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## *Upcoming Community Events*

### **ABI Coffee Talk – Prince Albert**

- Mondays (except statutory holidays)
- 10:30 AM – Noon
- Community Room @ the South Hill Mall

### **ABI Drop-In Program – Prince Albert**

- Wednesdays (except statutory holidays)
- 1:30 – 3:30 PM
- Minto Bowl (201 – 13<sup>th</sup> St. West)

### **Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association (SBIA) Support Group – Prince Albert**

- Contact Glenda James @ 1-888-373-1555 for details

## *Resources*

[www.abipartnership.sk.ca](http://www.abipartnership.sk.ca)

- Introduction to ABI online series provides basic knowledge about the effects of brain injury and strategies to help recovery
- The Survival Guide
- Many other resources & links available

### *Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services*

1521 – 6<sup>th</sup> Ave West  
Prince Albert, SK. S6V 5K1  
Phone: 306-765-6630  
Toll Free: 1-866-899-9951  
Fax #: 306-765-6657

# *Caregiver's Corner*

## *ABI Newsletter*

-- by Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services

### **Caring for the Caregiver**

The prevalence of depression, anxiety, and/or chronic stress in caregivers of individuals with brain injury has been found to be fairly high. Often caregivers, desiring to provide the best care possible for their loved one, will sacrifice their own physical and emotional needs. The emotional and physical experiences involved in caregiving can be very straining for even the most capable individuals. Feelings of anger, anxiety, sadness, isolation, exhaustion, and then guilt for having these feelings are not uncommon. Ignoring these feelings will not make them go away and can lead to more serious emotional distress and physical illness.

### **Common Symptoms of Depression, Stress and/or Anxiety**

- Increased heart rate, blood pressure or respiration rate
- Physical aches and pains
- Suicidal thoughts or engaging in self-harming behaviours
- Feeling helpless, fearful, useless, inadequate or bad
- Loss of energy and motivation
- Loss or gain in weight
- Agitation or restlessness
- Forgetfulness
- Finding it impossible to concentrate
- Difficulty getting to sleep or sleeping excessively



### **Stress Reduction**

The use of stress reduction techniques can reduce the symptoms of stress and anxiety and decrease the risk of developing depression. Here are a few stress reducing ideas for caregivers:

- Gather all the information you can about caregiving
- Set practical goals for both you and your loved one
- Don't be critical of yourself in moments of stress or irritation
- Stay in touch with your friends
- Don't give up activities that you enjoy
- Take advantage of respite services
- Join a support group
- Accept that there are events that you can't control
- Exercise regularly
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Rest and sleep
- Don't rely on alcohol or drugs to reduce stress
- Allow yourself to laugh

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## Quick Relaxation Tips

If you feel guilty about taking time to take care of yourself as a caregiver, ask yourself this question; If you were to lose your health, who else would have the compassion and courage to step in and take care of both you and your loved one?

- Just stop wherever you are. Take a deep breath.....let the air out very slowly. Imagine that you are breathing in energy and breathing out tension, letting all the tension go. Repeat this several times.
- Assume a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Deeply relax all of your muscles, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Keep the relaxed feeling. Breathe through your nose and become aware of your breathing. After each exhalation, think the word "one" silently to yourself. Breathe easily and naturally.

- Lie on your back with support, if needed. Let your body sink down until it is completely supported by the floor. Close your eyes and sink back in total relaxation, letting your mind and body be perfectly still. Feel yourself breathing deeply and easily.



References:

CORE Health Care. (2009, September). *Caring for the Caregiver*. Retrieved from <http://www.brainline.org>

## *Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services*

Sask North Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Services is a group of programs that offer a variety of services to residents in the Prince Albert Parkland, Kelsey Trail, Athabasca, Mamawetan Churchill River and Keewatin Yatthé Health Regions including case management, consultation, education and independent living services.

### Program Admission Criteria

- Must have a diagnosis of a **moderate to severe** brain injury supported by medical records
- Be a resident of Saskatchewan or eligible for Saskatchewan Health coverage
- Are open to working cooperatively on goal-directed rehabilitation with ABI and other service providers
- Community agencies, employers, families and schools who require resources & support are eligible as well
- \*\* Priority will be given to applicants whose brain injury occurred within the past three (3) years
- \*\* Congenital brain injury or one that is a result of a progressive condition will not be considered

### How to Access Services

- Participation in our program is **voluntary**
- Contact us @ 306-765-6630 or toll free @ 1-866-899-9951

