



**Brain Injury
Alliance**

N E B R A S K A

Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

Consumer Resource Guide

May 2018

Drafted by:

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With input from individuals with brain injuries and their families

and

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and

Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance

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Greetings from Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

Individuals with brain injury, their families or representatives are encouraged to contact Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE) at the beginning of the search for resources. Due to the unique challenges and needs of individuals with brain injury and their families; BIA-NE can assist with navigating the criteria for services to best serve the individual and identify community supports specific to the geographical location of where the individual lives in the state. BIA-NE assists individuals of all ages and all special needs related to any kind of brain injury.

Please Call BIA-NE at 844-423-2463 or go to www.biane.org



What is considered a brain injury?

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)

Injury to the brain which not hereditary, congenital, or degenerative, that has occurred after birth. ABI includes:

- Anoxia
- Aneurysms
- Infections to the brain
- Stroke
- External Trauma

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

A type of ABI, it is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head; or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. TBI includes concussion and shaken baby syndrome.

About Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

Each day in Nebraska, an average of three people are hospitalized and over 24 people visit the emergency department because of a traumatic brain injury (TBI). In the state of Nebraska, more than 300,000 people have suffered a brain injury (including concussions) and more than 36,527 individuals live with a disability caused by a traumatic brain injury.

Brain Injury can result in lasting challenges. The Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE) is dedicated to supporting Nebraskans throughout their journey with brain injury. BIA-NE is the only statewide non-profit exclusively dedicated to brain injury in our state. We strive to enhance the quality of life for the over 36,000 individuals living with disabilities caused by brain injury and their families through opportunities for engagement in prevention, education, advocacy and support.

The BIA-NE is committed to creating a better future for all Nebraskans with brain injuries. Serving the population means working in collaboration with individuals, families and professionals to secure and develop community-based services, providing support groups, peer support, assistance with referrals to resources, and offering pertinent information. It also means educating professionals and families providing care and services for children and adults with brain injury. The BIA-NE is committed to assisting people with brain injuries and their families to rebuild their lives, restore purposeful engagement, and hope for a better future.

This guide was created to provide comprehensive education and resources for individuals and families affected by brain injury in the state of Nebraska. This guide is intended to help individuals affected by brain injury become stronger and more independent advocates for themselves and their loved ones by learning about brain injury and available resources in Nebraska. In addition, the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska provides services to anyone who has been affected by brain injury, including caregivers, family, friends, co-workers, community members and medical professionals.

For more information please contact the Brain Injury Alliance Resource Facilitation program regarding available services. Call 844-423-2463 or visit www.biane.org.

Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska does not endorse any products or services listed in this guide and it is intended for general information purposes not for individualized plans of care.

We would like to give recognition and sincere appreciation to the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance for their hard work in creation of the Minnesota Consumer Guide and in their generous offer of their work as a guide and outline for the first BIA-NE Consumer Guide.

BIA-NE Mission & Vision

BIA-NE Mission: To create a better future for all Nebraskans through brain injury prevention, education, advocacy, and support.

BIA-NE is the voice of brain injury in Nebraska whose vision is:

- Nebraskans with a brain injury, regardless of geographic location or financial means, will have the necessary resources required to pursue their recovery journey.
- Individuals with brain injury and their family member's voices will be heard. Policies and programs will be designed to meet the needs of the voice.
- All brain injury stakeholders will understand their unique role as well as how they complement each other towards making the future of brain injury better. Subsequently, people with a brain injury will have an easier time navigating available resources with the help of specialized assistance from a specialized brain injury support network.
- The Nebraska Legislature will be informed about the nature of brain injury and its ongoing impact on Nebraskans so they can support funding and policies which create statewide resources needed by individuals with brain injury.
- The complex nature of brain injury will be understood by the public, such that stigma will be eliminated and the public will be more supportive of efforts to improve overall brain injury support and resources.

To accomplish our mission and vision, we provide:

- **Education** through the provision of information about brain injury at www.biane.org, conferences and training opportunities in Nebraska for persons with brain injuries, family caregivers, and the professionals who work with them.
- **Outreach and Family Support** through resources for educators, employers, and service providers. A call to **844-423-2463** provides information and options that can be shared with individuals with brain injury and their families that you may be working with in the community.

Survivors seen by a medical professional with a possible concussion or other head injury may receive a letter from the Brain Injury Registry inviting them to contact the Brain Injury Alliance – Nebraska for possible education, options and support including:

Our statewide support groups offer emotional healing, encouragement, education, socialization, and confidence building. Expanding the support groups to be increasingly assessable to survivors and their families. Call 844-423-2463

to start a group or to be directed to one located near you. The list of support groups is on www.biane.org.

