

A Guide to Post-Amputation Coping and Adjustment

Adjusting to life post-amputation is a complex journey that not only involves physical adjustments but also emotional and psychological ones.

It is common to experience a range of emotions during this process. This guide aims to provide you with information and strategies to support your coping and adjustment during your rehabilitation.



Common Experiences after Amputation

Grief and Loss

It is natural to grieve for the loss of a limb. Losing a limb can trigger a range of emotions, including sadness, anger, and denial. Allow yourself to feel these emotions.



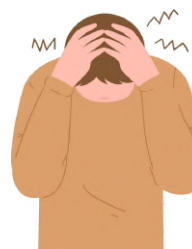
Adjustment Difficulties

Adapting to a new way of life can be challenging. This may include changes in daily routines, living arrangements, and relationships.



Experience of Phantom Limb Sensation and/or Pain

After amputation, it is common to experience pain. Additionally, the brain may still think that the amputated limb is there, leading to sensations or pain in the missing limb. This mismatch can be psychologically distressing because it messes with how a person perceives their own body.



Body Image and Self-Esteem

After an amputation, it is common to experience shifts in how you perceive your body. You might have mixed emotions about changes in your appearance. These feelings are normal, and it is important to acknowledge them.



Common Mental Health Challenges

Apart from the common experiences that one may undergo after an amputation, some individuals may also struggle with mental health challenges, especially after experiencing such a significant change. These may include:

Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or loss of interest in activities.• Changes in appetite, sleep disturbances, and low energy levels.
Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive worry, restlessness, and irritability.• Physical symptoms like rapid heartbeat, muscle tension, and sweating.
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts related to the amputation/surgery/incident that led to amputation.• Avoidance of reminders and heightened arousal (e.g., jumpiness).

Be aware of changes in your emotions and behaviour. Look out for persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, mood swings, or changes in sleep and appetite. If you notice any significant changes in your mental health, do not hesitate to reach out to your healthcare team. Early intervention can make a significant difference.

While it is natural to focus on the challenges and emotions that come with post-amputation rehabilitation, many patients also acknowledge the potential for positive change and new way of living. This might show up in the following ways:

New Perspectives

The experience of overcoming significant challenges can lead to a shift in perspective. You may find a greater appreciation for life, a change in priorities, and a deeper understanding of what truly matters.

Greater Appreciation for Life

Overcoming significant challenges can lead to increased awareness and gratitude for the simple joys in life.



Improved Relationships

Going through a significant life event often leads to deeper connections with loved ones. It can foster a greater sense of empathy, compassion, and understanding.

Spiritual Growth

For some, it prompts a deeper exploration of spiritual questions or questions about life. It can lead to a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper connection to one's spiritual beliefs.

Available Support for Post-Amputation Psychological Issue

There are different forms of support to aid in your recovery from the psychological issue:

Professional Help from Mental Health Professionals

Psychological service is accessible upon team doctor's assessment and referral. Psychological support aims to equip you with tools for managing emotional challenges

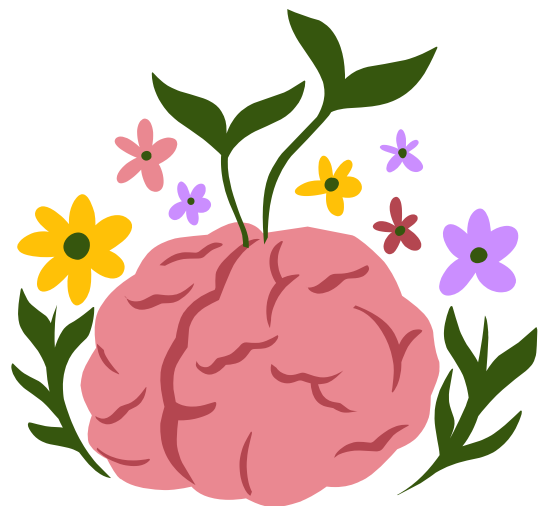
Peer Support

Connecting with others who have experienced similar struggles can offer a sense of community and understanding.

Medication

In some cases, medication may be recommended to address mental health concerns.

You and your healthcare provider will work together to determine the best approach for your unique situation. It is important to communicate openly with your provider about your progress and any concerns you may have.



Contributed by Psychology (Allied Health Service)

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

Information shared is accurate as of July 2024 and subject to revision without prior notice.



Scan QR code to download e-brochure