

## **Sample Chapter from “Starting Over: A Survivor’s Guide”**

### **A Short Reprieve**

The high I had originally felt after being discharged from the hospital dissipated once I’d been home for a couple of days. Being home was a reprieve from the emotional hell that I had experienced in the hospital, but a new kind of hell was returning in full force. Now, even in my own home, my emotions were screaming out of control. It was as if I had only two gears, and my moods alternated between depression and rage.

My entire family was feeling the stress and strain from my brain injury. I frequently got very upset at someone for no apparent reason. After days of walking on eggshells around me, my brothers started to avoid me.

I had been home for five days and it was a Saturday afternoon. I had just finished eating lunch and was lying around in my room, when I heard Jonathan’s stereo. It wasn’t unusually loud, but for some reason, his music upset the delicate balance in my brain. It pierced my ears and I felt very panicky, like all the mental processes in my brain were about to come to a stand still.

“Damn It!\$^@!” I struggled to get up off my bed, hobbled on one leg to the door. I swung it open and screamed at him. “Jonathan, turn that crap off. I am trying to rest!”

He peered out of his room, bewildered because the CD he’d been playing used to be my favourite.

I lay back down on my bed feeling worse than ever, knowing I had a problem and that I certainly was not the person my brother had known before the accident.