Through the monthly UPDATE e-newsletter, BIA-NE presents current information and webinars. You may sign up to receive the monthly newsletter at www.biane.org.

Peer-to-Peer support can connect individuals and family members that have experienced the journey with brain injury with others struggling to overcome or address the challenges that may be associated with the lasting effects.

- **Public Awareness** by educating the public and increasing statewide awareness of brain injury as a potentially serious disability with lifelong consequences is achieved through the development and distribution of prevention, education and public awareness materials. To reduce the occurrence of the brain injuries, BIA-NE educates children, coaches, trainers, and parents through the news media, social networking, and our website.
- **Advocacy** promotes and advances the rights of people with brain injury. Advocacy encourages individuals and family members to share their journey as a part of the voice of brain injury. When individuals are not yet able to effectively speak for themselves, BIA-NE helps to educate others about the unique challenges that may be associated with a brain injury to overcome the barriers that individuals could face. Advocacy is collaboration between individuals, communities, organizations and leaders across the state to improve awareness and inclusion of those impacted by brain injury to access appropriate supports that are available to the general public or other populations with disabilities.
- **Resource Facilitation** provides education and connection to supports and services to assist people throughout Nebraska in navigating life after brain injury. We aim to help individuals who have experienced a brain injury and their families identify and access information, services, and supports to make informed choices and meet or exceed their goals in order to successfully participate in their communities.

What the program offers;

- **Intake & Referral:** Serving as a point of contact for families and individuals seeking assistance.
- **Case Management:** Individuals may benefit from case management: a journey that starts with an assessment, personalized goal setting, developing strategies, and ends with celebrating outcomes.
- **Collaboration is the Key:** Individuals living with brain injury are across the spectrum of age, challenges, barriers and needs. Collaboration with the individuals, families, existing resources, organizations and services to

expand and develop supports is a goal of advocacy. Through Resource Facilitation, continue to locate potential collaborators across the state to increase options that can address the need for prevention, education, advocacy and support to improve futures for all Nebraskans.

Contact our BIA-NE Resource Facilitators

Resource Facilitation/General Information:
www.biane.org
844-423-2463

Additional Information about BIA-NE

- **Development** of BIA-NE seeks to raise funds to support the organization's programs, advocacy efforts and services through advertisements, sponsorships, individual donor support, third party fundraisers, and corporate and foundation grants.
- **Education and Community Outreach** with members in the community, build awareness of all types of acquired brain injury and provide accurate and culturally sensitive brain injury information for individuals, families and professionals in the community.
- **Public Awareness** is important to the BIA-NE and we work to enhance public knowledge and awareness of brain injury causes and symptoms as well as sharing information in the organization's mission, activities and services.
- **Public Policy Advocacy** at the community, state and national level. A high priority is providing for the needs of individuals in the state of Nebraska living with the effects of a brain injury. Through public education, proclamation days, and increasing awareness of policymakers about this largely underserved and unseen population across the state, the BIA-NE invites individuals and their families to join in the efforts to improve prevention, education, advocacy and support by having their voices heard.

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Understanding Brain Injury

Brain Injury can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. It affects people throughout all communities, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, socio-economic status, age, or any other variable.

Brain injury is our nation's leading cause of death and disability. In the United States, approximately 1.7 million people sustain a brain injury each year. Americans are five times more likely to sustain a traumatic brain injury than to be diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, HIV/AIDS, and breast cancer combined. In Nebraska alone, there are more than 36, 527 individuals living with a disability caused by a traumatic brain injury.

Defining Brain Injury

Brain Injury is damage to living brain tissue resulting from an internal or external injury or event. The damage may cause temporary or permanent changes to one or more of the following functional areas: cognitive, physical, behavioral, and emotional.

The severity of a brain injury ranges from mild (e.g. a short change in mental status or consciousness) to severe (e.g. unconsciousness or loss of memory for an extended period of time). Mild brain injuries are the most common. Brain injury may occur with no loss of consciousness or visible physical injury and symptoms can be temporary, longer-term or permanent. Unfortunately, many mild brain injuries go undiagnosed for weeks, months, or even years after the injury.

