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## *Upcoming Community Events*

### **ABI Coffee Talk Prince Albert**

- Mondays (except
- statutory holidays)
- 10:30 AM – Noon
- Community Room @ the South Hill Mall

### **ABI Drop-In Program Prince Albert**

- Wednesdays (except
- statutory holidays)
- 1:30 – 3:30 PM
- Minto Bowl (201 – 13<sup>th</sup> St. West)

### **Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association (SBIA) Support Group – Prince Albert**

- Contact Glenda James @  
1-888-373-1555 for details

## *Resources*

[www.abipartnership.sk.ca](http://www.abipartnership.sk.ca)

- Introduction to ABI; an online series that provides basic information about brain injury and strategies to help recovery
- The Survival Guide; Living with Acquired Brain Injury in the Community
- Many other resources & links available

## *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*

## *ABI Newsletter*

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

### **Helping Children Cope with Brain Injury in the Family**

Children, like adults, are affected when a close relative, especially a parent, sustains a brain injury. They can experience many of the same problems that adults face, including anxiety, worry, depression, and fear. In addition, children of different ages tend to react in different ways. They need honest age-appropriate information to help them understand brain injury and an opportunity to express feelings and concerns.

### **How Children Are Affected**

**Babies and infants** tend to show problems such as unsettled behaviour, disturbed sleep, and feeding difficulties at times of family stress.

**Preschoolers** can become clingy, have more temper tantrums, and lose some of their previously acquired skills (e.g. begin bed-wetting again). They may also develop new fears (e.g. become scared of the dark).

**School-age children (pre-teens)** worry about being different from their friends and are vulnerable to being teased about a parent being odd. They may become sad and withdrawn and fall behind in their school work. They can also show an increase in fears and phobias.

**Teenagers** may respond with resentment and anger. They may also become tired and their schoolwork could suffer. They may show an increase in mood swings and oppositional behaviour (often a characteristic of normal teenage years anyway) and resist family rules and boundaries. Teenagers can also become preoccupied with issues of justice and may wish to seek revenge on any third party involved in a parent's injuries.

### **How to Explain Brain Injury to Children**

For babies and infants the concept of brain injury is largely incomprehensible but they are aware of simple concepts such as being hurt and sick, so these terms can be used when telling them what has happened. As language and thinking become more developed preschoolers have a greater understanding of what an injury is.

School-age children will understand both its seen aspects (such as physical problems) and unseen aspects (such as cognitive problems) if they are clearly explained. Teenagers can generally comprehend the complexity of brain injury in much the same ways as adults and so can be told about issues such as the severity, seriousness, and extent of recovery.

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## How to Explain Brain Injury to Children

Try to prepare what you're going to say in advance of talking to children, taking into account their age and what they already know. You can follow the structure below:

- State what a brain injury is and explain how the brain injury specifically affects their relative (include all areas of difficulty).
- Focus on the injured person's strengths and abilities as well to create a balanced picture.
- Reassure the child that the brain injury is not contagious and they are not to blame for it.
- Discuss recovery and the likelihood of some long-term problems.

## Other Ways to Help Children Cope

- Try to keep children's daily routines as normal as possible. It helps if they can continue with after-school activities and hobbies, but you may need to have extra help to maintain this.

- It's helpful not to have too many different people looking after your children as this can make them feel insecure. It's also preferable for them to be cared for in their own home (if possible).
- Tell the school what's happening. They may be able to offer extra support and will be sympathetic if the children seem upset or show changes in behaviour.
- Children may need to relearn ways of communicating with relatives who have speech and language problems.
- Some children may need specialist support (e.g. if they are continually sad, their school work deteriorates significantly, or they engage in risky behaviours such as drug/alcohol use).



## References:

Audrey Daisley, Pachel Tams, and Udo Kischk. "Helping Children Cope with Brain Injury in the Family" (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.brainline.org>

## *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 to residents in the Prince Albert Parkland, Kelsey Trail, Athabasca, Mamawetan Churchill River and Keewatin Yatthe Health Regions including case management, consultation, education and independent living services.

### Program Admission Criteria

- Must have a diagnosis of a **moderate to severe** brain injury supported by medical records
- Be a resident of Saskatchewan or eligible for Saskatchewan Health coverage
- Are open to working cooperatively on goal-directed rehabilitation with ABI and other service providers
- Community agencies, employers, families and schools who require resources & support are eligible as well
- \*\* Priority will be given to applicants whose brain injury occurred within the past three (3) years
- \*\* Congenital brain injury or one that is a result of a progressive condition will not be considered

### How to Access Services

- Participation in our program is **voluntary**
- Contact us @ 306-765-6630 or toll free @ 1-866-899-9951

