RECAP FROM PART 1...

Mike is about to come home from the hospital, where he was on the inpatient rehabilitation unit because of his TBI. While he was there we met different therapists that he worked with and saw his family use the Problem Solving Method. People around him are starting to notice that he’s acting a bit differently. His sister Sam is about to give a class presentation about what she learned while he was in the hospital.

Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury: Part 2

LEARNING ABOUT TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

We learned so much about TBI that I did a presentation about it for my science class.

For our next presentation, Sam is going to teach you about the brain!

Thank you! I’m going to share what I’ve learned about the brain while my brother has been in the hospital.

This is the brain; it controls everything that we do, from moving to thinking. It has two halves or “hemispheres”.

The left hemisphere controls the right side of the body and vice versa. Usually the left half of the brain controls verbal and logical thinking.

The right brain deals with intuition, it makes a big picture out of little parts, and sees or hears patterns in music or visual art.

Also controls emotions

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PREPARING TO MOVE BACK HOME

We wanted to know how to help Mike at home, so my mom and I often went to his therapies with him.

After a TBI, the fastest improvements happen in the first six months. Recovery continues after six months but at a slower pace.

Mike, you must be excited to go home soon!

Well, things may not be exactly how they were before. It may take some adjustment.

Improvements may continue for many years after the injury. People recover at different speeds.

The brain is soft tissue floating inside the skull. A trauma to the head can make the brain bash into the skull, bruising tissue or even damaging blood vessels.

When cells in the brain are hurt they can’t talk to each other the right way. That can change people’s behavior or how they do things.

The effects of a TBI depend on which areas of the brain are injured.

There are three things that are typically affected by TBI.

1) Physical Abilities
2) Thinking or Information Processing
3) Behavior and Emotions

The brain is soft tissue floating inside the skull. A trauma to the head can make the brain bash into the skull, bruising tissue or even damaging blood vessels.

You might think any brain injury is traumatic, right? But “traumatic” means that an outside force has injured the brain.

When cells in the brain are hurt they can’t talk to each other the right way. That can change people’s behavior or how they do things.

Preparation to move back home
READJUSTING TO HOME-LIFE

Try to restrict the number of visitors, keeping it to one or two at a time. Use short sentences with direct and clear words. Keep stimulation to one sense (hearing, visual or touch) at a time. Avoid crowded places. Use a calm soft voice.

All of your schedules are connected now, having one calendar with everyone’s plans on it may help...

Also Mike, things may be overwhelming. It can help to have a daily routine.

Yeah, I’ll be living with my parents, but I’m ready to get out there.

...and one person should speak at a time. Must be nice to be home huh?

Wow Mike, you look great!

How you been man?

Ooh...can we see your scar?

I’m trying to watch my show!

Mike, calm down! We’re just going to watch a movie.

Keep stimulation to one sense (hearing, visual or touch) at a time. Avoid crowded places.

Only one person should speak at a time. Use short sentences with direct and clear words.

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AVOIDING OVERSTIMULATION

After a TBI agitation can be heightened by too much activity or stimulation. Here are a few ways to help. Some of these suggestions may not apply to your situation.

• Limit the number of visitors (1 or 2 at a time).
• Not more than one person should speak at a time.
• Use short sentences and simple words.
• Present only one thought or request at a time, and allow extra time for a response.
• Use a calm soft voice when speaking to the person.
• Keep stimulation to one sense (hearing, visual, or touch) at a time.
• Avoid crowded places like shopping centers or sports stadiums.

TBI AFFECTS THE WHOLE FAMILY

A TBI affects not only the person who sustained the injury, but the whole family. Some common problems experienced by families are having less time for themselves, changes in the roles that they play, feelings of loss, financial difficulties, communication problems, and lack of understanding or support from extended family and friends.
Ways to Respectfully Support a Person Who’s Had a TBI

- Treat people like adults
- Respect people’s preferences in regards to music, food, clothes, and entertainment
- Avoid making people feel guilty about mistakes or accidents, like spilling something.
- If the person has memory problems, explain an activity as simply as possible before you begin. Then as you go through the activity review each step in more detail.

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Stress is related to medical problems like heart disease, stroke, and cancer. It can also lead to depression or anxiety.

Well, you shouldn't ignore stress. It can be really negative for your body and mind.

It's good to have Mike at home, but he's different and it's got us all a little on edge.

How are you guys managing that?

I'm just trying not to focus on it.

Stress is related to medical problems like heart disease, stroke, and cancer. It can also lead to depression or anxiety.

I know I'd feel better if I wasn't so stressed, but what can I do?

Stress can make it harder to be organized and to think clearly. There are some things you can do to help deal with it.

- Practice relaxation
- Reward yourself
- Find the right coping strategy

Focusing on deep breaths, thinking of a calm situation, or repeating a word with a positive meaning can help.

I'm so busy, I can't just go on vacation.

Don't forget to give yourself little rewards.

Learning to relax isn't easy, but with practice you'll get better at it.

You're right, I need to take time for myself so that I can calm my mind.

Peace
The health information presented in this Graphic Fact Sheet is based on evidence from research and/or professional consensus and has been reviewed and approved by an editorial team of experts from the TBI Model Systems.

**AUTHORSHIP AND ILLUSTRATION**

*Understanding TBI* was illustrated by David Lasky, it was written by Silas James and Ayla Jacob. Portions of this InfoComic were adapted from the four part series of Consumer Information Pamphlets also titled Understanding TBI, which was developed by Thomas Novack, PhD, and Tamara Bushnik, PhD in collaboration with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center. Portions of this document were adapted from materials developed by the University of Alabama TBIMS, Baylor Institute for Rehabilitation, New York TBIMS, Mayo Clinic TBIMS, Moss TBIMS, and from “Picking up the Pieces After TBI: A Guide for Family Members”, by Angelle M. Sander, PhD, Baylor College of Medicine (2002).

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