

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Introduction

An acquired brain injury (ABI) refers to damage to the brain as a result of disease or injury. The term is often used when damage to the brain has occurred after a period of normal development.

Since people who have a brain injury often appear healthy and fully recovered, others are not always aware of the difficulties which arise from permanent damage to brain function. A brain injury can affect a person's short-term memory and their ability to concentrate and solve problems. It can also lead to fatigue, a lack of motivation and a tendency to become self-centered.

Impact on Study

- difficulty remembering things and learning new information
- difficulty initiating tasks
- difficulty reasoning and problem solving
- difficulty organising time; more time required to complete tasks
- difficulty setting goals, working out priorities and completing work
- easily distracted
- slower rate of information processing
- difficulty managing many tasks simultaneously
- tendency for linear or rigid thinking
- speech problems; difficulty finding the right words
- physical problems: dizziness, headaches, fatigue, pain, or epilepsy
- fine motor control and other co-ordination problems
- possible social difficulties: may misread situations and respond inappropriately
- possible impulsive or disruptive behaviour, can appear aggressive
- possible feelings of low self-esteem, depression or anxiety.

What is helpful:

- provide course work and notes prior to class
- provide clear, simple and consistent instructions
- visual cues to assist with identification of key themes / points
- extra time given to process information
- check for understanding frequently
- allow student to record classes in order to supplement notes
- use of buddy system
- extra time in a quiet environment for assessment tasks

What is **not** helpful:

- lack of empathy with frustration experienced by student
- lack of flexibility during instruction and assessment

Links:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_abi_resource_rb0116.pdf
<http://www.adcet.edu.au/Oao/View.aspx?id=4401>
<http://www.brainfoundation.org.au>
<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/edp/policy/publications.html>

