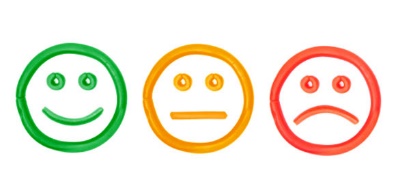
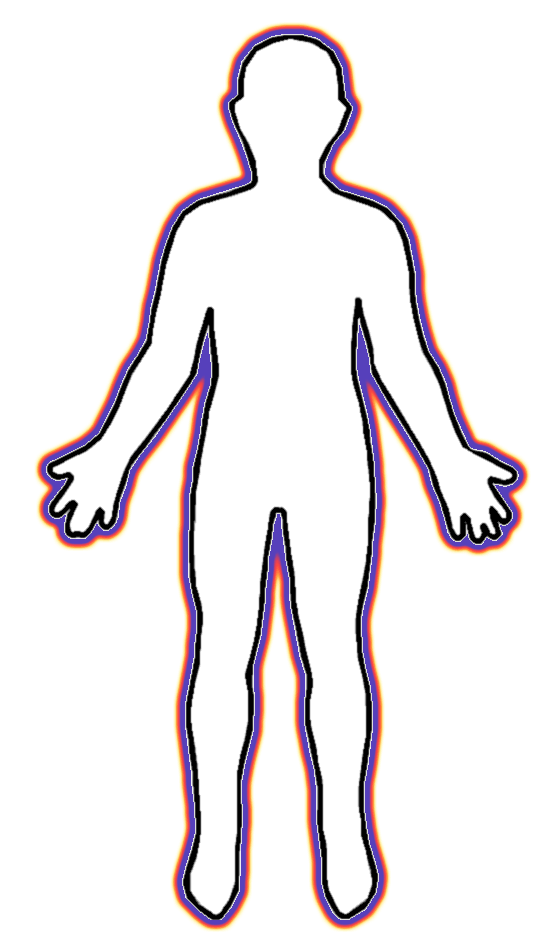
**Common Difficulties**

Cognitive Difficulties:

* Being able to solve problems and think these through may be difficult.
* Imagining and understanding the consequences of actions may be difficult.
* Being able to put yourself in someone else’s shoes (empathy) is a complex cognitive skill which can be affected.
* Lack of insight – it is common for some people to lack an awareness or understanding of their injury and limitations.
* Memory may be impaired, including short term memory or memory of specific events. Working memory can also be affected which is very important when planning, problem solving and decision making.
* Communication may be affected in different ways e.g. being able to explain your current situation and understanding instructions.
* ‘Confabulation’ – some people may talk about things which are not true but may be linked to things which are true and they have got very confused. This is not deliberate lying.
* Responding to what, where, why, how questions – all common in assessment, may be very challenging for someone with brain injury.



Emotional

* It may be difficult to control emotional responses.
* Emotional outbursts may be common.
* Sometimes emotional responses may be flat, e.g. humour may not be understood in context.
* If an individual’s cognition is affected, this may mean they cannot understand why others behave as they do, meaning their own emotional response may seem inappropriate.
* Some people with brain injury become sexually inappropriate or disinhibited in other ways.

Physical

* Senses may be affected e.g. vision may be blurred, bright lights may be overwhelming, hearing may be impacted etc.
* Noise may be distressing.
* Speech may become slurred.
* Coordination of movement may be diminished – visuospatial abilities may be affected – can lead to falls.
* There may be obvious physical effects such as problems with walking or reduced use on one side of the body.
* Dribbling, difficulty with eating, choking may be present.
* Hormonal changes can cause weight gain, hair loss and many other symptoms (low blood pressure, pale appearance, constipation and reduced fertility).