

Teaching Students With Brain Injuries

Definition

Acquired brain injury (ABI) is a non-degenerative injury to the brain that has occurred since birth. The term acquired brain injury includes traumatic brain injuries (TBI), such as open or closed head injuries, and non-traumatic brain injuries. A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts brain function. A non-traumatic brain injury can be the result of a stroke or aneurism, seizure activity, brain tumor, infectious disease, substance abuse or loss of oxygen to the brain..

Characteristics and Educational Implications

ABI is characterized by changes in cognitive, emotional, behavioral or physiological functioning. These changes can be temporary or permanent and will frequently include a combination of:

- Impaired memory
- Increased irritability
- Disorganization
- Anger management issues
- Confusion
- Depression
- Poor concentration
- Impulsivity
- Difficulty problem-solving
- Loss of balance or coordination
- Impaired thought processing speed
- Fatigue
- Decreased tolerance for frustration
- Seizures
- Poor judgment
- Frequent headaches or nausea

Suggestions and Instructional Strategies for Faculty

- Summarize information as it is being taught.
- Provide clear guidelines and expectations about the course, including time-lines.
- Post rules, schedules, and assignments. Provide reminders and call attention to any changes in the schedule.
- Make sure directions are given step by step
- Give directions both verbally and in writing.
- Combine lectures with classroom demonstration, visuals and videos.
- Work together with the student and the Disability Resource Center to ensure a successful learning experience for the student.

Possible Academic Accommodations

- Reduced course load
- Priority/front row seating
- Extended exam time
- Extended time on lengthy assignments
- Access to class notes/note taker
- Use of tape recorder for lectures
- Distraction reduced test space
- Seizure precautions if necessary

This document is a compilation of resources from the DSM-IV, CARD, NAMI and UCI



**Disability
Resource
Center**

Pamela A. Farron Coordinator
(413) 499-4660, Ext. 1608
Fax: (413) 499-4576

Dan Collyer - Learning Specialist
(413) 499-4660, Ext. 1607

