



Brainkind Adapt: Accommodations Guide

Ways to adapt support for
people who may be living with a
brain injury



Adapted with permission from Ohio Domestic Violence Network CARE Head Injury Accommodations tool

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Ways to adapt support for people who may be living with a brain injury

This document contains common accommodations that can be used to support survivors of domestic violence with a brain injury.

In the first instance, try to ask the person what helps them (with feeling safe, memory, attention etc.) and what does not help them.

Try to avoid making assumptions about what support the person might need.

It might also be helpful to validate that these difficulties are common after a brain injury.



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Cognitive Difficulties	
Planning and Organisation Challenges • Problems getting a task started or completing tasks • Needs several reminders to complete a task • Misses deadlines / appointments • Problems remembering things that need to be done in the future • Able to identify a goal but often unable to achieve it • May lose objects or documents • Living space can be cluttered • Struggles with organisation • Is often late to appointments	Encourage the person to break big tasks into smaller, achievable steps.
	Encourage the person to write down important information about the task at hand.
	Encourage the person to set up a routine.
	Assist with prioritising tasks and setting plans.
	Support them to attend an agreed appointment by phoning / texting to remind them.
	Encourage the use of diaries to keep track of important appointments.
	Where possible, facilitate drop-in times as an alternative to fixed appointments. If fixed appointments are regular, try to schedule them for the same day / time.
	Encourage the person to identify a place to keep important things (e.g. keys, phone chargers, wallet are always place on the bedside table).
	Understand that cognitive processing may be slower and require more time.
	Encourage the use of technology to set alarms and reminders e.g. mobile, smart speakers.



Cognitive Difficulties	
Attention and Communication Challenges • Struggles to follow a conversation • Struggles to find the right words • Short attention span • Easily distracted • Appears disinterested / unmotivated • Easily fatigued	Consider having fidget toys available.
	Be patient and allow extra time for communication.
	Use simple, clear language and repeat information if necessary.
	Create an agenda for each meeting to help stay on track.
	Make conversations brief, simple and to the point.
	When providing new information, think about the key points to get across and try to avoid unnecessary jargon.
	Work on one thing at a time.
	Encourage the use of visual aids and written instructions.
	Make sure the person does not feel pressured in conversation.
	Help with forms or paperwork.
	Redirect the person to the conversation if they go off topic.
	Consider having fidget toys available.
	Encourage the person to tackle more challenging activities when they feel most alert in the day.



Cognitive Difficulties

Memory Challenges

- Might describe themselves as forgetful
- Has challenges learning new information or recalling previously learned information
- Does not follow through with plans
- Memory can be inconsistent
- Loses items frequently

Present information in small, manageable chunks.

When providing new information, think about the key points to get across and avoid unnecessary jargon.

Review notes from the last interaction before starting a new one.

Encourage the person to set up a routine.

Provide a written summary of the main points of your discussion.

Repeat information frequently. To check if someone has understood you, ask them to summarise what you said back to you in their own words.

Ask staff to wear visible name badges to help support memory.

Put signs up in the building that point towards exits, kitchen, bathroom, etc.

Encourage the use of calendars, notebooks, diaries and checklists to support memory.

Present information visually as well as verbally, using pictures and words. It can be helpful to provide a printed copy of information for people to take home with them.



Emotional Difficulties

- May say or do things without thinking
- May not follow directions
- May dominate conversations
- May struggle to focus
- May have low motivation
- May experience flashbacks
- May be anger focused
- May experience irritability
- Does not open up
- Is guarded or reserved
- Does not engage with you or others
- Avoids or misses appointments

Stay calm and in control of your own feelings and reactions.

Validate the importance of expressing emotions.

Help the person identify how they might be feeling.

Identify emotional regulation strategies such as breathing techniques, distraction, fidget toys, grounding, etc.

Encourage the person to slow down and think about their actions and the consequences.

Acknowledge that people who have experienced trauma and abuse can find it difficult to trust others.

Be patient, building trusting relationships takes time and effort.

Highlight the person's strengths.

If a behaviour is inappropriate or unsafe respond directly.



Physical Health Challenges

- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Pain
- Balance issues
- Nausea or vomiting
- Seizures
- Sensory problems
- Fatigue

Encourage the person to see their GP, particularly for new, distressing or worsening symptoms.

Ask if there is anything they have found helpful to manage the symptoms.

Ask if there is anything they have found that worsens the symptoms. Where possible try to facilitate accommodations to avoid these things.

For fatigue, try to encourage regular breaks and naps where needed.



General Support	
Regular Check-ins	Maintain consistent communication to monitor the person's well-being and adjust support as needed.
	Regular check-ins can help identify any changes in symptoms that may need medical attention.
Resource Provision	Provide information on local resources, such as counselling services or support groups.
Empowerment	Encourage self-advocacy.
	Empower the person to make decisions about their care and support.
	Help the person understand their symptoms and how to manage them.

Useful information
Brain Injury www.brainkind.org www.headway.org.uk
Health Information www.nhs.uk
Mental health and wellbeing www.mind.org.uk www.samaritans.org