



The Family and TBI: A Long Road Ahead

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Overview:

Stages in the Brain Injury Journey

- Early
- Rehab
- Home and Community
- Long Term Focus/Needs

Impact on Survivors

Impact on the Social System

- Partners/Caregivers/Family/Friends

Relationship Challenges

Management Strategies

The Stages: A Shared Vocabulary

Early Stage: ER, Hospital

Acute Rehab Stage: Inpatient Rehab
Center

Home & Community Stage:

- Outpatient Rehab
- Post Acute Rehab
- Residential Rehab

Long Term Stage: Lifelong Living

Early Stage Issues:

- Initial Response and Coping
- Concerns of Survival and Severity
- Acceptance and Readying to Move On
- Gathering Info., Networking and Education



Acute Rehab Stage Issues:

- Family Joins the Team
- Managing Expectations
- Maintaining Hope While Looking Forward
- Active Discharge Plan
- Return to Normalcy: A New Normal



Home and Community Stage



Assessing Needs, Level of Care

- Return to Work/School (Voc Rehab, 504/IEP)

Redefining and Readjusting

Family System Changes

Whole Person Needs for Each Family Member

Long Term Stage Focus/Needs



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Developing Resources and Support

Medical Management

Lifelong Planning

- Medical
- Legal
- Housing

Aging Well

- Survivor and Caregiver Support
- Mind Body Health
- Productive Activity



Issues that Affect Relationships: Survivors



Cognitive Changes

- Memory, Attention, Problem Solving, Social cues

Emotional Shifts

- Irritability, mood swings, depression, anxiety, impulsivity

Personality Changes

- Self Centered, Apathetic, Childlike

Social Withdrawal

- Feeling Misunderstood, isolated

Issues that Affect Relationships: Family

Role Reversal

- Shift from partner to caregiver, new responsibilities/letting go

Emotional Strain

- Stress, Anxiety, Uncertainty about the Future

Loss and Grief

- Mourning the person and dreams they knew pre-injury

Isolation

- Feeling Alone/that friends have disappeared

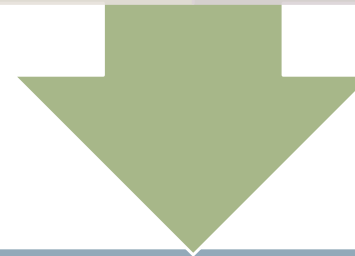


Relationship Challenges

Communication Breakdown

Fear of
Misunderstanding

Inability to express
oneself clearly



Loss of Intimacy

Reconnecting
Emotionally,
Physically

Changes in Sexual
Function/Desire

More Relationship Challenges

New Dynamics

- Finding New Ways to Have Fun, Quality Time

Marital Challenges

- Uncertainty: Neither Partner Knows What to Expect from the Other
- Financial Stress
- Social Emotional Changes
- High Divorce Rate (48%-78%)

Management Strategies

1. Validate Experiences:

Allow each member space to express their unique feelings without judgment

Maintain dignity, value and respect

2. Functional Adaptation:

Help the family unit adjust to daily life after a significant loss and a life-changing event

Physical and mental adaptations and strategies



More Management Strategies

3. Build a Supportive Environment:

- **Support Groups and/or Family Counselling:** Fostering a space where members can lean on each other and grow in both knowledge and patience with the changes.
- Willingness to try and explore.

4. Spiritual/Social Support: Join a Club, Be active in your religious Community, Foster friendships

5. Maintain Physical/Mental Health: Exercise, Healty Eating, Routine Care, Counselling, Self-Care

6. Developing a Plan: Being able to be proactive and developing a plan to re-establish the family's unity and direction in key areas. Goals, dreams!!

- Routine Family Meetings to share concerns, hopes and plans
 - Keep a record for later reference
- Visual Family Schedule/Reminders-Calendar, paper, electronic
- Plan low stress family activities to grow together
- Celebrate small and big successes

Wrap Up

Remember: Life after
Brain Injury is different,
but worth living and
growing together!

Questions?