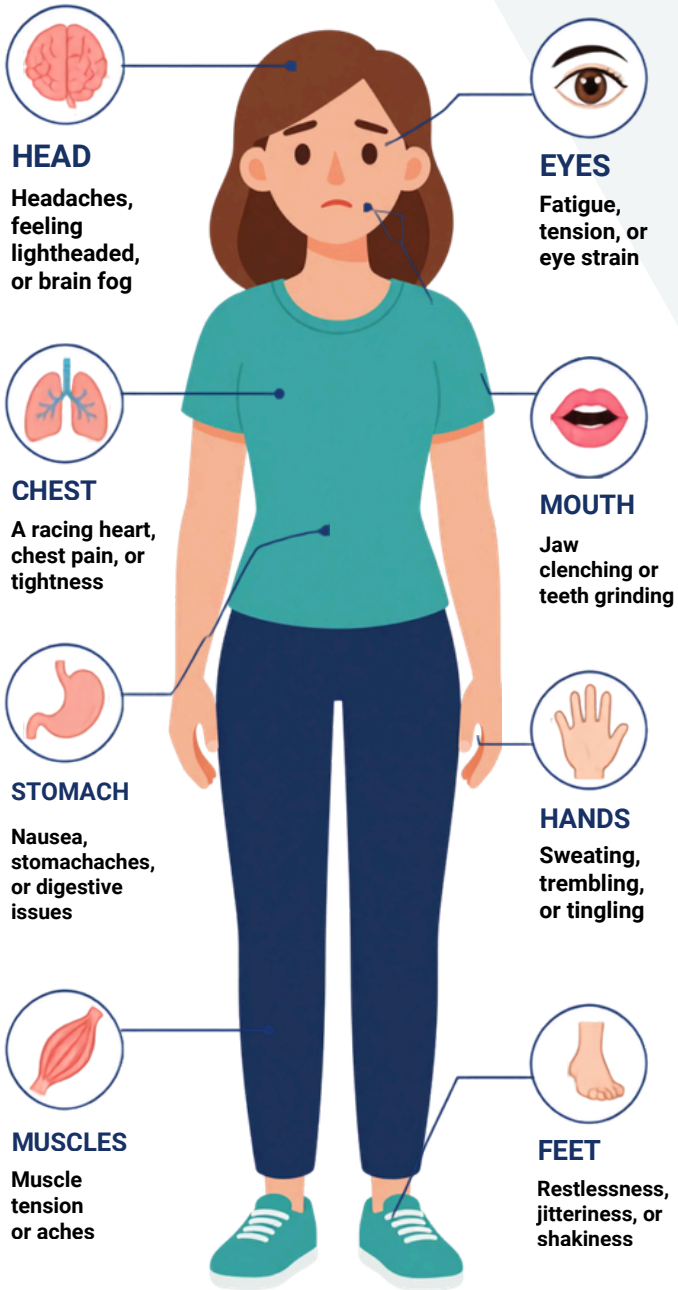


Figure 2: Anxiety symptoms in the body

One of the hardest parts of recovering after a major incident can be not knowing what will happen next. Most people feel better when they have some control over their lives and health. After a serious injury, things may feel very different. This can lead to feelings of fear, stress, worry, or helplessness. These feelings can also affect your body. You may notice physical signs of anxiety, such as those shown in Figure 2.

The QR code below links to Daylight, a free app that can help you manage anxiety. You can work through it at your own pace. More information about support for anxiety can be found at the end of this booklet.

daylight

When we feel stressed or anxious, our minds can become very busy. We may have racing thoughts, worry about what might happen, or keep thinking about difficult things that have happened in the past. This can leave us feeling overwhelmed and stuck in an unhelpful cycle, as shown in Figure 3.

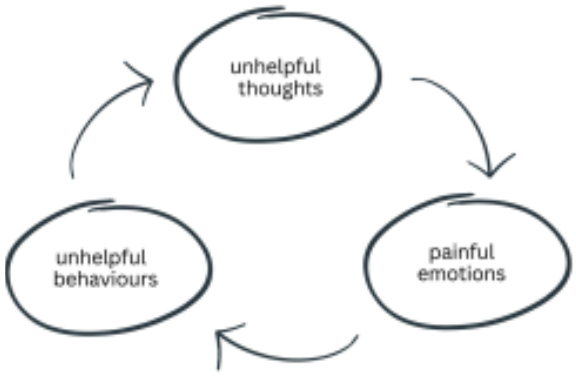


Figure 3: The Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour Cycle

When we feel anxious, we may start to avoid things that feel difficult or stressful. For example, we might ignore calls or messages, stay at home more, or put off everyday tasks. Things that once felt easy can become much harder.

You may also look for ways to feel better in the moment. This might include eating more or less than usual, sleeping more, or drinking too much alcohol. While these things may help for a short time, they can sometimes keep anxiety going.

QR Code 1 links to an Accepting Uncertainty workbook. This workbook can help you understand your worries and learn new ways to manage them. You can work through it at your own pace.

Sleepio is a free app that can help if you are having problems sleeping. It offers simple tips to help you build better sleep habits. Scan QR Code 2 to find out more.

QR Code 3 links to an NHS Better Health page that has 10 top tips for coping with uncertainty.

1

2

3

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Sleepio

Better Health every mind matters



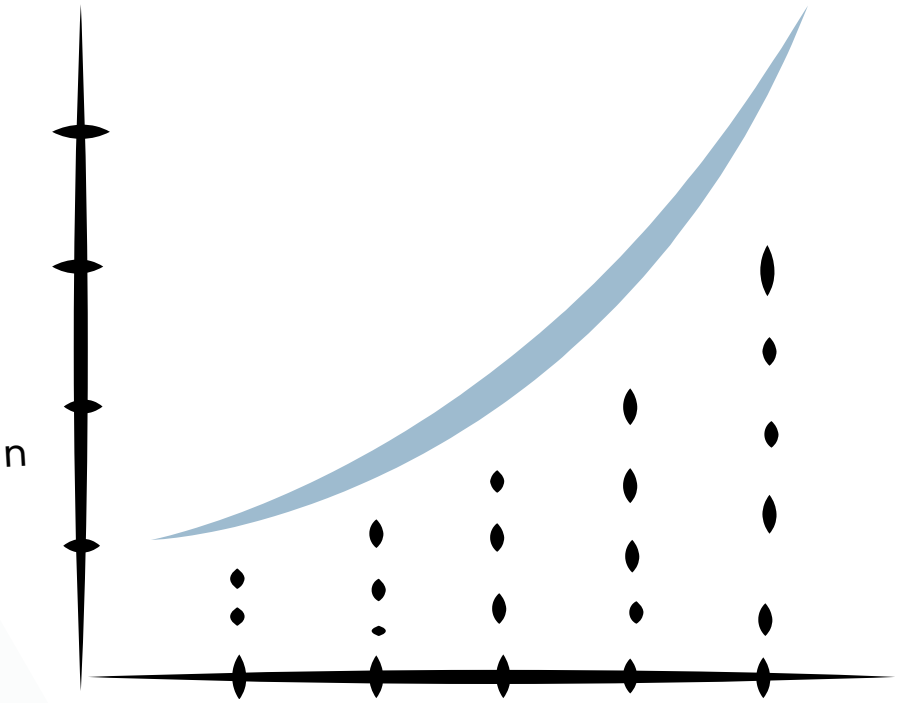


Figure 4 (a): Health Improvement over time (weeks)

Many people hope their recovery will follow a straight path, with steady improvement over time. However, recovery is not always like this. Setbacks can happen, and your goals may change as you recover.

While you are in hospital, you may see lots of different health professionals who regularly check on your progress. After you go home, support can feel different. You may have to wait longer between appointments, which can make recovery feel slower and sometimes frustrating.

It is important to remember that recovery is rarely a straight line. It often has ups and downs, as shown in the picture below.

