



Brain Injury

A brief overview of brain injury and how you can help.

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A stylized graphic on the left side of the slide. It depicts a hand in shades of yellow, orange, and pink, holding a brain. The brain is represented by various colored regions (yellow, orange, pink, teal, blue) with grey outlines, symbolizing different parts of the brain.

Housekeeping

- Please keep yourself on mute - we'll have time for Q&A at the end
- Please do write questions in the chat
- The presentation will be recorded and available later

Learning outcomes

- Improved understanding of the ways brain injury can present in individuals
- Understand how Headway Nottingham helps our brain injury community
- Be better able to empathise with those with brain injury-related disability
- Understand the impact of brain injury-related disability on individuals
- Understand the impact of brain injury-related disability on support networks
- Gain tips for supporting those living with brain injury



What is Brain Injury?

- Has often been split into two categories **TBI** (traumatic brain injury) and **ABI** (acquired brain injury)
- TBI's include those injuries resulting from a blow to the head – road traffic collisions, falls, assaults and other accidents
- ABI's are those resulting from illnesses or medical events – stroke, brain tumours, meningitis, encephalitis, aneurysms, lack of oxygen after cardiac arrest/strangulation/near drowning
- A movement towards referring to **ALL** brain injuries as ABI's now

How often does it happen?

- **EVERY 90 SECONDS**
someone in the UK is admitted to hospital with a brain injury

What is Headway Nottingham?



A stylized graphic of a human brain, rendered in a simplified, abstract manner. It is composed of several large, rounded, overlapping shapes in a palette of yellow, orange, pink, light blue, and teal. The graphic is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping the text area.

What does brain injury mean?

Physical disabilities

- Paralysis or weakness
- Balance and co-ordination problems
- Loss of taste, smell, vision, hearing or sensation
- Extreme fatigue
- Difficulty with physical sequencing and voluntary actions
- Headaches



What's your most important memory?

What does brain injury mean?

Cognitive disabilities

- Long- and short-term memory loss
- Slowed thought processes and diminished understanding
- Difficulty with word-finding
- Repetition/perseveration - fixating on particular tasks and/or subject matter
- Reduced attention span and concentration – particularly impacted by noisy environments
- Visuospatial difficulties
- Loss of reading and writing
- Difficulty with planning, organising, problem-solving and decision-making
- Perceptual difficulties, affecting someone's ability to see other's perspective

What does brain injury mean?

Behavioural challenges

- Lack of insight - into the self and other people
- Mood swings including agitation, restlessness, aggression and irritability
- Disinhibition
- Inflexibility and obsessiveness
- Impulsivity, lacking understanding of the consequences of actions
- Self-centredness, with appearance of insensitivity or indifference
- Apathy, poor motivation and depression
- Social isolation



Steps to manage residual difficulties

- Long or short term memory loss - simple aids and prompts such as phone alarms, notebooks, wall-planners, calendars or voice recordings (with permission)
- Where there is opportunity, manage the environment to avoid over-stimulation which can exacerbate other issues
- Open and clear communication with individuals, asking them about their information and feedback preferences
- Where struggling with fatigue, request revisiting important conversations when most receptive
- **Ask and listen.** Each ABI is individual and the ways in which you can most successfully interact with the individual will vary
- Talk to someone - helpline@headway.org.uk / 0808 800 22 44

How to support someone to manage their brain injury

- Learn about brain injury to foster a supportive environment
- Prompting use of aids for memory and routine where required
- Respond openly and honestly - providing praise and reassurance, and **constructive** suggestions where necessary
- Offer practical support (whilst remaining mindful of your own workload) but...
- Don't disempower the individual or assume they can't do something
- Avoid overloading the individual with lots of direction or corrective suggestions at once
- Allow time for the individual to process the information that's been given

How to support someone to manage their brain injury

- Be understanding and do make allowances where it is reasonable to do so, but don't be afraid to challenge behaviour:
 - Ensure you have their full attention during conversations
 - Challenge behaviour immediately to overcome any confusion which may arise from memory loss
 - Avoid sarcasm or ambiguous speech
 - As far as possible, maintain the same routine during any interactions with the individual, routine is important

How to support someone to manage their brain injury

- Remember that difficulties can fluctuate
- Provide written reminders of conversations for reflection.
- Avoid escalations in difficult situations - encourage those involved to remove themselves to calm down.
- Remember that the effects of brain injury can fluctuate and be exacerbated in certain situations.
- Ask! The support each person requires will be unique to them, their injury and their situation.



Any questions?