

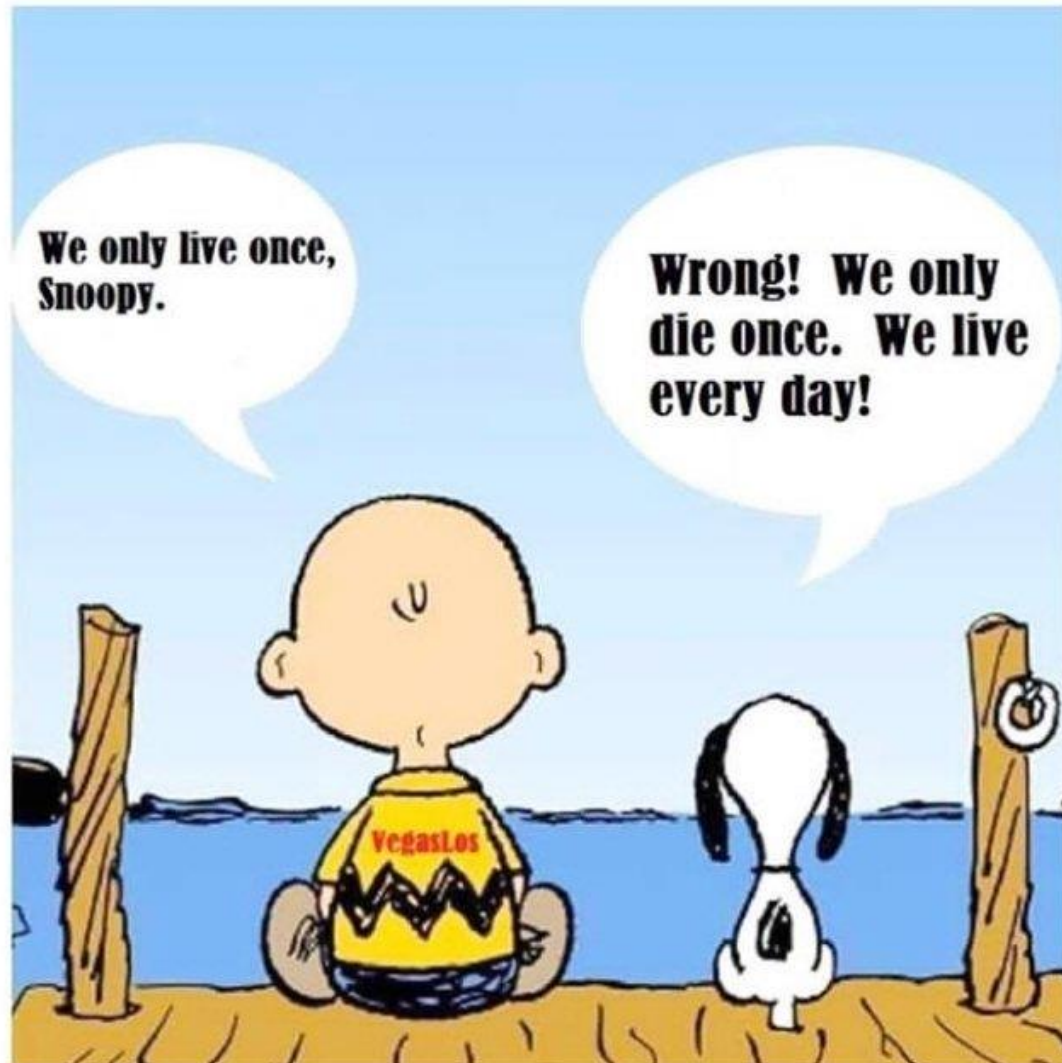
Preparation for Cardiac Surgery

Dr Michelle O'Keeffe
Specialist Clinical Psychologist
CHD Psychology Network Day
11th February 2020

Outline

- ❑ Pre-and post-surgical anxiety and depression
- ❑ Before, during and after cardiac surgery challenges
- ❑ How you can support surgical patients

Cardiac Surgery is Amazing!