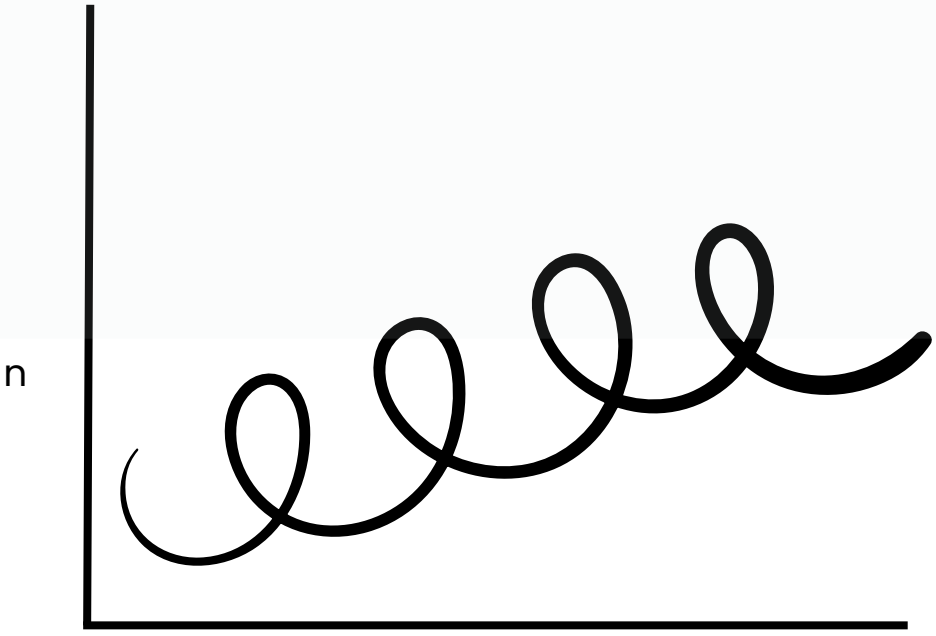




Figure 4 (b): Health Improvement over time (weeks)

THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO FEEL AFTER A MAJOR ACCIDENT.



Life after a serious injury can be stressful and overwhelming. Setbacks can be hard and may leave you feeling frustrated or hopeless. The tips below may help you cope with setbacks and the ups and downs of recovery.

1. Take things one moment at a time.
2. Keep to a daily routine and do things you enjoy.
3. Use your five senses to help bring your attention back to the present moment. Notice what you can see, hear, feel, smell and taste.
4. Try to do some activities you enjoy and some that help you feel proud of what you have done.
5. If you can, spend some time outdoors.
6. Try to eat well and do some gentle exercise, if you can.

THE GLITTER METAPHOR

A serious injury or traumatic event can be like knocking over a pot of glitter.

At first, the glitter seems to get everywhere. It covers everything you can see. The injury, hospital stays, appointments, worries, and changes in your life can take up all your attention.

Recovery can be like slowly cleaning up the glitter. Some glitter is easy to sweep away. Other bits stay stuck in places you did not expect.

As time passes, life often begins to feel more settled. You may return to activities you enjoy, spend time with friends and family, and find new ways to do things. The glitter is no longer everywhere.

But every now and then, a little bit catches the light. It might happen on the anniversary of the accident, before a hospital appointment, when you see something that reminds you of what happened, or when your recovery feels harder than usual.

This does not mean you have gone backwards. It does not mean you are back at the start of your recovery.

It simply means that what happened to you was important and had an impact on your life. Most days, you may hardly notice the glitter at all. On other days, you might spot a few sparkling pieces.

The glitter may never disappear completely, but it does not have to take over your life. It is only one part of your story. It does not define who you are.

FINANCIAL STRESS

A serious injury can change many parts of life very quickly. Changes at home, work, or in relationships can affect you and the people around you. While you are recovering, money worries can sometimes add extra stress.

Try to talk to family, friends, or other people who support you. Breaking tasks into smaller steps can make them feel easier to manage.

Citizens Advice can provide free information and support about money, benefits, work, housing, and other practical concerns while you adjust to life after your injury.

Day One Trauma Support can also help. They offer support with benefits and welfare, and may be able to provide small grants to people recovering from serious injury.



citizens advice

Day One Trauma Support

You can find more help with money worries in the local and regional support sections at the end of this booklet.

