

Brain injury and communication

This brief factsheet highlights some of the main impacts of brain injury on communication.

It identifies practical action you can take to remove barriers to participation that people with brain injury may face. Remember every person is different.

People with a brain injury (sometimes also referred to as a head injury) may experience difficulties with understanding and expressing themselves. In particular with:

- concentrating and remembering things
- following instructions, especially if you say them too quickly or give too much detail
- understanding what you say or write
- moving quickly from one topic to another in a discussion
- organising themselves
- finding solutions to problems.
- finding the right words to say or write
- keeping to the subject of a conversation.

Their speech may be slurred. As a result, a person who has had a brain injury might not be easy to understand.

Key actions

To enable a person who has a brain injury to engage more fully:

- ensure the environment is quiet, with no distractions
- look at the person when you are speaking to them
- give the person time to take in spoken and written information
- use clear, simple, written and spoken language
- make sure a pen and paper are available
- write down key points to help the person to understand
- allow the person time to express their opinions and answer questions
- give the person encouragement to communicate.

Further information:

Child Brain Injury Trust (www.cbituk.org)

Headway (www.headway.org.uk)