

FACT SHEET



Emotional and Behavioural Changes After Brain Injury Impatience

QUICK FACTS

- Patience refers to the ability to accept and tolerate inconveniences, difficulties or suffering without becoming agitated, upset or angry
- Waiting is a complex cognitive and social task that can often be linked to frustration, irritation and anger
- Linked to frustration, irritation, and anger

WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE?

- Difficulty tolerating wait times
- Agitation/verbal aggression if not attended to quickly
- Calling out and asking for help repeatedly
- Difficulty with managing disappointment
- A sense of urgency for immediate need to be met
- Difficulty waiting for their turn to speak, often interrupting conversations or talking over others
- Individual's body becomes tense and may begin to sweat
- Denial, anger and sadness at the losses which have occurred
- Anxiety, nervousness
- Rushing and impulsive decision making
- Sudden outbursts of anger (i.e. yelling)
- Lack of awareness of other's needs (i.e. tasks, commitments, emotions, priorities)
- When situation is unexpected or plans change it can trigger irritation, frustration and anger

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE CAUSES AND COMPLICATIONS?

Possible causes:

- Injury to the frontal lobes
- Cognitive and executive function changes
- Inhibition of behaviour
- Lack of understanding of social skills and communication skills
- Poor reasoning and problem solving
- Changes in emotional awareness and empathy (focused on their own needs)
- Lack of awareness/insight of the impact of injury

Possible complications:

- Changes to relationships, friendships
- Rise in stress level, increase in blood pressure

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- Determine if there are possible triggers
- Give person a time frame if you are not able to respond to their immediate need
- Avoid making individual wait longer than needed, plan ahead
- Inform individual quickly and clearly of what the plan is (e.g. "I just need to do this first")
- Clearly inform person when it is their 'turn'
- Have clear rules around turn taking (e.g. "Everyone gets a turn", "We all get to have a say")
- Encourage and provide positive reinforcement for waiting
- Provide reminders and cues during times of wait (e.g. "we are waiting for...", "it's going to take time")
- Encourage the individual to develop self-calming strategies, relaxation techniques, and think positively
- Establish routine, structure and predictability
- Practice scenarios where things do not go according to plan

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace advice from a medical doctor. Consult the health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment.