

7 Habits of Highly Effective Families

Regional Community Brain Injury Services
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Caron Gan, RN, MScN, AAMFT Approved Supervisor

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Hopes and Expectations

- A chance to meet others who share in the experience of caring for a person with an ABI
- Learn about the major adjustments facing spouses, parents, siblings, and children after ABI
- Share tips and strategies for coping and living with a family member with ABI
- Expand your network of support
- Discover “seven habits” of highly effective families


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7 Habits of Highly Effective Families

1. Become educated
2. Allow for emotional expression
3. Make it a family affair
4. Develop a family alliance against the ABI
5. Build your emotional bank account
6. Weave a web of support
7. Focus on strengths and accomplishments

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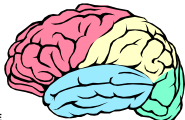
1. BECOME EDUCATED AND INFORMED



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What Happens After Brain Injury?

What are common changes after brain injury?



FRONTAL LOBE
Attention and concentration
Emotional control
Judgment
Initiation (starting things)
Impulse control
Planning and organizing

PARIETAL LOBE
Sense of touch
Knowing right from left
Knowing size, shapes, and colours
Naming objects
Eye-hand coordination

TEMPORAL LOBE
Memory
Hearing
Understanding language
Sequencing
Recognizing faces

OCCIPITAL LOBE
Vision
Recognizing objects or words
Identifying colours
Reading and writing

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Brain Basics Course

The course modules include:

- Module 1 - Parts and Functions of the Brain
- Module 2 - ABI Types and Causes
- Module 3 - ABI General Strategies
- Module 4 - ABI Consequences and Strategies: Physical
- Module 5 - ABI Consequences and Strategies: Cognitive
- Module 6 - ABI Consequences and Strategies: Behavioural
- Module 7 - Support Roles: Team and Family

www.obia.ca

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Impact of ABI on Caregivers


- Family strain, psychological distress in 47% of relatives (Kreutzer et al., 1994)
- Negative life change in 67% of caregivers (spousal or parent) (Wallace et al., 1998)
- Spouses: 73% depression and 55% anxiety symptoms (Linn et al., 1994)
- 47% of caregivers changed or gave up jobs one year postinjury (Hall et al., 1994)
- Increased use of alcohol & medications (Hall et al., 1994)

Ten Problems Most Frequently Reported by Relatives (Brooks et al., 1986)

Problem	Percent Relatives Reporting	
	1 year	5 years
➤ Personality change	60	74
➤ Slowness	65	67
➤ Poor Memory	67	67
➤ Irritability	67	64
➤ Bad Temper	64	64
➤ Fatigue	69	62
➤ Depression	51	57
➤ Rapid mood change	57	57
➤ Tension & anxiety	57	57
➤ Threats of violence	15	54

Family Burden

	1 year	5 years
Low	43%	10%
Medium	33%	33%
High	24%	56%



(Brooks et al., 1986)

Family Burden (cont'd)


- Family burden remained significant @ 7 years post-injury (Brooks et al., 1987)
- Physical changes cause the least burden
- Emotional, behavioral, and personality changes in survivor cause the most burden, NOT injury severity

What Do Caregivers Need?

- Information about brain injury and ways of coping with cognitive and behavioral changes
- Peer support
- Family counselling, including support for children
- Information about resources
- Practical support & help in navigating the system
- Coordinated, developmentally appropriate, & accessible programs
- Respite

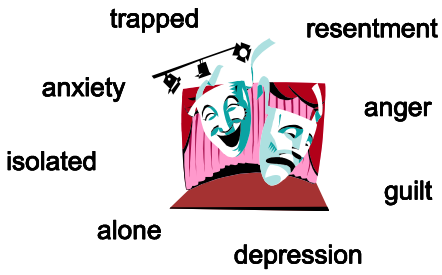
(Gan et al, 2010)