NAVIGATING THE LEGAL PROCESS

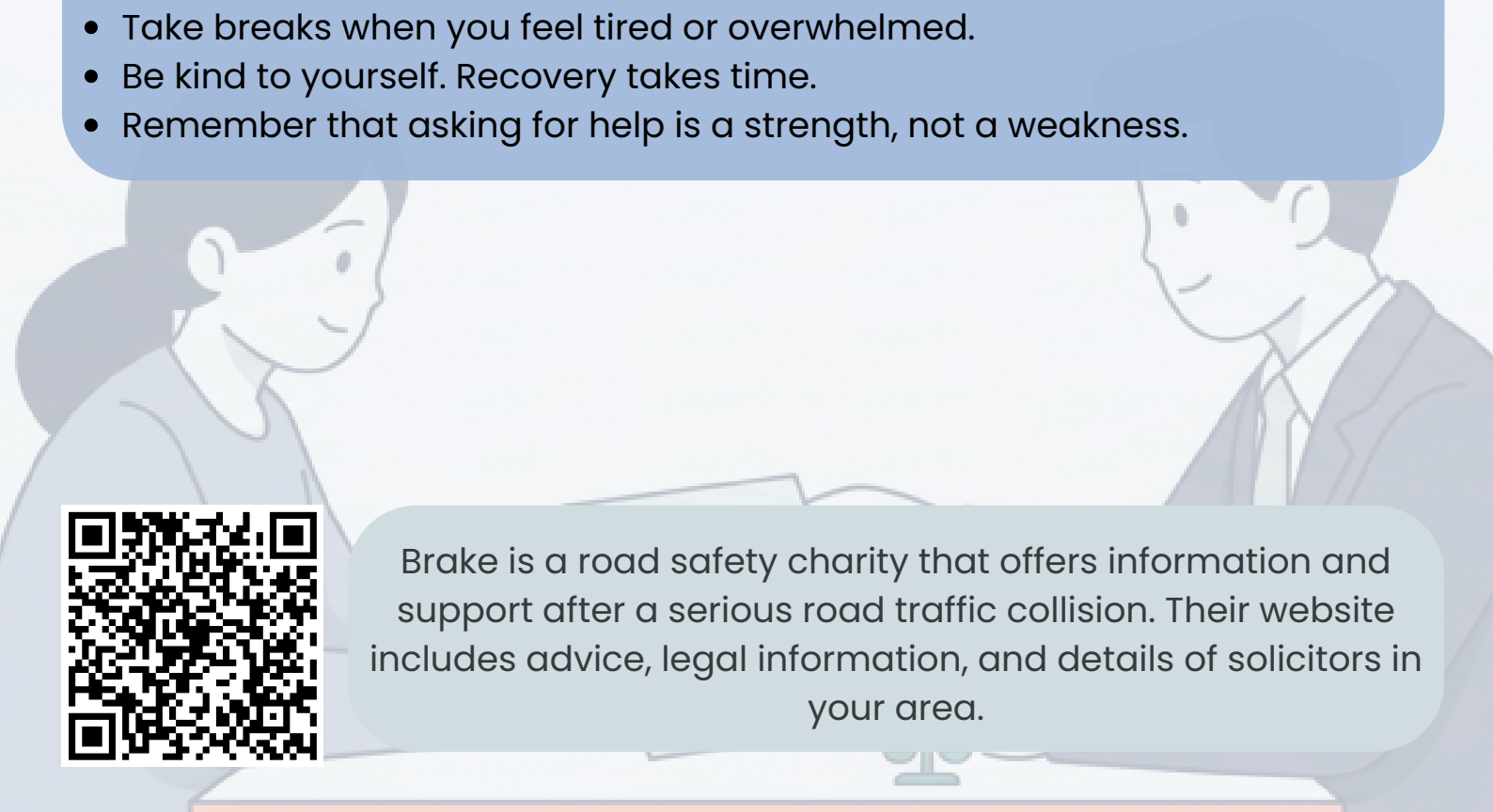
After a major incident, you may need to work with lawyers or other legal professionals. Legal matters can sometimes take a long time and may feel stressful or uncertain.

Because of your injury and everything you have been through, it may be harder to complete forms or deal with paperwork. You may find it difficult to concentrate, plan tasks, solve problems, or make decisions. You may also feel very tired.

These difficulties are common after a serious injury or traumatic event. Many people notice changes in their thinking, memory, attention, and ability to stay organised.

TOP TIPS

- Take things one step at a time.
- Set yourself one small goal each day.
- Use a diary, calendar, or phone reminders.
- Ask someone you trust to help with difficult tasks.
- Take breaks when you feel tired or overwhelmed.
- Be kind to yourself. Recovery takes time.
- Remember that asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.



Brake is a road safety charity that offers information and support after a serious road traffic collision. Their website includes advice, legal information, and details of solicitors in your area.