Since no two brains are the same, each brain injury is unique and effects can vary from person to person. Symptoms may appear right away or they can take days or even weeks to show up. After brain injury, people differ how they adjust or even identify with the changes. There are resources and programs available to help people throughout their recovery that may assist individuals and families to adjust to the changes, maintain or even improve the quality of life after brain injury. Please use this guide to learn about brain injury and the variety of resources available.

Types of Acquired Brain Injury

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain that was not present at birth and is non-progressive. The two categories of ABI are non-traumatic and traumatic brain injuries:

Non-traumatic Brain Injuries are the result of a non-traumatic cause that has occurred after birth. Some of the following are common sources of non-traumatic brain injuries:

- **Brain Aneurysm** is a weak bulging spot on the wall of a brain artery, very much like a thin balloon or weak spot on an inner tube.
- **Stroke** occurs when the blood supply to part of your brain is interrupted or severely reduced, depriving brain tissue of oxygen and nutrients. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die.
- **Anoxia/Hypoxia** is a condition characterized by an absence of oxygen supply to an organ or a tissue.
- **Brain Tumors** may cause damage to the brain tissue based on size or location
- **Infection** (bacterial or viral) may cause encephalitis or meningitis which results in swelling to brain or the surrounding structures causing damage to brain tissue.
- **Toxic Exposure** from things such as substance abuse, kidney failure and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Degenerative Neurological Illness** may lead to brain damage. Diagnoses that may involve neurological brain damage include Alzheimer's disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and Huntington's disease.

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) are caused by an external physical force to the brain that may produce a diminished or altered state of consciousness that disrupts the normal function of the brain. The most common injuries are from motor vehicle accidents, falls, gunshot wounds, and assaults. TBI contribute to a substantial number of deaths and cases of permanent disability. The severity of a TBI may range from "mild," i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness to "severe," i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.

Concussion is a type of brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a fall or a blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Health care professionals may describe a concussion as a "mild" brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, their effects can be very serious and can lead to future disabilities.

Functional Changes

A brain injury may result in mild, moderate, or severe impairments in one or more of the following areas:

Cognitive Functions

- Short term memory loss; long term memory loss
- Slowed ability to process information
- Trouble concentrating or paying attention for periods of time
- Difficulty keeping up with a conversation; other communication difficulties such as word finding problems
- Spatial disorientation
- Organizational problems and impaired judgment
- Unable to do more than one thing at a time
- A lack of initiating activities, or once started, difficulty in completing tasks without reminders

Physical Functions

- Seizures of all types
- Muscle spasticity
- Double vision or low vision, even blindness
- Loss of smell or taste
- Speech impairments such as slow or slurred speech
- Headaches or migraines
- Fatigue, increased need for sleep
- Balance problems

Emotional/Behavioral Functions

- Increased anxiety
- Depression and mood swings
- Impulsive behavior
- More easily agitated
- Egocentric behaviors; difficulty seeing how behaviors can affect others
- Reduced level of self-esteem
- Personality changes
- Emotional flatness and passivity

Living with Brain Injury

Life after a brain injury looks different for each individual and each family member and often may involve a change in roles or occupations ultimately leaving a lasting impact on the family dynamic. These are a few examples of changes that may occur for an individual or family member after a brain injury:

Changes in Identity

After a brain injury, you or a loved one might experience changes in your identity, that is, who you perceive yourself to be and what makes you who you are. This may be in part to not feeling you are able to be who you were before the brain injury or do the things you were able to do before the brain injury. You and your loved ones may need ongoing support and encouragement to enhance communication and establish your identity with life after a brain injury.

After a brain injury, individuals may find it difficult to express themselves for various reasons;

- Feeling misunderstood
- Difficulty expressing desires
- Difficulty remembering self before the injury
- Difficulty understanding changes in ability
- Difficulty communicating frustrations

Changes in Communication

In the recovery process after a brain injury, it is important to demonstrate patience and adapt to the needs of the individual to best allow them to take part in conversation and in making decisions. In any situation, as a brain is recovering, it is working overtime, and therefore, communication can be an added source of exhaustion and effort.

Some helpful strategies during this process may include;

- Speaking slower
- Using fewer amount of words to get the point across
- Using similar cueing/phrases daily
- Using strategies such as notes/reminders
- Being patient with the individual to find the word/get their point across

Roles & Relationships

The brain is a very complex organ and regulates every aspect of physical function and behavior. After an injury to the brain, individuals with brain injury may need additional support and reassurance from their loved ones and support network. The roles you and your loved one's play may be different following an injury. You may need to give up some home or work responsibilities to focus on recovery. You may have to adjust to others assisting you with things and completing things for you that you used to do by yourself. This can be a difficult time for the individual, family, and friends as the future

may be unknown. Your loved ones may have new or increased responsibilities such as managing healthcare, handling finances, and caring for you.

