



FACT SHEET

Organization of Behavior

***Do you
have
trouble
with
organizing
your
thoughts
and
behavior
since
your
brain
injury?***

What does this mean?

Difficulty organizing behavior or thoughts is one of the most common results of a brain injury. Real-life situations are often not very organized and structured, so many brain injured people have to provide some organization for themselves in order to behave appropriately and to get things done. Problems in this area can result from a variety of underlying issues, including deficits in memory, attention and language.

How might a brain injury affect organization of behavior?

The upper frontal region of the brain, behind the forehead, controls planning and organization of thoughts and activities. The ability to sequence thoughts in a logical fashion and translate those thoughts into action involves communication between the front part of the brain and other brain areas. Whenever a part of this circuit is damaged, it can produce disorganized thinking and behavior.

Common issues with organization of behavior:

Individuals with a brain injury may have difficulty paying attention to the most important features of their environment, logically organizing and planning their behavior, and following through; they often have great difficulty behaving reasonably in situations which do not provide intense external support and structure.

Recommended strategies for persons with brain injury:

- ◆ Think through some possible scenarios before entering the situation and anticipate potential problems.
- ◆ Plan possible solutions to these problems, practice them beforehand and execute them when needed.

Recommended strategies for support persons:

- ◆ Think ahead about situations that might bring about confusion or poor judgment.
- ◆ Give realistic, supportive feedback as you observe confused or inappropriate behavior.
- ◆ Establish verbal and non-verbal cues to signal the person to “stop and think.” For example, you could hold up your hand to signal “stop,” shake your head “no,” or say a special word you have both agreed on. Practice this ahead of time.
- ◆ If undesired behavior occurs, gently intervene and provide corrective action so the individual can be aware of the problem.

Sources: IU School of Medicine / Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana TBI Model Systems; Colorado Department of Education. Further, the information in this FACT SHEET is also based on a consensus of expert opinion of the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana Departments of Neuropsychology and Resource Facilitation.

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace advice from a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatments.

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