

Prepared by Sask North ABI Services



## Rehabilitation and ABI

Rehabilitation - also known as rehab or therapy - means building back up physical and cognitive abilities through activities and therapies with trained healthcare professionals following a moderate to severe brain injury. Rehabilitation plans are tailored to the individual for optimal results. Rehabilitation will often be multi-disciplinary: there will be multiple professionals helping with cognitive, behavioural, psychosocial and physical needs. Depending on the situation, rehabilitation can last a few months to a few years. Some people continue it for the rest of their lives.

There are several types of rehabilitation that individuals with brain injuries may find helpful in their recovery. Different rehabilitation therapies will be recommended for different people. Not every rehabilitation therapy will be available in every area. Speak with your medical team about rehabilitations available to you, and ways you can access them. In some cases, there may be online rehabilitation services that can make getting support even easier. Below is a list of some of the rehabilitation professionals and services that a person may encounter during their recovery.

### Neurologist

A neurologist is a medical health professional that specializes in treating the nervous system, which includes the brain. A neurologist is one of the physicians that would be able to make a diagnosis of brain injury and address symptoms. They also help with management of brain injury and its symptoms through treatment and referrals to other treatment options.

### Neurosurgeon

A neurosurgeon is a medical doctor who specializes in performing surgical treatments to the brain or nervous system.

### Physiatrist

A physiatrist is someone who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation. They can help a person with a brain injury by evaluating physical needs and making rehabilitation/treatment plans. The physiatrist can identify and make recommendations for treatment in relation to physical, cognitive or behaviours problems that can result from brain injury.

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### Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy (OT) assists with activities of daily living (ADLs) and creating a home environment that is designed for the person with a brain injury to be as independent as possible. This includes things like:

- Cooking
- Eating
- Bathing
- Cleaning
- Getting dressed
- Going to the bus stop

After a brain injury, these everyday activities can be more challenging. If you're experiencing problems with your fine motor skills, having trouble with memory or processing instructions, or have issues with vision, hearing, or touch, occupational therapy will be a big help.

An occupational therapist will perform a functional assessment of you, identify impairments and environmental barriers, and create a treatment plan designed specifically for you. Part of the plan is developing specific goals you want to achieve, and using tools and strategies to help you do so.

### Speech Language Pathologist

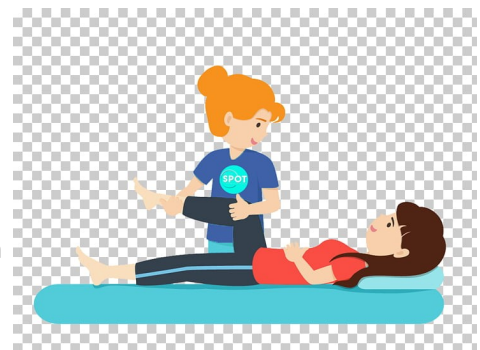
Possible effects of brain injury include cognitive communication challenges. You may not be able to process your thoughts, have difficulty organizing your speech, or struggle with reading and writing. A speech language pathologist (SLP) can help with relearning communication skills and new adaptive techniques.

A person may also experience difficulty speaking or trouble swallowing. These challenges are connected to the throat and mouth muscles. Not only can it be difficult to talk, but it can be challenging to eat or drink, causing further problems with nutrition and safe eating. An SLP will perform tests in the early (acute care) stages of recovery if a person is experiencing any of these issues. It may be recommended that the person continue to work with a speech language pathologist to improve speaking and swallowing abilities.

### Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy focuses on improving movement and mobility. This is done through carefully monitored stretching and exercises. This is one of the most common therapies - most people recovering from physical injuries need it. A physiotherapist is a rehabilitation professional who will perform an assessment of your physical capabilities and create a treatment plan to improve strength, muscle tone, or mobility. Exercises and activities can include range of motion exercises (ROM), strengthening exercises focused on building endurance and muscle, balance exercises which will target areas of deficit, and gait training to improve posture and walking.

Physiotherapy can be short or long-term. You may also be given activities or exercises that you have to do between appointments. As you meet physiotherapy goals, your abilities and needs will be reassessed and your plan adapted to make sure you continue making positive progress.



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### Neuropsychologist

A neuropsychologist specializes in understanding how the brain and behaviours are linked. For someone with an acquired brain injury, a neuropsychologist can help determine how the injury affects your cognitive abilities and behaviours and make recommendations for what therapies could be helpful in your recovery.

### Recreational Therapist

A recreational therapist is a professional that uses leisure and recreational activities as rehabilitation to build skills. The treatments are assessment-based and can be useful for people with social, cognitive and behavioural challenges in developing independence and improving quality of life.

### Case Manager

A case manager works with individual's and their families to assess, plan, coordinate, evaluate and advocate for services to meet their needs in the community after brain injury.

### Vocational Counsellor

A vocational counsellor assesses an individual's ability to return to work and provides appropriate vocational opportunities and resources to address common challenges in the workplace.

### Dietician

A dietician assesses an individual's nutritional needs, monitors the daily intake of food and liquids, and provides for any special dietary needs. Dieticians can also counsel families about these nutritional needs and make specific diet recommendations for individuals with a brain injury.

### References:

- Brain injury Canada. 2022. retrieved from [braininjurycanada.ca/en/survivor/traumatic-brain-injury/rehab/types-rehab](https://braininjurycanada.ca/en/survivor/traumatic-brain-injury/rehab/types-rehab)
- American Case Management Association. (2011) "Definition of Case Management".*
- Dikengil, Angela Tipton. (1994). Family Articles about Traumatic Brain Injury; "The Brain Injury Team". Communication Skill Builders, Inc.*
- Mayo Clinic. 1998-2022*<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/traumatic-brain-injury/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20378561>

## Caregiver Corner

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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!

### 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.

Following a brain injury, both family members and the brain injury survivor may be in a state of shock initially. In the hospital, family members may rally to help the survivor and the survivor may feel grateful for this support. After a time, however, family members may expect their loved one with a brain injury to return to "normal". They are sometimes frustrated when their family member continues to have problems with thinking or behaving and cannot assume the same roles as they had before the brain injury. On the other hand, survivors may feel out of control of their lives and resent the fact that family members are making decisions that they once made for themselves. Survivors may deny or minimize their cognitive (thinking) problems and reject others' help or appear ungrateful. Added to this, a brain injury can sometimes cause personality changes.

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 individuals 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 as a result.

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

### References:

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

### 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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**Toll Free:**

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**Fax:**

**(306) 765-6657**

## **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](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/ABIServices)

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

Email: [Lisa.Chambers@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto: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](http://www.abipartnership.sk.ca/index.cfm)**

## **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 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...

