



Brain Tumour Australia Information

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Social & Emotional Impact

The Brain – Social & Emotional Impact

There can be a lengthy period of adjustment. The shock of the diagnosis and the effects of subsequent treatments may result in changes to behaviour, differences in relationships and personal circumstances. The individual and their support network may experience significant loss and therefore go through a period of grieving.

A range of responses may be experienced, including:

- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Anger and/or irritability
- Depression
- Confusion and/or isolation
- Decreased appetite
- Fatigue or sleeplessness
- Temporary memory problems

The part of the brain where the tumour is situated may effect mood, behaviour, ability to understand and cope.

Interactions may be affected because of following changes:

- Relationships with family, friends, colleagues and health care professionals can be strained
- Roles may change
- Social supports may be lost
- The impact of the diagnosis/treatment may result in dependence on others

Life activities may need adjustment in relation to:

- Independent daily activities
- Employment
- Driving a vehicle/handling machinery/technology
- Usual hobbies & interests
- Financial matters
- Relearning social skills (eg. How to walk, speak, coordinate hands etc)

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If you are the person diagnosed with a tumour

Helpful hints/tips/strategies

- Take it slowly
- Share your worries with your family or treatment team
- Talk about any concerns you may have
- Seek support from trained professionals eg. A dietician, speech pathologist, physiotherapist

- Makes notes to remind yourself
- Stick to familiar routines
- Check out support groups
- Start with doing small tasks
- Make a list of what you can do and what may be difficult
- Develop new interests
- Discuss concerns about loss of independence
- Try relaxing strategies like meditation, relaxation or exercise

If you are a family member

Helpful hints/tips/strategies

- Be consistent & patient
- Don't pretend to know what another person is feeling
- Take it slowly
- Explain what you are about to do and why
- Make reminder notes
- Provide a consistent flow of information about your actions
- Keep surprises to a minimum
- Consider an individuals need for independence
- Allow for regular rest breaks
- Check out support groups
- Encourage self-reliance if appropriate
- Provide frequent, clear feedback (this can assist understanding about issues of concern)
- Encourage individuals to widen their circle of support people, look for new interests
- Remember not everyone gets what they want all the time even if they are seriously ill. So it's OK to "agree to disagree"
- If arguments occur, look for ways to diffuse the situation
- Occasionally it may be necessary to be firm and set "rules"
- Encourage independence where possible (with supervision if appropriate)
- Maintain regular routines
- Explain activities clearly
- Encourage work colleagues to maintain interaction where feasible
- Be honest about identifiable changes to behaviour, circumstances etc with friends, family including children
- Provide appropriate external controls eg over managing finances. Balancing a cheque book, paying bills may prove difficult even if these tasks are usually carried out with ease
- Contact Centrelink for assistance regarding income support