

seek professional help. In general, the earlier that treatment can begin, the more effective it is and the greater the likelihood that recurrence can be prevented. If problems arise while you are an in-patient, your doctor will refer you to be seen by a Psychiatrist, Psychologist and/or a Rehabilitation Medicine Specialist.

Following your return home, if you, or a member of your family, have any queries or concerns regarding your mental health you should contact your GP. Your GP can then refer you to the Department of Psychiatry in Beaumont Hospital or the Neuro-Behavioural clinic at the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH) if he/she thinks that would be helpful. One of our Psychiatrists or a Rehabilitation Medicine Specialist would be happy to see you and provide any necessary information and advice.

Contact Details.

Beaumont Hospital: 01 8093000
Department of Psychiatry: 01 8093354
ABI Nurse Specialist: 01 8092913
National Rehabilitation Hospital: 01 2854777
NRH Website: www.nrh.ie

Further information and advice is available from:

[Headway Ireland: The National Acquired Brain Injury Association.](#)

National Helpline: 1890 200 278
Email: info@headwayireland.ie
Website: www.headwayireland.ie

[Acquired Brain Injury Ireland: Provide case management, rehabilitation and day resources for people with Acquired Brain Injury.](#)

Tel: 01-280 4164 www.abiireland.ie

[Bri: The Acquired Brain Injury Support and Advocacy Association](#)

Tel: 01-235 5501 www.briireland.ie

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Patient Information Sheet



Information on Emotional and Behavioural Consequences Following an Acquired Brain Injury.

As the brain is responsible for controlling our feelings and behaviours, it is not surprising that patients can notice a change in these areas after an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). These can lead to subtle or occasionally quite dramatic changes in personality or behaviour which can be difficult to understand. Of course not everyone with an ABI will exhibit changes and the severity of changes varies from individual to individual.

Depression

Depression occurs frequently due to the injury itself, and also due to the social and personal difficulties that can arise as part of it.

Depression is associated with the following symptoms:

- Low mood for at least two weeks.
- Loss of interest and enjoyment.
- Ideas of guilt and unworthiness.
- Negative views of the future.
- Ideas or acts of self harm or suicide.
- Disturbed sleep.
- Reduced appetite.

Anxiety

Like depression, anxiety is also common. Typical symptoms of anxiety include:

- Anxiety in social situations, i.e. talking or eating in public.
- Anxiety attacks with shortness of breath, palpitations, chest pain and fear of losing

control.

- Constant feelings of anxiety, not just in certain situations.
- Persistent thoughts and memories of a frightening event. Sufferers may experience sleep problems, feel detached or numb, or be easily startled.

Coping with Anxiety and Depression:

- Talk to friends, family or a counsellor, and let them help you. Acknowledge the uniqueness of the loss you have experienced and identify your own strengths and assets.
- Treat thoughts or talk of suicide seriously and seek professional help in the first instance from your GP. He/she may consider that it may be helpful to speak with a psychiatrist or psychologist.
- Identify which situations, thoughts or memories trigger your anxiety and learn to deal with these triggers.
- Learn what you can do to calm yourself down when you are feeling anxious. This may be going for a walk, having a bath, calling a friend.

Agitation and Impulsiveness

Following an ABI some people find it difficult to relax and concentrate on things and can become bothered by small things. The ability to control

behaviour can also be affected by an ABI. This can lead to impulsive acts, poorer judgement, or inappropriate behaviour that can be frustrating and embarrassing for the patient themselves.

Coping with Agitation and Impulsiveness:

- Try to limit changes, surprises or excessive distractions.
- Try to redirect attention from the focus of agitation to more appropriate ways of behaving.
- For persistent difficulties, you may consider consulting your GP or Neurorehabilitation team.

Substance Misuse.

The brain is more sensitive to alcohol (and many other drugs) after an injury. No matter what quantity of alcohol a person was able to tolerate before an ABI, it is less now. It is advised to avoid taking alcohol until you are feeling better and with consultation with your doctor.

Getting Help.

When someone experiences what might appear to be a mental health difficulty after an ABI, the first step is to acknowledge having a problem. It is also important to listen to your family who have your best interests at heart. The next step is to