Pre-surgical anxiety and depression

- **Pre-op anxiety 8-80%** (Nigusse, 2014). **Pre-op depression 25%** (Horne et al., 2013)
- Yin et al. (2012) Keyhole closure of CHD defects associated with less postoperative anxiety/depression compared with surgery.
- **40% CABG surgery patients** experience postop anxiety (Tully, 2012)
- Depression prevalent in **1/3 cardiac surgery patients** at discharge. Not associated with operative or postoperative risk factors, with the exception of prolonged hospital stay >7 days (Horne et al., 2013).

Cardiac Surgery: The Emotional Rollercoaster

- *“I can’t sleep, I just lay awake thinking about the surgery”*
- ***“I know I’m not going to wake up”***
- *“The night before surgery in hospital was horrific- it was the worse experience of my life”*
- *“I’m so relieved it’s done”*
- *“I literally felt as though I’d been hit by a bus”*
- ***“Look at how pink I am!”***
- *“I wished I’d had it done years ago”*
- *“I feel useless”*
- ***“Life is never the same after open heart surgery”***

Before Challenges

System

Change of plans
Unknown date of surgery
Cancellations
High level of trust required
Consent form

Physical

Non-symptomatic
Fear needles and dentist
Poor sleep
Lifestyle changes

Thoughts

“Living in limbo”
Triggers memories of previous
surgical traumas
Worries about dying
What if’s?
Loss of control

Social

Impact on family and friends
Work
Education
Events

Emotions

Uncertainty
Fear
Anxiety
Low mood
Pre-existing mental health issues
exacerbated

During Challenges

System

Unfamiliar environment
Trust in professionals
Moved around BHI
Changing plans
Mixed messages
Lots of different people

Physical

Out of daily routine
Blood tests/cannulas
Pain
Complications
Poor sleep
Post-op delirium

Thoughts

When can I go home?
Has the surgery worked?
Will I be safe when I leave?
What else?

Social

Away from family
Long(er) hospital admission
Coping with family anxiety

Emotions

Uncertainty
Anxiety
Low mood
Boredom
Isolated

After Challenges

System

Anticipation of 6 week follow up appointment
Rescheduled appointment
Communication between systems

Physical

Out of daily routine
Pain
Complications
Poor sleep
Long recovery
Tired

Thoughts

Did the surgery work?
When am I going to feel better?
Is it normal to feel this way?
I am useless

Social

Loss of role in the family
Unable to work or study
Financial stress
Social isolation

Emotions

Uncertainty
Anxiety
Frustration
Low mood
Boredom
Guilt

Support Ideas

Before

- Prompt them to remember why they are having the surgery
- What helped them get through past difficult events
- Coping strategies; exercise, pets, hobbies
- Practice mindfulness exercises
- Grounding exercise
- Challenge unhelpful thoughts
- Think about what they will do after surgery
- Sleep hygiene (throughout process)
- Encourage them to talk to family and friends
- Focus on what they can control; putting plans in place before surgery, packing hospital bag, talking to work/family/friends, childcare arrangements
- Read Cardiac Surgery Booklet
- BHF and Sommerville Foundation website for surgical information
- Keep list of questions and contact cardiac team

Support Ideas

During

- Pre-med before surgery
- Bring in things to keep them entertained – they will be bored
- Face time with family and friends every day
- Download audio books and podcasts on their phone
- Ear plugs and eye mask
- Sleeping pills
- Write down any questions they have
- Cuddly animal/s, their own pillows
- Hope vs expectation
- Tentative plans for treatment and discharge
- Try and eat at regular times

Support Ideas

After

- Patience- progress will be slow- much slower than they want
- Review- progress week to week rather than compared to how they felt before surgery
- Listen to their bodies
- They won't be able to carry out daily routine for awhile- not a sign they are useless or weak, a sign of having had cardiac surgery
- Physical recovery and emotional recovery will be experienced in waves
- Pace themselves
- Don't hesitate to call the team if they have any questions

Questions?

