



Community Events

ABI Coffee Talk—Prince Albert

Join us for a morning of good conversation and learning.

- ⇒ Mondays (except stat holidays)
- ⇒ 10:30—11:45 AM

ABI Drop-In Program—Prince Albert

Join us for an afternoon of cards, games and fun.

- ⇒ Wednesdays (except stat holidays)
- ⇒ 1:30—3:30 PM

For more information or to sign up for these programs call Nicole @ 306-765-6480

Adjustment, Grief and Loss

Adjustment is the ability to adapt to change. When we choose to change something about ourselves or about our lifestyle, the adjustments that we make are usually viewed in a fairly positive light. However, changes that are forced upon a person are more difficult to adjust to as there is a sense of a loss of control over one's life.

Following an acquired brain injury (ABI), people may experience many changes or losses. A person with an ABI may experience changes in their personality or changes in their physical, emotional, behavioural, and cognitive function. This can impact a person's roles and responsibilities, performance of tasks, and on their identity. For example, a person who has always been independent and driven their own car may now need to use public transport or rely on others to drive them. A person who has always seen themselves as a "bread winner" may struggle to perform this role to the level they were previously.

Those close to the person with an ABI may also experience loss and find themselves having to adjust to changes. For example, they may experience loss of freedom and independence, loss of a friend, loss of intimacy, or loss of financial stability.

Adjustment, Grief and Loss - Continued

Adjustment to loss generally involves a grieving process. There is often a gap between how things are after an injury and how things were before the injury. This gap results in pain. There are many emotions involved in the adjustment and grieving process including shock, disbelief, denial, anger, resentment, guilt, despair, hopelessness, depression, sadness and acceptance. Not everyone will experience all of these emotions nor do they occur in any predictable way. Grieving is an individual and mostly private experience and at times may seem very lonely. Individuals who have an ABI or those close to them may not be seen to have experienced loss at all. In fact, individuals who have an ABI are often told that “they are lucky to be alive”. Sometimes, these types of comments make the person experiencing loss feel all the more alone.

Strategies for Managing Loss and Adjustment

- ⇒ Allow yourself time to grieve and adjust to what happened.
- ⇒ Talk to someone that you trust (family, friend, psychologist) about your thoughts and feelings.
- ⇒ Write a story or journal about your experience to help you process what has happened.
- ⇒ Look after yourself. Make sure that you are meeting your basic needs. Eat regular meals, get enough exercise daily, take medication as prescribed.
- ⇒ Stay connected with your social supports and interests as much as possible. Problem solve ways to do things that are important for you in a modified way. For example, if you value spending time with your child but can no longer participate in physical activities, consider other ways to spend time with them. You could play a board game, read, watch sports, etc.
- ⇒ Seek support from organizations that specialize in ABI.



Strategies for Families, Friends and Caregivers

- ⇒ **Normalize feelings of grief.** For example, “It seems natural to feel sad about being unable to drive”.
- ⇒ Allow for individual differences.
- ⇒ Allow for the person with an ABI to grieve.
- ⇒ Avoid platitudes like “You’re lucky to be alive” and “I know how you feel”.

Strategies for Families, Friend and Caregivers—Continued

- ⇒ Listen and reflect back what the person is saying to you. Try not to project your own feelings onto them.
- ⇒ There is often no need to offer advice or find a solution. Feeling understood and connected with another person is usually enough.
- ⇒ Don't feel bad about expressing your own needs. The more clearly you can define them the better you can work out ways to fulfil them.
- ⇒ Look after yourself so that you can better support the person with an ABI.
- ⇒ Seek support from organizations that specialize in ABI.

References:

Queensland Government. (2017). Adjustment, Grief and Loss. Queensland Health. Retrieved from <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/>

ABI Resources

- ⇒ Sask North Acquired Brain Injury Services onsite library
- ⇒ Acquired Brain Injury Partnership Project (www.abipartnership.sk.ca)
 - Video Series—Introduction to ABI
 - Book—The Survival Guide; Living with Acquired Brain Injury in the Community
- ⇒ Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association (1-888-373-1555)
- ⇒ Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (heartandstroke.ca)
- ⇒ Brainstreams.ca
 - Blog Series—Between the Lines: Stories of Brain Injury Survivors
 - Podcast—Time to Talk Traumatic Brain Injury

Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services

Sask North ABI Services is a group of programs that offer a variety of services to assist individuals, families and communities affected by an acquired brain injury. We provide services to residents in the areas formally known as Prince Albert Parkland Health Region, Kelsey Trail Health Region, Athabasca Health Authority, Mamawetan Churchill River Health Region and Keewatin Yatthe Health Region.

Program Admission Criteria

- ⇒ Must have a diagnosis of moderate to severe brain injury supported by medical records
- ⇒ Are open to working cooperatively on goal-directed rehabilitation; Participation in our program is voluntary
- ⇒ Priority is given to applicants whose brain injury occurred within the past three (3) years
- ⇒ Applicants with a congenital brain injury or one that is a result of a progressive condition will not be considered for services

How to Reach Us

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THE ABI PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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Provides funding to 36 programs across Saskatchewan