Provide social and emotional support

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Traumatic brain injury (TBI): Support a return to learning and activity' from the Guide: Acquired brain injury and learning

Includes:
- Notice where support is needed
- Demonstrate empathy
- Gently support participation
- Useful teaching strategies
- Reflection questions
- Useful resources
Notice where support is needed

Many symptoms can often be misinterpreted.

Instead, these symptoms are signals that a brain is still healing and needs a supportive environment to aid recovery.

- Behaviour changes triggered by minor events
- Reduced impulse control
- Frustration over not being able to do things they could do before
- Easily overwhelmed
- Reduced problem-solving skills
- Unaware of changes in ability
- Less able to read social cues
- Inflexible thinking
**Demonstrate empathy**

A student talks about the value of adults having empathy for his invisible injury.

Source: [CDCFoundationTBI (USA)](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCf8JU8VzTkVOZffhiixHTdw)  
No captions or transcript

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Inclusive Education

From Guide: Supporting learners with acquired brain injury

Strategy: Traumatic brain injury (TBI): Support a return to learning and activity

Suggestion: Provide social and emotional support

Date 14 July 2019

Gently support participation

Demonstrate understanding and compassion.

Sensitively support participation.

Provide both physical and emotional support.
Useful teaching strategies

Select teaching strategies to support the recovery of a child or young person with a traumatic brain injury.

Seek feedback on what’s helpful.

Adjust as needed.

- Maintain a daily routine as much as possible.
- Practise dry runs for unfamiliar situations.
- Provide more structure and fewer choices.
- Provide activities for unstructured times.
- Give directions slowly and support them with visual cues.
- Teach self advocacy skills and prompts, such as “Can you help me get started?”
- Focus on success – what the child or young person can do.
- Offer lunchtime buddy groups.
- Provide direct feedback on social skill development.
- Suggest and model alternative words and actions in situations that escalate. Avoid descriptions or explanations.
- Avoid time outs (the child or young person is not likely to independently regroup or calm down).
- Use social stories to help teach solutions or coping strategies for different situations.
Reflection questions

Adapt for your own context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How could you reduce situations that may trigger anxiety? (Consider</td>
<td>minimising changes in routine, cramped working spaces, noise, clutter,</td>
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<tr>
<td>minimising changes in routine, cramped working spaces, noise, clutter,</td>
<td>unstructured activity, frequent transitions).</td>
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<td>unstructured activity, frequent transitions).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where can you teach and include relaxation and coping strategies?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What processes will you use to regularly check-in with the child or</td>
<td>young person?</td>
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<td>young person?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How will you strengthen self-advocacy skills?</td>
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</table>
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Link

Useful resources

Changes: Behaviour, mood & personality

Read time: 3 min
Publisher: Brain Injury NZ

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BrainSTARS: Regulation of emotion

Publisher: BrainLine

Visit website