



Prepared by Sask North ABI Services



Learning to Manage Anger and ABI

Problems with irritability and anger are common after acquired brain injury. Specific concerns can include:

- Feeling more irritable or snappy
- Having a short fuse
- Losing your temper over small things
- Throwing, breaking or damaging things
- Hitting, pinching, punching, shoving, slapping, poking, spitting at other people
- Swearing more than usual or using words that other people get offended at
- Yelling, using an angry tone of voice



What Causes My Anger?

Like other behavioural changes that can occur after brain injury, there are many reasons why people with an ABI have trouble with anger. Understanding each cause is important in deciding what to do about it. Angry behaviour can be a result of:

- Changes caused by the brain injury, for example, general irritability, restlessness, agitation, or aggression are common after an ABI
- Reduced ability to keep track of and stop angry behaviour (including irritability, temper, swearing, and aggression)
- Some people are impulsive and may not be able to think about what to say or do before doing it so irritability and anger may be shown more easily.
- Increased stress, physical demands, and fatigue after a brain injury can all be triggers for irritability, frustration

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Tips for Coping with Anger

Anger can sometimes be caused or triggered by other problems. Try to work out the kinds of things that make you more angry or likely to lose your temper. Some examples of things that might make you feel irritable or angry are:

- Fatigue and tiredness
- Memory difficulties
- Frustration
- Changes in thinking or being unable to think quickly or clearly
- Being unable to do simple things for yourself
- Telling yourself (or thinking) that you can't control your anger
- Feeling that you cannot make your own decisions
- Money worries
- Boredom and lack of things to do
- Loss of independence with work or driving
- Living with other people you don't get along with

Try to find out what is making you feel angry or agitated – have a think about things that might trigger your anger, and what you can do about them.

Triggers for me are:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____

Finding ways to calm down may help with anger. Strategies might include:

- Relaxation or breathing exercises
- Talking about feelings and thoughts when you are calm
- Walking away or doing some exercise
- Listening to music
- Having a shower or cold drink
- Trying a different activity or task
- Taking a break and trying again later
- Changing the topic

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Strategies I can try to calm down are:

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____

When your angry behaviour has stopped, think about:

- What helped you get control or calm down?
- The behaviour and how it affects other people?
- Consequences for you—making amends?
- What you could do differently next time?
- Strategies or solutions to deal with a problem that caused the anger?
- Do you need to apologize or work things out?

If you can't leave a situation and you are already angry, other people (family, friends) need to:

- Leave the situation if there is any physical risk
- Sit down with you afterwards and talk about what happened to find out why you got angry, and discuss what you could do differently and what they could do differently next time.

Family members, friends and carers may find it useful to learn about your brain injury and how to help you with your angry behaviour. Make sure you get enough sleep and rest because fatigue can be a big cause of anger problems.

Find someone to talk to about your problems with anger: You could learn some strategies to manage anger from:

- Friends or family
- Doctor
- Psychologists or other counsellors
- Psychiatrists
- Brain Injury Services

References:

ABIOS (Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Services).2021.Learning to Manage Anger.Retrieved from health.qld.gov.au
Samuel Briskar forThree Dee.2022.[online image]bribble.com/tads/anger

Caregiver Corner

This is a brand new section we've added to the ABI Newsletter in lieu of the Caregiver Corner Newsletter we've been producing for the past few years. Moving forward, you'll find information specifically for caregivers right here instead!

Emotions Experienced by Families after Brain Injury

Many families put the welfare of their loved one with a brain injury above everything else. At first, this is necessary. However, as time goes on, family members need to recognize that they're also changing and probably experiencing emotions & behaviours not consistent with their former personalities. These emotions & behaviours may include:

- Anxiety—anytime trauma is experienced, anxiety & tension levels rise
- Irritability—a roller coaster of emotions may keep you from seeing the positives, so you react defensively, etc.
- Denial—denial provides hope when needed, though if held onto it may interfere with realistic expectations
- Guilt & Ambivalence—feeling guilty about contributing to or not preventing what's occurred
- Frustration—a lifelong battle may occur as you continue to face frustrating experiences
- Loss of Love—the realization that a loved one is a very different person than the one that existed prior to the brain injury

