

Understand the injury and its implications

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Traumatic brain injury (TBI): Support a return to learning and activity' from the Guide:

[Acquired brain injury and learning](#)

Includes:

- Get to know the whānau story
- Be aware of new challenges for whānau
- Understand each child's experience
- Siblings' experiences
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Supporting learners with acquired brain injury](#)

Strategy: [Traumatic brain injury \(TBI\): Support a return to learning and activity](#)

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Date

06 June 2026

Link

inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/brain-injury/understand-the-injury

Get to know the whānau story

To be effective collaborators, educators need to understand that a brain injury doesn't only affect the individual, the whole family is affected.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/Jh3rIzca0E4>

Closed Captions

Source:

[ACC New Zealand](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsA6EAhqJAb4-WCwOFMj4gg>

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Be aware of new challenges for whānau

Families may face many of these unexpected situations and challenges.

- ✓ The shock of the initial brain injury may involve coping with intensive care treatment.
- ✓ The cognitive, behavioural, and emotional effects of a brain injury can be more limiting and harder to accept and overcome than the physical injuries, both for the person who has sustained the injury and for their family and friends.
- ✓ Unplanned for financial and legal costs have to be managed.
- ✓ They may experience isolation.
- ✓ They may have to deal with multiple agencies, including ACC, hospitals, and WINZ.
- ✓ They have to adjust to the changes in the person with brain injury and how these affect other family members and friends.
- ✓ They may experience stress related to caring for the injured person.

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Understand each child's experience

The effects of a traumatic brain injury vary from person to person and can result in any or all of these outcomes.

- ✓ Changes in thinking, behaviour and personality, physical abilities, and sensory perceptions
- ✓ Feelings of fear, anxiety, loss or confusion, and frustration
- ✓ Difficulty communicating needs or thoughts and ideas
- ✓ Extreme tiredness.

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Siblings' experiences

Siblings or whānau members may experience:

- ✓ feelings of unfairness – it might be difficult for them to understand why their brother or sister is being treated differently to them
- ✓ worry, anxiety, and sadness about their parents or their brother or sister
- ✓ feelings of wanting to protect their sibling
- ✓ confusion and misunderstanding about the brain injury
- ✓ difficulty understanding changes in their sibling's personality or behaviour
- ✓ embarrassment about the injured child's behaviour and may be wary about having friends at the house
- ✓ feelings that they're not being told about what's going on, or being "kept out of the loop"
- ✓ feeling left out or forgotten
- ✓ feeling guilty about what's happened (sometimes called "survivor guilt")
- ✓ feeling guilty about expressing their own feelings because they don't want to add to the burden on their parents
- ✓ a sense of loss that their sibling seems different.

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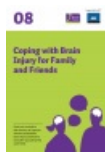
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Useful resources



Coping with brain injury for friends and family

Read time: 4 min

This resource suggests strategies for helping in the recovery of a person with a brain injury and looking after yourself at the same time.

[Download PDF](#)



Whakawhiti kōrero, a method for the development of a cultural assessment tool, te waka kuaka, in Māori traumatic brain injury

Read time: 23 min

This research article explores a method used to develop better statements in the development of a cultural needs assessment tool in Māori traumatic brain injury.

Publisher: Wiley online library

[Visit website](#)



Headway Auckland

This webpage explains traumatic brain injury and its implications for the person injured and their whānau.

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