MANAGING ISOLATION



If you are in hospital, you may sometimes feel lonely or cut off from other people. It can feel as though life is carrying on around you while you are stuck in one place.

Listening to music, reading, or watching television can help pass the time. You might also enjoy watching funny videos on your phone or spending a short time on social media. Texting, calling, or video-calling family and friends can help you stay connected with the people who matter to you. If you are away from home or feeling lonely, speak to your nurse or care assistant. They may be able to help and support you.

After a serious accident, you may not feel like spending time with other people. You might feel more tired than usual, get annoyed more easily, or feel that you do not have much to talk about.

Everyone is different. Some people enjoy being around others more than others do. After an accident, you may notice changes in how you feel or react to things. For example, you may feel more irritable, frustrated, or angry.

Try to take one day at a time. Keeping in touch with other people and noticing when you start to feel lonely can help support your wellbeing and recovery

NAVIGATING RELATIONSHIPS



After a serious injury, relationships can sometimes feel different. While you focus on your recovery, it can be harder to keep up with family, friends, work, and other parts of daily life.

In the days after the accident, you may have received lots of visits, calls, and messages. As time goes on, this contact may happen less often. You might find it harder to keep in touch with people, or feel that some relationships have changed.

After a major incident, some friends and family may be there to support you when you need them. At other times, people may not be able to offer the support you hoped for. This can feel upsetting.

While you are recovering, try to spend more time with people who make you feel supported, understood, and positive. Some people can give us energy and help us feel better, while others can leave us feeling tired or stressed.





LOCAL RESOURCES: FIFE

THE WELL

The Well (Fife HSCP)
can provide information and support. You can contact them by phone, email, or in person. Their website includes information about money support, local groups, and services across Fife. Scan QR Code 1 to find out more.

1

moodcafé

NHS Fife Mood Café
has information and self-help resources to support your emotional wellbeing. Scan QR Code 2 to visit the Mood Café and find out more.

2

Access Therapies Fife

Access Therapies Fife
provides information about local services and support available in Fife. Their website also includes tips and guides to help you look after your mental health. Some groups and courses allow you to refer yourself, including support for managing stress. Scan QR Code 3 to find out more.

3

NHS Fife

LOCAL RESOURCES: FIFE

Fife Carers Centre
Because Caring Matters

Fife Carers Centre

Provide straightforward information and practical help for those with caregiving responsibilities. They work with carers to protect physical, mental, emotional and financial health.

1

MEN'S SHEDS

Men's Shed

Provide space for men's health and well-being. Peer support groups, focusing on practical projects and connection opportunities across Fife

2

SAMH
Scottish Action for Mental Health

Sam's Cafe

is a peer support mental health project, provided by SAMH, offering support for people aged 16+ (who have left school) who are experiencing mental health issues. Drop in cafes are available in Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline & Leven..

3

NHS Fife

NATIONAL RESOURCES

The organisations listed below provide information, help, and support for people affected by serious injury and major trauma.

You can find their websites by searching for them online.
These organisations are trusted and have experience supporting people with many different needs.

