



Managing Anger & Irritability After TBI

Caring for someone with a brain injury

Caring for someone with a brain injury can be challenging sometimes. After a brain injury, people often behave differently than they did before. Sometimes people become more angry or irritable. Finding ways to accept and cope with these emotions can help you and the person you love. Here are some ideas that might help:

Put actions and emotions into words. After a brain injury it can be harder for someone to recognize nonverbal communication, such as a downturn of your mouth or your tone of voice indicating that you're unhappy. Also, your loved one may not always understand the reasons for your behaviors or realize that your actions have good intentions. Help your loved one understand your actions and feelings by expressing them clearly in words.

Pay attention to your own emotions. Remember that you can only control yourself, your emotions, and your reactions. If you change them, you might influence how the other person responds.

Learn the triggers. Be aware of the things that cause strong reactions in your loved one. Does the person you care for feel as if people never really listen to him or her any more? Do they become angry when someone mentions their injury? Learn his or her triggers and then figure out how to help your loved one cope with them as well as possible. That may mean creating prepared responses, coming up with a signal when things become overwhelming, or figuring out another system that works for both of you.

Learn. Try to put yourself in your loved one's shoes. Research his or her injury. Learn as much as you can so you can better understand what your loved one has gone through, what they are going through now, and how you can help them.

Accept help. Your loved one's reactions might require more assistance than you can provide. Consider seeking out a professional who can help the person you care for understand and manage his or her emotions more successfully.

Take time for yourself. Being worn ragged or feeling taken for granted can result in feeling angry, frustrated, or irritable yourself. So do something you enjoy and that can help you recharge. Maybe take a short walk or connect with a friend. The more you feel rested, calm, and appreciated, the more easily you'll be able to deal with the emotional reactions of the person you love.

This information is made possible by a partnership between Indiana University and WETA/BrainLine.
For more information, please visit [Brainline.org/brain-injury-and-anger](https://brainline.org/brain-injury-and-anger)