2. ALLOW FOR EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION



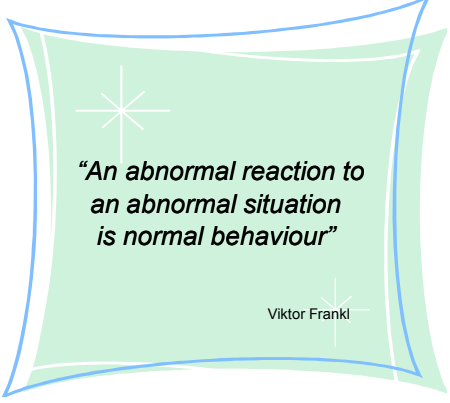
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Common Family Reactions



trapped
resentment
anxiety
anger
isolated
guilt
alone
depression

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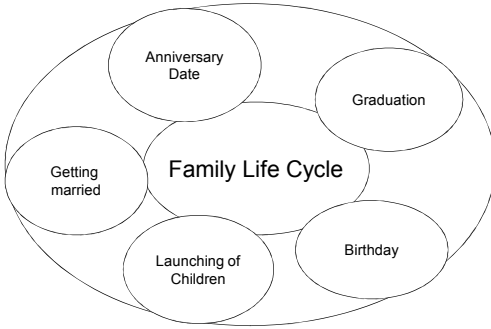


“An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behaviour”

Viktor Frankl

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Episodic Loss Reaction




Anniversary Date
Graduation
Family Life Cycle
Birthday
Launching of Children
Getting married

(Williams, 1991)

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Ambiguous Loss

- A loss that remains unclear
- Ambiguity freezes the grief process
- Closure is impossible
- Friends and family do not know what to do or say




(Boss, 2007)

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Coping With Emotions

<http://free.braininjurypartners.com/page20210/>



www.brainline.org/content/2010/06/my-childs-brain-injury-why-do-i-feel-so-sad.html

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How to Mourn Resiliently

- Give yourself permission to grieve – pain, anger & sadness are healthy normal responses to loss
- Recognize that everyone in the family may cope differently with the loss. Share your feelings with one another.
- Recognize that grief will likely recur
- Acknowledge your losses with another person
- Reach out for support; by reaching out, the process of grieving will be easier

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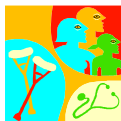
3. MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR



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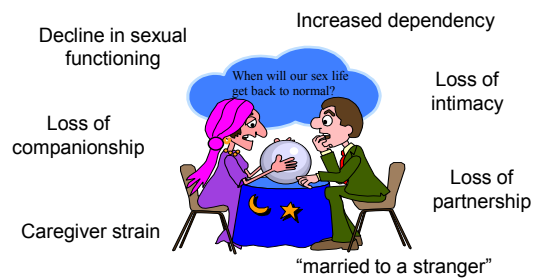
Impact of ABI on Family System

- Disruption of family roles
- Shifting responsibilities
- Safety issues
- Family strain
- Financial strain
- Social isolation
- Protracted caregiving



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Unique Issues of Spouses



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Sibling Adjustments

- Needs often unrecognized
- Compromised peer relations
- May be target of inappropriate behaviour
- Added responsibilities
- Role reversal
- Limited supports



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Children Who Have a Parent With Brain Injury

- Fear around personality & behavioural changes
- Role changes - increased responsibilities
- Compromised social relationships
- Fewer positive interactions with injured parent
- Loss - one or both parents

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Children's Adjustment With a Family Member With BI



- Sadness, anger
- Separation anxiety
- Somatic complaints
- Changes in school performance
 - Negative
 - Positive



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Children's Adjustment (cont'd)

- Nightmares & sleep problems
- Behavioural difficulties
- Relationship difficulties
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Parentification
- "Good child"



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Remember the other members of your family, your spouse, partner, other children... Life cannot and should not revolve around one member of a family. The person with the injury may take more time, but not more of your love.

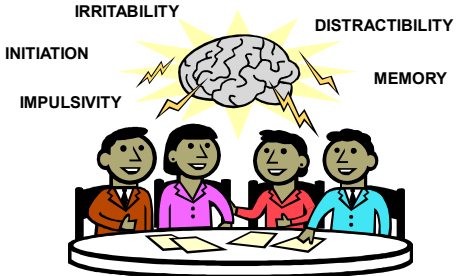
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4. DEVELOP A FAMILY ALLIANCE AGAINST THE ABI



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Develop Strategies Against the ABI



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Learn Effective Ways to Deal with Family Emotions


- Skills for emotional expression
- Strategies for managing anger and intense emotions



S top
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A ct

10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1

Deep breathing



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COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



- Speaker skills
- Listener skills
- Strategies to accommodate cognitive communication challenges



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Re-aligning Roles and Responsibilities



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5. BUILD YOUR EMOTIONAL BANK ACCOUNT




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Avoid Superman/Superwoman Syndrome