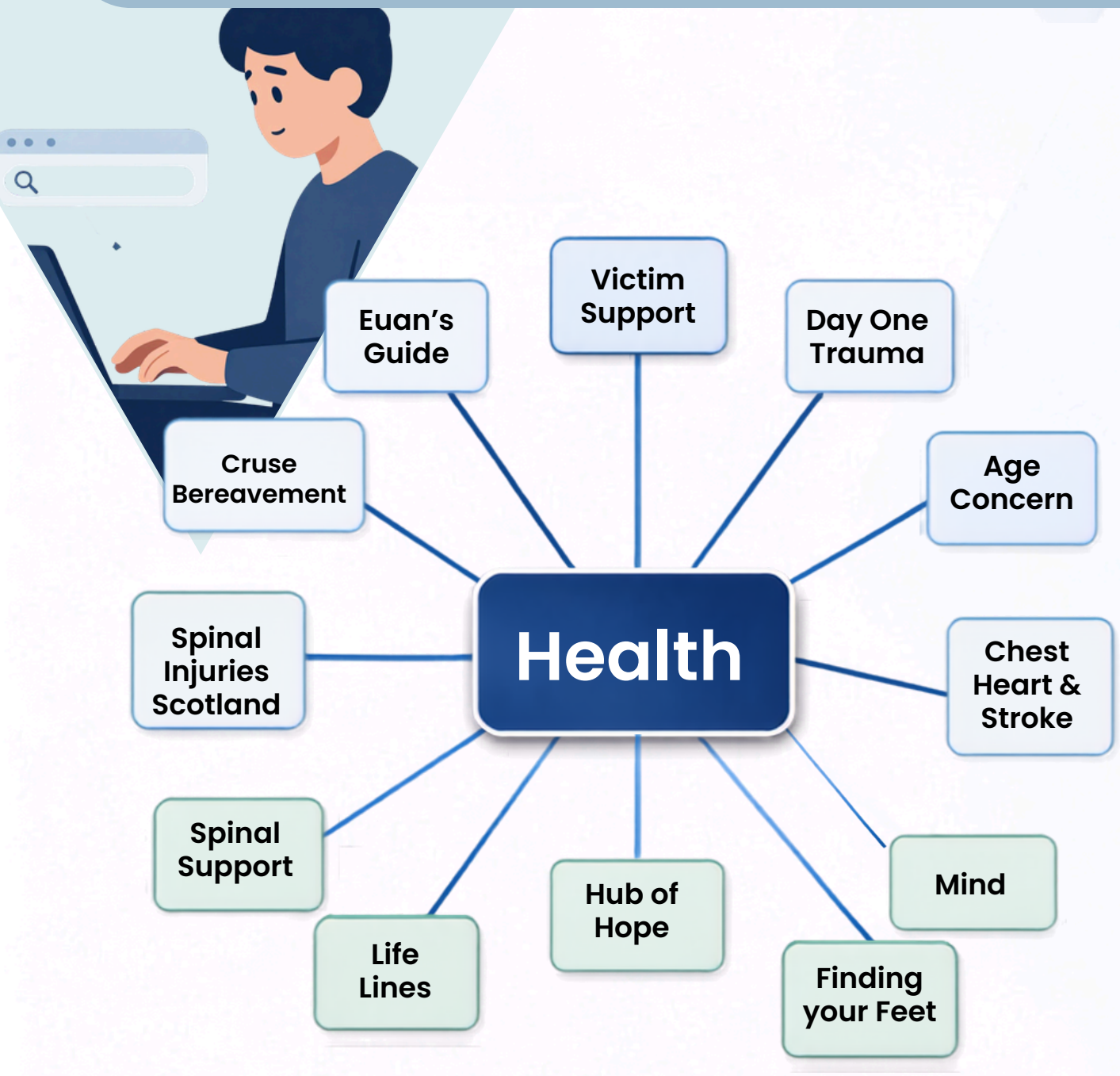


Figure 5 : Health and Third Sector Support Options Mindmap

NATIONAL RESOURCES

A serious injury can affect many parts of life, not just your health.

The organisations shown in the figure below can provide help with things such as money, relationships, caring responsibilities, and driving.

You can find their websites by searching for them online.