Tips for coping with emotions

- Participate in a local support group.
- One day at a time – use this as your motto.
- Seek counselling.
- Use relaxation techniques.
- Put off until tomorrow anything that is not absolutely necessary.
- Delegate responsibilities.
- Don't quit your job unless absolutely necessary.
- Don't feel that you have to constantly be by your loved one's side.
- Don't let yourself obsess on negative thoughts.
- Enjoy other activities such as gardening, exercising or biking.
- Go out with friends and have some fun.
- Get sleep and eat regularly.
- Recognize your limits and realize you cannot fix everything.
- Ask for help! Let friends know what they can do to help, contact people of your faith or religion, or talk to your physician and other outside sources of support about what you're experiencing.

References:

- DeBoskey, D., Hecht, J., Calub, C. (1991). Educating Families of the Head Injured: A Guide to Medical, Cognitive, and Social issues. Gaithersburg, Maryland: Aspen Publishers, Inc.
- Rocchio, C. & Lash, M. (2008). Life after Brain Injury: A guide for families. Lash & Associates Publishing/Training Inc.

Sask. North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services

Who We Are

Sask. North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services is a group of programs that assists individuals, families and communities affected by an acquired brain injury.

We are a part of the Acquired Brain Injury Partnership Project that is managed by Sask Health and funded by Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI).

Our programs include:

- Sask. North ABI Outreach Team
- Sask. North Independent Living Program
- Sask. North Education and Prevention Program

Who We Can Help

To qualify for services clients must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Have a diagnosis of a moderate to severe acquired brain injury supported by medical records and be medically stable.
- 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, caregivers, employers, families and schools who require resources and support are eligible as well.

**** Individuals are prioritized for services based on time since injury with priority given to those whose injury occurred in the past (3) years.**

**** Individuals who have a congenital brain injury or one that is a result of a progressive condition will not be considered.**

What We Do

Sask. North ABI Outreach Team

- Case Management: helping develop client-driven goals, coordination health services, providing referrals and planning for return to work or school.
- Consultation: providing information to others regarding specific client care.
- Brain Injury education.
- Adult & children's camps

Sask. North Independent Living Program

- Activities of daily living: helping individuals become more independent through short-term interventions.
- Assistance to find housing.
- Therapeutic recreation and leisure services.
- Vocational: exploring work or volunteer opportunities.

Sask. North Education and Prevention Program

- Prevention Activities: Prevent Alcohol & Risk-related Trauma in Youth (PARTY) Program, Brain Walk, Brain Waves, Safety Resource Kits, ATV, snowmobile and traffic safety, Bike safety, Child car seat clinics and Fall Prevention.
- Mild Brain Injury (MBI) education.

Our mission is to provide individual and family support to people with ABI so that they may live successfully in their communities with improved quality of life.



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

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ABI Community Programs

ABI Drop-In Program-Minto Bowl

Join us for an afternoon of cards, games , coffee and fun!

- **Wednesdays**
- **1:30-3:00pm**
- **No cost**



Other programs offered include:

- Crafts
- Art
- Fitness

For further information on the programs offered at this time please call Nicole Storoschuk, Recreational Therapist at (306) 765-6480.

ABI Services Library

We also have a large collection of reference books, activity guides, and easy to read books available for survivors, family members & professionals to borrow.

We have an online searchable list of all the resources in our collection.

Check out: www.librarything.com/catalog/ABIServices

To borrow resources from this collection, contact: **Lisa Chambers** phone 306-765-6629

Email: Lisa.Chambers@saskhealthauthority.ca

Additional resources are also available on the provincial website at [http://](http://www.abipartnership.sk.ca/index.cfm)

www.abipartnership.sk.ca/index.cfm

Introduction to ABI - Online Series

Available online at **www.abipartnership.sk.ca**

Designed to provide basic level knowledge about the effects of brain injury and strategies to help recovery. Many other resources are also available on this website.

The Sask North ABI Outreach Team is a funded program of...

The ABI Partnership Project...



...A joint initiative of...