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- ⊗ Not asking for help
- ⊗ Revolving life around the person with ABI
- ⊗ Not taking time for self
- ⊗ Feeling guilty if you do take time for yourself
- ⊗ Juggling too many responsibilities
- ⊗ Having little time for other family members
- ⊗ Not taking care of yourself



↳ **PATH TOWARDS BURNOUT**

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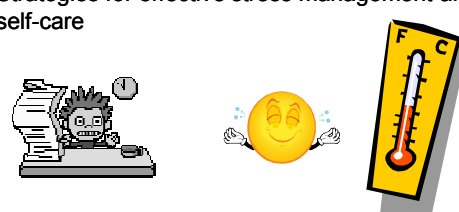
JUST SAY NO!



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Managing Stress and Taking Care of Self

- > Things that cause me to feel stressed
- > Identify signs of stress
- > Strategies for effective stress management and self-care



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Self-care

BACK IN AN HOUR

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LAUGHTER!

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FUN!



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6. WEAVE A WEB OF SUPPORT



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INSURANCE lack of ABI specialists
Medical-legal
Dealing with the system
wait lists
school
 lack of resources

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It's rarely just the ABI!

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Weave Your Web of Support

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Don't be afraid to ask for help. It is a sign of strength, not weakness to acknowledge you need help.

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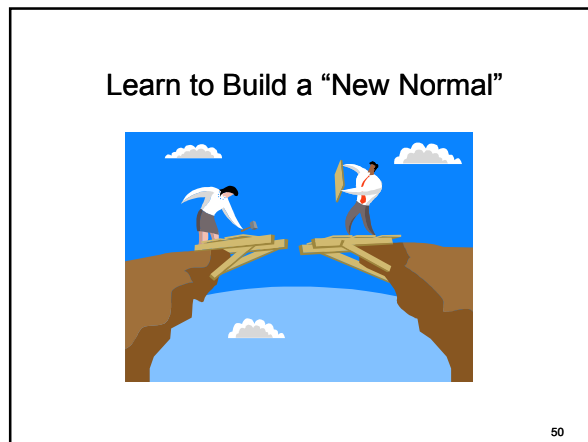
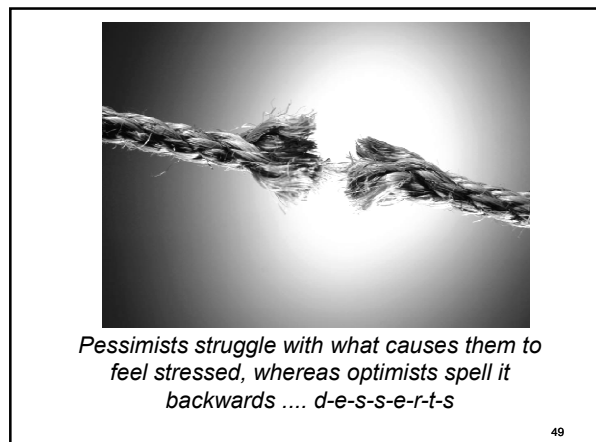
7. FOCUS ON STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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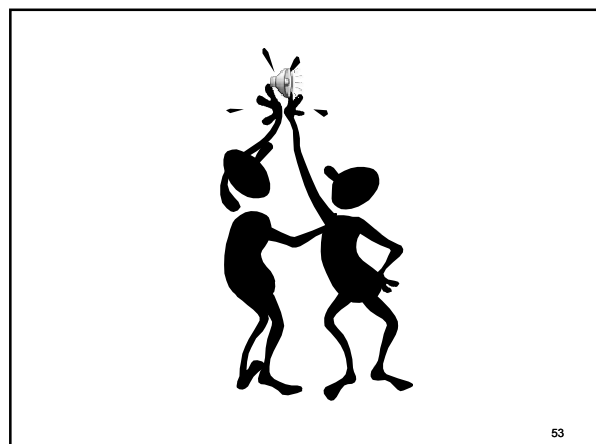
Become Solution Focused

AVOID FOCUSING ON...	FOCUS ON...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × The old life and the past × What you have lost × What is wrong × Negatives × Failures × Problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Your goals and the future ✓ What remains ✓ What is working ✓ Positives ✓ Successes ✓ Possibilities

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Caron Gan, RN, MScN, AAMFT Approved Supervisor
Registered Marriage & Family Therapist
Toronto, Ontario
Phone: 416-485-2284, extension 1
E-mail: jccgan@sympatico.ca

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