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## *Upcoming Community Events*

### **Prince Albert Coffee Talk**

- Mondays  
(except stat holidays)
- 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM
- Community Room @ the  
South Hill Mall
- Free of charge
- Refreshments served

### **Introduction to ABI Online Series**

- Available online at  
[www.abipartnership.sk.ca](http://www.abipartnership.sk.ca)
- Designed to provide basic  
level knowledge about the  
effects of brain injury and  
strategies to help  
recovery.
- Many other resources also  
available on this website.

## *Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services*

1521 – 6<sup>th</sup> Ave West  
Prince Albert, SK S6V 5K1  
Phone: 306-765-6630  
Toll Free: 1-866-899-9951  
Fax #: 306-765-6657

# *Caregiver's Corner*

-- by Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services

### **Changes in Family Roles**

In every family, members need to help and support one another to live successfully and happily. Everyone has a responsibility or job within the family. Family members also work together to share responsibilities. These responsibilities and jobs are called roles. When members work to fulfill their roles in the family and share roles with each other, relationships within the family also grow stronger.

Following a brain injury, a family will experience a great deal of anxiety and worry. Family members may try to keep the family happy by taking over the roles of the person who has been injured. Yet there may be worries about finances that unavoidably strain family relationships.

While the family as a unit is affected by the strain caused by the brain injury of one member, individuals in the family may also experience personal and intense emotional reactions. Initially, both family members and the survivor may be in a state of shock. In the hospital, family members may rally to help the survivor. The survivor may feel grateful for this support.

After a time, however, family members may expect their loved one with brain injury to return to "normal". They are sometimes frustrated when their family member continues to have problems with thinking and behaving.

After a brain injury, survivors may react by feeling "different". They may feel out of control of their lives, and resent the fact that family members are making decisions that they once made for themselves. People with brain injury may deny or minimize their cognitive (thinking) problems. They may reject others' help and appear ungrateful. Added to this, a brain injury can sometimes cause personality changes. An individual who was never that way before may appear quick-tempered and irritable.

Despite emotional reactions and family stress, families must continue to work to maintain a sense of normal family life. To do this, roles must be readjusted or changed. How family members react to the need for change in family roles is important. Individuals who expect family life to return to what it was originally will end up feeling resentful and frustrated. Family happiness depends upon how well each family member can accept the need for change and work to achieve it.

Communication problems are a major obstacle to changing family roles. Often they keep these feelings to themselves for fear of adding more strain to the family. If these feelings are not expressed, however, they can lead to feelings of anger and bitterness. Other relationships within the family may suffer. For example, a mother and father may quarrel because each feels overwhelmed. This can lead to marital problems unless these feelings are shared and individuals learn to work together to find solutions to their frustrations.

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## What Can Families Do?

**Become educated.** Know what the cognitive problems are and how they may affect the survivor's behavior. This information will help you and other family members develop a plan of action.

**Allow independence.** Allow your loved one to have a role in the family. Give responsibility as the survivor is able to handle it.

**Support and nurture loving relationships.** Though frustrations occur, remember to show your appreciation and love to others.

**Take time for yourself.** Family members often feel overwhelmed because they ignore their own needs. It's okay to take time to rest and relax.

**Communicate.** Share your feelings and work with other family members to create solutions and reduce the negative feelings you might have.

**Consider professional help.** If frustrations continue, professional help may be desirable, even necessary. Consult a counsellor who specializes in treating family relationships.

**Remain positive.** A positive attitude is important to succeed in making changes in family roles.



Reference:

Anita Lara Chatignay, Ph.D. Family Articles about Traumatic Brain Injury. Communication Skill Builders., a division of The Psychological Corporation.

## Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services

Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services is a group of programs that offer a variety of services. Services are provided to the Prince Albert Parkland, Kelsey Trail, Athabasca, Mamawetan Churchill River and Keewatin Yatthé Health Regions and include...

**Case Management** : developing client-driven goals, coordinating health services, referrals based on current needs, return-to-work or return-to-school planning, help accessing adaptive equipment and general counselling.  
**Consultation**: providing information to others in regards to specific client needs and ABI in general.  
**Education**: general ABI education for anyone and prevention activities for schools and community groups.  
**Independent Living Services**: helping to find housing (private residence, personal care homes, etc.), recreation and leisure opportunities and assistance with therapeutic home programming and independent living skills.

### Program Admission Criteria

- Must have a diagnosis of a **moderate to severe** brain injury supported by medical records.
- Be free of active substance abuse &/or be currently involved in a treatment program.
- Applicants with a primary psychiatric diagnosis must have symptoms well managed.
- Priority will be given to applicants whose brain injury occurred within the past three (3) years.

### How to Access Services

- We accept referrals from anyone.
- Participation in our program is **voluntary**.
- Contact us @ 306-765-6630 or toll free @ 1-866-899-9951.

