

Accessible Customer Service for Emergency Responders

An Emergency Management Ontario E-Learning Utility

Tips for Interacting with a Person with Acquired Brain Injury

Communication

- Ask if assistance is required. A person with a brain injury may be unable to follow directions due to poor short-term memory or poor directional orientation. S/he may ask to be accompanied, or s/he may use a guide dog for orientation, although s/he does not appear to have mobility needs.
- Check for clarity. If you are not sure that the person understands you, ask if s/he would like you to write down what you were saying.

Behaviour

- Provide explanations about their environment. A person with a brain injury may still rely on your explanation of things but more so that they can interact with their environment. Spend a few seconds showing them any objects or instruments before letting them touch it, be sure to discuss it with them.

Environment/Surroundings

- Be patient. The person may have trouble concentrating or organizing her/his thoughts, especially in an over stimulating environment, particularly during an emergency. Be patient. You might suggest going somewhere with fewer distractions.
- Stay calm. Remember to stay calm, the person may have trouble remembering things or regulating their emotions.