

Overview - Brain Injury Impacts

Physical Impacts

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Chronic pain
- Insomnia
 - Trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Slurred speech
- Loss of coordination or balance
 - Fine motor skills (e.g., typing or picking up small objects) difficult
- Persistent nausea
- Dizziness
- Seizures
 - May begin years after injury
- Vision changes
 - Double or blurred vision
 - Loss of peripheral vision
 - Difficulties focusing on screens or objects
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Loss of smell/taste or more sensitive to tastes/smells
- Temperature regulation issues
 - Easily become too hot or cold

Cognitive Impacts

- More time needed to process information
- Executive dysfunction
 - Difficulty planning, scheduling, sequencing tasks (putting steps in order)
- Lack of focus and attention
 - Zone out during conversations, meetings, classes
- Poor memory
 - Hard to remember faces, names, dates
- Problems understanding conversation, difficulty expressing thoughts
- Difficulty with judgement and decision-making
- Getting 'stuck' on a topic, idea, or activity (perseveration)
- Confusion
 - Unable to recall the date, year, time of day, location
- Impulsivity
 - Acting before thinking
- Disinhibition
 - No 'social filter' telling one not to do or say something
- Communication difficulties
 - Lose track of thoughts
 - Hard to find the right word

Emotional Impacts

- Irritability and 'short fuse'
- Fear and worry about returning to activity, avoiding activities in response
- Feelings of depression, sadness, and grief
 - Frustration with changes
 - Loss of sense of self
- Apathy (not feeling anything or having little enthusiasm or concern)
- Mental health disorders
 - e.g., PTSD, depression, anxiety
- Emotional lability
 - Rapid, often exaggerated changes in mood
- Emotional/behavioural outbursts
- Anger management issues
- Personality changes
 - More reactive
- Substance misuse/addiction issues
 - Using substances to cope
 - Reduced tolerance for substances

Behavioural Impacts

- Difficulty reading social cues
- Isolating because they feel 'different'
- Loss of social network
 - Friends more distant
- Becoming dependent on others
 - Unhealthy relationships
- Trouble with work, school, & relationships, as well as poor coping skills
- Poor coping skill
 - Harder to deal with conflicts
- Family breakdowns
- Loss of independence and privacy
 - Rely on others
 - Unable/not allowed to drive
- Changes and doubt about future plans/income
 - Not sure being able to handle certain jobs or college/university
- Change in roles
 - May move from being a caregiver to receiving care