

Children and Youth

How can my family cope with my child's TBI and how might my other children be affected?

When you bring your child or youth home from the hospital or rehabilitation facility after TBI, your home life may not return to the way it was. Brothers and sisters can be strongly affected by their sibling's injury and by the changes in your relationship to the injured child.

Parents will likely need to pay more attention to the needs of the child with TBI, which may leave the other siblings feeling left out or ignored. In addition, dealing with your child's injury may put pressure on your relationship with your spouse. Your children may notice their parents fighting more, or acting distracted, tired, or closed off.

As tired as you probably are during this period, you need to pay attention to possible changes in the behavior of your non-injured children. Behavior changes could be a signal of pressures that are waiting to erupt.

Siblings may resent the changes they observe in your home. Or, they may feel responsible in some way for what has happened. Some kids will cope by being helpers, even if it means over-riding their own needs. Others may act out in ways that put more stress on the family.

Look for behaviors like these in your non-injured children:

Nightmares

Tearfulness

Changes in eating

School problems

Unusually quiet or unusually quarrelsome behavior

Moodiness

Risk-taking

Of course, this is not a complete list. Any changes in your children's normal behaviors may be signs of stress. If you see such signs, it's important to find a way to provide support to help your children adjust to what has happened. They may need help from a professional counselor to understand their sibling's new condition and how to relate in a supportive way. They may also need help with how to explain to their friends what happened to their sibling or family member in a constructive way.

Peer supports, such as a teen or family support group, might also be helpful to you and your children. Contact your child's school for more information.



Office of Special Education and Related Services

Traumatic Brain Injury Navigating the System A Guide for Students with Traumatic Brain Injury and Their Families

<https://www.ppsk12.us/>

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What is Traumatic Brain Injury?

Every brain injury is different. These are common symptoms that many people experience after brain injury. You may not have all symptoms on this list-or you may have a symptom that is not on the list.

- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Short term memory problems
- Confusion or disorientation
- Fatigue
- You do not need to lose consciousness (black out) to have a brain injury.
- If you have had a "concussion," you have had a mild brain injury.

Some examples of moderate traumatic brain injury symptoms may include:

- Loss of consciousness greater than an hour but less than 24 hours
- Difficulty reasoning or solving problems
- Difficulty carrying on conversations
- Speech problems
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances
- Fatigue

Some examples of severe traumatic brain injury symptoms include:

- Loss of consciousness greater than 24 hours (could last for several days or longer)
- Longer recovery time
- Significant disturbance in thinking
- Speech-Language Problems (examples: can't speak, can't understand others)
- Movement disturbances (examples: loses balance, can't walk)

IN THE HOSPITAL

What comes next? After the hospital, this depends on the severity of the injury.

For severe injuries, your loved one may need to spend time in a skilled nursing facility.

Inpatient rehabilitation is done during a stay in a rehabilitation facility. Outpatient rehabilitation can be done in your home or during appointments at the rehabilitation facility.

Rehabilitation services are varied to meet the needs of each person after brain injury. They may include such therapies as:

- Speech-language therapy
- Cognitive retraining
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Counseling

If your loved one has physical impacts from the injury, you may need to obtain equipment to support his or her progress. Some examples are:

- Wheelchair
- Cane
- Communication device
- Shower chair
- Standing frame

Every brain injury is different. Your social worker at the hospital will help you understand the services and equipment that are best for your loved one.

At Home and in the Community

What are the behavioral changes that someone experiences after brain injury?

Below are common emotional and behavioral changes that may occur after a brain injury:

Depression or sadness

Increased irritability or anxiety

Fatigue, tiredness, or drowsiness

Over-reacting

Blaming other people

Being afraid/avoiding other people

Poor judgment

Taking risks without thinking first