

## Brochures to Print or Order from the Website

- ABIN-PA Services
- Brain Injury Basics
- Building New Lives
- Changes in Your Loved One
- Children Require Rehabilitation
- Criminal Justice
- Customer Service
- Definitions
- Discharge Planning
- Domestic Violence
- Everybody Knows Somebody
- Families
- Financial Planning
- Healing Strategies
- Law Officers: Info & Strategies
- Medication Record
- Partnering with Professionals
- Planning Your Recovery
- Professionals You May Meet
- Public Benefits
- Rehabilitation
- Seniors
- Sports
- Suicide Prevention
- Telephone Book
- Veterans

## Brain Injury Resources

- ABIN-PA InfoLine 800-516-8052  
[www.abin-pa.org](http://www.abin-pa.org)
- Area Agency on Aging (phone book)
- BIAA Help Line 800-444-6443  
[www.biausa.org](http://www.biausa.org)
- BIAPA Resource Line 866-635-7097
- Brain Injury Help Line 866-412-4755  
(PA DOH free literature, books)
- CHIP 484-477-2948  
(Children's Health Insurance Program)
- Disability RightsNetwork  
(SpEd, TBI, SS) 800-692-7443
- Elks Nurses (PA) 814-781-7860  
(care plan if disabled before 22)
- Head Injury Program 717-772-2762  
(1 year of rehab, \$100,000 max)
- Health Law Project 800-274-3258  
(help with public benefits)
- Legal Aid (PA) 800-322-7572
- Meals on Wheels [www.mealcall.org](http://www.mealcall.org)
- Medicaid Waivers 877-550-4227  
(Help at home, COMMCARE)
- Medical Assistance 866-542-3015  
(some adults, all disabled children)
- Medicare Coverage 800-633-4227  
(24/7 line, A & B in-home services)
- Medicare Denials 800-322-1914
- Social Security 800-772-1213  
(survivors, disability, low income)
- Special Ed Consult Line 800-879-2301
- Special Needs Help 800-521-6860  
(Medicaid rehab for children)
- Vocational Rehab [www.dli.state.pa.us](http://www.dli.state.pa.us)

# HELPING FAMILIES ADJUST TO BRAIN INJURY



ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY  
NETWORK OF PENNSYLVANIA  
Office: 1-215-699-2139  
Messages: 1-800-516-8052  
Fax: 1-215-699-5139  
Email: [info@abin-pa.org](mailto:info@abin-pa.org)  
Website: [www.abin-pa.org](http://www.abin-pa.org)

## **What is a Brain Injury?**

A brain injury means something happened to decrease the flow of oxygen or blood to the brain or even destroyed some brain cells.

After this event, there was a change in the person's thinking, behavior or physical functioning.

The event causing the injury could have been trauma (whiplash, blast, impact), fever, stroke, brain tumor, cardiac arrest, surgery, poisoning, blood loss, medication, drugs, anesthesia, infection, smoke, carbon monoxide, or nearly being drowned, electrocuted, or suffocated. Injury due to trauma is usually called a traumatic brain injury or TBI.

### **Possible changes...**

**COGNITIVE:** memory, speed, word finding, concentration, judgment, spatial awareness, organization, planning, multi-tasking.

**PHYSICAL:** seizures, balance, spasticity, weakness, paralysis, vision, hearing, speech, headache, fatigue, smell, taste.

**BEHAVIORAL:** anxiety, depression, mood swings, impulsive, agitated, egocentric, unaware of others.

## **Effect on Families**

Changes due to brain injury mean that the injured child or adult cannot play the role that was expected and family roles must shift. Recovery takes a lot of effort over many years. Everyone must work together. Adjustment means accepting a wide range of emotions. Recovery may appear to plateau. Fatigue can be sudden and alarming. When starting new activities, old ones may slide. Family responsibilities must be adjusted.

### **Partner Issues**

Sometimes a partner will seem like a total stranger or a child. Patience is essential. Personality usually returns.

### **Parenting Issues**

The child of an injured parent needs time with loving relatives in addition to time with the parent. Coaching, cuing, reminders, and supervision will help to re-establish the role of parenting but attention can fade suddenly.

### **Older Adult Issues**

Seniors are generally misdiagnosed as demented. Brain injury rehabilitation is essential. The COMMCARE Waiver has no age limit.

## **Children's Issues**

Parent's need help to assure recovery. Check the back panel and the Children's pamphlet. Special education and Medicaid laws mandate all necessary services for children's recovery after brain injury. The child's best strategies for success must be used all day, every day, in every setting. Graduation can be at age 21.

### **Caretaker Issues**

An understanding of brain injury will serve as a guide and reduce frustration. Assist in finding funding and services. Family and friends may need to be mobilized. Encourage the caretaker to protect their health, arrange respite or time alone. Keep up with friends, interests, and spiritual connections. This is not a short sprint, but a daily marathon.

### **Celebrate the Journey**

Most survivors far exceed the initial predictions made about their lives because the brain keeps repairing itself with stimulation. ("The Brain That Changes Itself", Norman Doidge, MD.) Survivors and family members need something to enjoy during each day of this journey.