

CAREGIVING

Caregiving can be important yet very demanding task. It is important for you to take care of yourself as well as you take care of your loved one. Our bodies are kind of like a car, without love and attention eventually they break down.

Below are common questions concerning TBI that may be helpful to you.

When will my family member get better?

Each brain injury is different as is each person's recovery time. If your family member has had a mild brain injury, symptoms may seem to resolve gradually over a period of months. Someone that has suffered a severe brain injury may require months even years to recover. Unfortunately your family member may never be the person that they once were. As unique as the person that has suffered the injury so is the recovery time.

What is causing my family member to act so differently than before their accident?

Although a brain injury may not have caused any physical changes, the brain has suffered internal damage. Our brain controls our emotions and feelings, which can affect how a person acts. It is hard to realize that although a loved one may look the same, they may act like a different person. Accepting these changes will be difficult and may be accompanied by a sense of loss. If these feelings lead to depression it is important to seek professional help.

How do I deal with my loved ones unpredictable behavior?

When a person's part of the brain that controls laughter, crying, or anger has been damaged; your family member may cry or laugh much easier. They may have more outbursts of anger, may act inappropriately, or do impulsive things. This unpredictable behavior can lead to health and safety concerns for both you and or your loved one. It is very important to get help from therapists or medical professionals to help deal with mood swings. Medication, behavioral interventions or therapy may be required.

I am feeling overwhelmed? Help!

It is easy for one to feel overwhelmed when faced with caring for your loved one. Seek assistance in dealing with the emotional toll that a brain injury may have on you and your family members. Psychologists, social workers, counselors, and clergy are all professionals that can offer the support you may need.

How do I know that I need help?

- Do you feel isolated and alone?
- Do you have feelings of guilt, anger or frustration?
- Do you feel hopeless?

- Are you having trouble sleeping?
- Are you having trouble taking care of your own needs?

Some strategies for caregivers

- Take care of yourself- rest when you can, eat right, make time for you.
- Try to get and stay organized
- Be patient
- Accept the situation
- Be flexible
- Get counseling for you and or family members
- Ask family members for help
- Help your loved one become more independent
- Seek outside help
- Be knowledgeable- if you can't find the answers ask a professional.

Join a support group- a support group can allow you time to let off steam, talk to others that may be in the same situation, exchange ideas and information and develop a support network

Resources

Family Caregiver Alliance

180 Montgomery Street, Suite 1100
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 434-3388 phone
(800) 445-8106 toll free

Website: www.caregiver.org

E-mail: info@caregiver.org

Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA) seeks to improve the quality of life for caregivers through education, services, research, and advocacy.

FCA's National Center on Caregiving offers information on current social, public policy and caregiving issues and provides assistance in the development of public and private programs for caregivers.

FCA's e-newsletter, Caregiving Policy Digest, offers up-to-date information on national policy issues.