Financial Support

- Turn2us
- Money Mattrs Web
- Day One Trauma
- Citizens Advice

Relationships

- The Spark
- Women's Aid

Carers

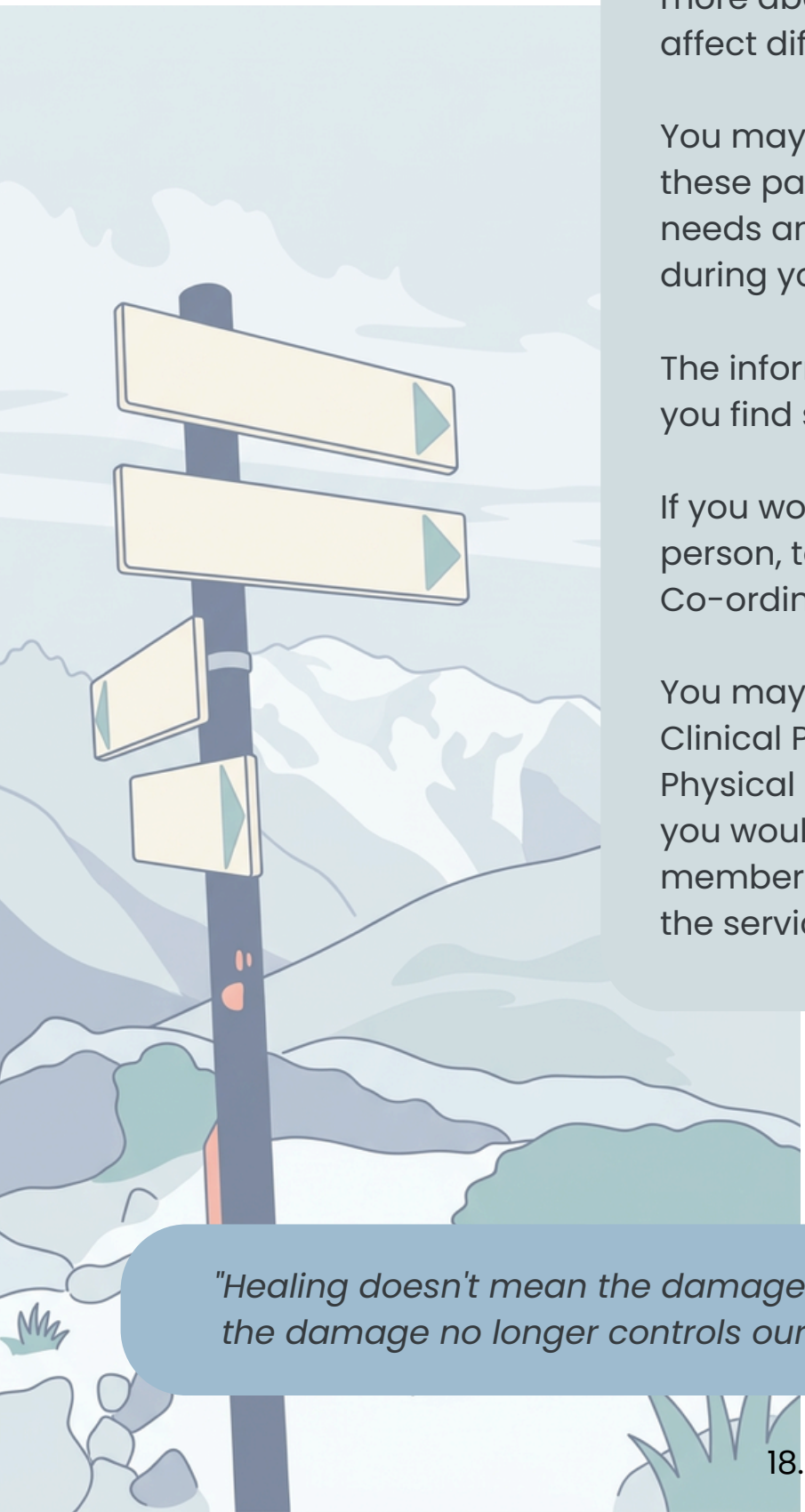
- Carers UK

Driving

- Driving Mobility
- DVLA
- Citizens Advice

Figure 6 : Additional Third Sector Support Options Mindmap

FURTHER INFORMATION



We hope this booklet helps you learn more about how a serious injury can affect different parts of life.

You may find it helpful to come back to these pages from time to time, as your needs and questions may change during your recovery.

The information in this booklet can help you find support when you need it.

If you would like to speak to someone in person, talk to the Major Trauma Co-ordination Team, or your GP.

You may also be able to speak to a Clinical Psychologist from the Major Physical Trauma Psychology Service. If you would like more information, a member of your care team can contact the service for you.

"Healing doesn't mean the damage never existed. It means the damage no longer controls our lives." — Akshay Dubey

This leaflet was developed by Dr Craig Mackay (Clinical Psychologist) and Dr Bethany Brown (Clinical Psychologist), NHS Fife

Fife Health & Social Care Partnership
Supporting the people of Fife together

NHS Fife

Clinical Health Psychology

If you require this information in a community language or alternative format e.g. Braille, audio, large print, BSL, Easy Read please contact the Equality and Human Rights Team at:
email:
fife.EqualityandHumanRights@nhs.scot
or phone 01592 729130.

For Deaf BSL-users, or people with a hearing or verbal impairment, you can also contact the team via the NHS Fife SMS text service number on 07805800005.

Version 1.1 *Review date: November 2028*