

# Understanding the injury and its implications

A suggestion for implementing the strategy

'Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity' from the Guide:

[Acquired brain injury and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

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From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Non-traumatic brain injury: Support a return to learning and activity](#)

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Date

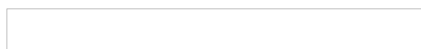
10 July 2019

Link

[www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2](http://www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury-2)

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## What is a non-traumatic brain injury?



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A non-traumatic brain injury is caused by a condition or an illness within the body.

It may for example, be caused by a stroke, a tumour, choking, an infection, or cancer treatments.

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## Get to know the whānau story

To be effective collaborators, educators need to understand that a brain injury doesn't only affect the individual, the whole family is affected.

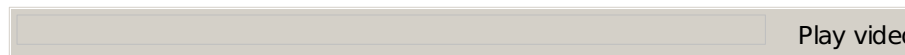
Source: [Attitude \(NZ\)](#)

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## The experience of the child or young person

The effects of a non-traumatic brain injury will vary from person to person and can result in any or all of these outcomes.

- Changes in thinking, behaviour and personality, physical abilities, and sensory perceptions
- Feelings of fear, anxiety, loss or confusion, and frustration
- Difficulty communicating needs or thoughts and ideas
- Extreme tiredness

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## Siblings' experiences

Siblings or whānau members may experience:

- feelings of unfairness – it might be difficult for them to understand why their brother or sister is being treated differently to them
- worry, anxiety, and sadness about their parents or their brother or sister
- feelings of wanting to protect their sibling
- confusion and misunderstanding about the brain injury
- difficulty understanding changes in their sibling's personality or behaviour
- embarrassment about the injured child's behaviour and may be wary about having friends at the house
- feelings that they're not being told about what's going on, or being "kept out of the loop"
- feeling left out or forgotten
- feeling guilty about what's happened (sometimes called "survivor guilt")
- feeling guilty about expressing their own feelings because they don't want to add to the burden on their parents
- a sense of loss that their sibling seems different.

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## Be aware of new challenges for whānau

Families may face many of these unexpected situations and challenges.

- The shock of the initial brain injury may involve coping with intensive care treatment.
- The cognitive, behavioural, and emotional effects of a brain injury can be more limiting and harder to accept and overcome than the physical injuries, both for the person who has sustained the injury and for their family and friends.
- Unplanned for financial and legal costs have to be managed.
- They may experience isolation.
- They may have to deal with multiple agencies, including ACC, hospitals, and WINZ.
- They have to adjust to the changes in the person with brain injury and how these affect other family members and friends.
- They may experience stress related to caring for the injured person.

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## Useful resources

### Non-traumatic brain injury

Publisher: The Children's Trust for Children with Brain Injury

[Visit website](#)



### Coping with brain injury for friends and family

Read time: 4 min

Publisher: Brain Injury NZ

[Download PDF](#)

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