

# GRIEVING AND TBI

## CONTENT



### CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF GRIEVING AND TBI

5-10 MINUTES

#### **Discussion: How brain injury is connected to grieving.**

Brain injury often brings about drastic life changes for individuals as well as their families and friends. Individuals with TBI often find that they are less able to carry out responsibilities and daily activities. Activities that were once accomplished easily, often require a good deal more effort. Many individuals find themselves unable to work, drive, live alone, manage their finances, and do things alone. This loss of independence leads to frustration and sadness. They may also lose confidence in themselves.

Family members may notice that their responsibilities have changed too. They may have to take on responsibilities that belonged to the individuals with a TBI or other family members. Changes in responsibilities may affect family members' ability to work like before or do things they enjoy. Some family members reduce their work hours or resign from their jobs to help care for the survivor.

Financial difficulties and worries about the future tend to be difficult for all family members. Because of the losses and changes, many people have a mixture of feelings including sadness, fear, hopelessness, and frustration.

Grieving brain injury is different than grieving as it relates to death and dying. A primary factor in grieving after brain injury is related to a change in our "self-concept".

- Self-concept: how we perceive ourselves based on our beliefs, feelings, and values

After brain injury individuals evaluate their self-concept:

- Compares who they are now to who they were after the injury

- Doubts self-efficacy: our own beliefs about our abilities
- Disruption of beliefs, assumptions, values, and expectations
- Frustration increases with cognitive problems and loss of skills



## ICE BREAKER

5-10 MINUTES

*Write the following bolded phrases on the white board to facilitate ease of discussion with the participants. The following section provides information regarding these common signs of grieving related to brain injury and coping strategies.*

- Longing for what has been lost
- Sadness for what has been lost
- Wishing for what has been lost
- Upset when reminded about what has been lost
- Angry or anxious about what has been lost
- Needing to talk about what has been lost



## DISCUSSION PROMPT

- What signs of grieving have you noticed in your life? When was the last time that you experienced this?
- Have family members, friends, staff, etc., told you that you exhibit signs of grieving?
- What strategies have you used in the past to address grieving?
- What can you see using in the future?

## BREAK

5 MINUTES

Now we are going to take a five-minute break. During this break, we will be doing stretches. Stretching helps to relieve tension in the muscles and can help alleviate stress.

- Begin different muscle stretches (e.g., arms, shoulders, head, neck). These stretches can be based on the personal preferences of the group facilitator. Group participants may also be encouraged to walk around the room or do brief contained cardio exercises such as jumping jacks to “shake out” any tension or pent-up energy they may be feeling.

# GRIEVING AND TBI GROUP ACTIVITY



## COPING STRATEGIES

10-15 MINUTES

*Facilitator should hand out the “Grieving and TBI Recognition and Strategies” handout (found in the handouts section for this week).*

- Now that we have discussed the signs of grieving, we are going to work through the grieving and TBI Recognition and Coping Strategies handout. Check off any of the items that you have or are experiencing.
- Now check any of the coping strategies you can see yourself trying.
- Have the Group share what they checked.