# Brain injury can happen to anyone



# **Acquired Brain Injury:**The Basics



# What is an Acquired Brain Injury?

Acquired Brain Injury refers to any damage to the brain that occurs after birth and is not related to a congenital or a degenerative disease.

# There are 2 types of Acquired Brain Injury:



#### **Non-Traumatic Brain Injury**

Non-traumatic brain injuries are caused by something that happens inside the body or a substance is introduced into the body that damages brain tissues. They can include:

- > Ischemic stroke
- > Hemorrhagic stroke
- **>** Aneurysm
- > Seizure disorders
- > Brain tumour
- Poisoning
- > Substance abuse
- > Opioid overdose
- Meningitis
- > Encephalitis
- > Hydrocephalus
- Vasculitis
- > Hematoma



#### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

Traumatic brain injuries are caused by something that comes from outside the body, such as a blow, bump, or jolt. It can result in temporary injury, or more serious, long-term damage to the brain. They can include:

- Motor vehicle accidents
- **>** Falls
- **>** Assaults
- > Gunshot wounds
- > Domestic violence
- > Strangulation, suffocation
- > Shaken baby syndrome
- Sport injuries
- > Explosive blasts, combat injuries



A brain injury can happen to Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime.



# **Impact of Acquired Brain Injury**

The effects of an acquired brain injury can begin to show immediately or increase / decrease over time. Every individual will experience a unique combination of challenges and changes.



# **Physical**

- > Fatigue, difficulties with sleeping, insomnia
- Challenges with walking, sitting, moving from one location to another, bathing and household tasks
- > Slurred speech
- > Chronic pain, headaches
- > Seizures, vertigo (sensation of dizziness / spinning / loss of balance)



# **Cognitive**

- Needing more time to process information
- > Difficulty with making plans, decisions, organizing or beginning tasks
- > Challenges with communicating: understanding and making conversations, finding the right word, speaking in proper sentences, understanding cues
- Difficulty writing
- > Difficulty with concentration, easily distracted
- > Difficulty with memory, learning, reasoning and judgment
- > Perseveration: getting stuck on a single topic, idea, or activity either in conversation or actions
- Loss / changes to senses and perceptions: sensations, sense of smell or taste, vision, double vision, hearing, swallowing



## **Emotional**

- Feeling irritable, having a 'short fuse'
- > Depression, anxiety, anger
- > Prone to sudden, extreme emotions for no clear reason
- > Showing a limited emotional response to situations
- Feelings of loss of identity



### **Behavioural**

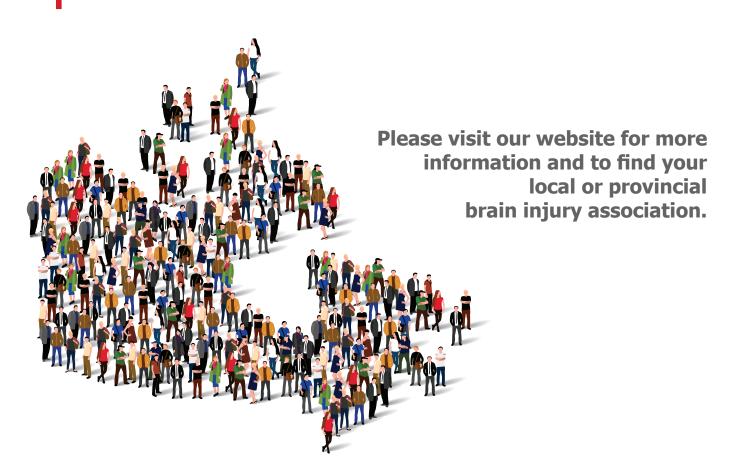
- > Engaging in risky behavior, impulsive
- > Lack of a 'filter', saying things that are inappropriate
- > Isolating oneself
- > Difficulty with social and work relationships
- Changing / inconsistent sleep patterns
- Change in role: often from being independent to relying on others for care and support



# **Our Mission**

The mission of Brain Injury Canada is to enhance the quality of life of individuals and families / caregivers living with brain injury in Canada. Our Board, staff and volunteers are dedicated to facilitating post-trauma research, education, awareness and advocacy in partnership with national, provincial / territorial and regional associations and other stakeholders.

Brain injury is unpredictable, unique and affects every aspect of life. All individuals and families / caregivers living with the effects of brain injury should feel supported, valued and engaged in their communities.





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