Sexuality

Changes in sexual functioning are common after a brain injury. Some changes are directly related to the damage to the brain, other are related to physical problems or changes in thinking, self-esteem, and relationships. After experiencing a brain injury, individuals may begin doubting themselves and may not feel confident about how they look or move given their diagnosis. This can impact a person's desire to engage in sex. Since brain injury can also impair reasoning, judgment, and inhibition, some people may notice inappropriate sexual behaviors after brain injury.

Sex after brain injury may also be more physically difficult. A person who has experienced brain injury should be cleared by a doctor before participating in sexual activities. Some people may feel embarrassed talking openly about sexual issues, but sex is a part of normal functioning and problems can be addressed by medical professionals. If sex has become painful or difficult due to physical changes, it is important to speak to a primary doctor and rehabilitation team.

Caregiving

Caregivers are responsible for making sure a person's needs are met. This may include tasks such as bathing and personal care, preparing meals, providing transportation, managing money, medications, scheduling appointments and physically assisting movement. It is helpful to learn about the individual, and/or family member's, deficits by close involvement in the rehabilitation process to gain a clear understanding of the functional abilities. Since each brain injury is unique and recovery varies for each person, the amount of support or assistance you may need from a caregiver also varies. Some people need assistance for a short amount of time after a brain injury, while others could require support from a caregiver throughout their life.

Caregiver Support

Caring for an individual with a brain injury can be rewarding and challenging. As a family member/friend or paid caregiver, it is extremely important to take care of yourself. Your wellbeing is very important and can be easily overlooked when caring for someone else. In order to maintain your health while providing care to an individual with a brain injury consider the following:

- Maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle
- Visit a doctor regularly
- Engage in hobbies and activities that are important to you
- Take care of your emotional well-being

If providing care becomes a long-term arrangement, find out if there is funding or options available through state or federal programs. The primary family member providing, short or long-term, may benefit from occasional breaks called *respite*. A professional, friend, or other family member cares for your loved one for a period of time so you can take time for yourself. Contact the Nebraska Respite Network for options in

your area. Within Nebraska, call: (866) RESPITE (866-737-7483)
Outside Nebraska, call: (402) 996-8443

Grief & Loss

You and your loved ones may feel as though the person that was known has been lost. After experiencing a brain injury, individuals may experience personality, cognitive and attitude changes. It may be helpful to open up to loved ones, acknowledge changes, and recognize feelings of grief and loss as a result of the changes.

Grief is a common emotion associated with loss. People with brain injury and their loved ones may feel this emotion with the realization that life may never be as it was before. Grief is a process, not an event. There is no set time and each individual may react or behave differently while grieving. Some people find it helpful to journal, writing their thoughts and feelings. It can be helpful to connect with support groups or seek professional counselors for guidance.

Aging with Brain Injury

Aging is a natural part of life and we will all age as time passes no matter how hard we fight it. Activities of daily living, mobility, energy levels, and physical function may become more difficult. Be aware that a brain injury should be viewed as a chronic condition, not a single event. People who have sustained a brain injury may experience the effects of aging sooner and/or more severely. People with brain injury should visit their doctor regularly to assess for the development of conditions that may arise after the initial injury.

Supports to Help Cope with Change

BIA-NE considers community support to be an important outlet for individuals who have experienced a brain injury to ask questions, share their story and connect with other individuals and caregivers that have experience with brain injury. They can provide a supportive environment in which members can share frustrations, triumphs, and knowledge.

Contact BIA-NE for Resource Facilitation at 844-423-2463 or www.biane.org

Support Groups

ALLIANCE Stroke and Brain Injury Group

When: Second Tuesday at 3 pm

Where: Box Butte General Hospital, Alliance Room

2101 Box Butte Avenue

Contact: Martha Douglas p: 308-761-3372 e: mdouglas@bbgh.org

CHADRON Stroke and Brain Injury Group

When: First Wednesday at 3 pm

Where: Chadron Community Hospital Pine Lodge Room

825 Centennial Drive

Contact: Martha Douglas p: 308-761-3372 e: mdouglas@bbgh.org
Contact: Maddie Nitsch 308-432-5586

SCOTTSBLUFF

When: Third Tuesday at 4:30 pm

Where: ESU13, 4215 Ave I

Contact: Martha Douglas p: 308-761-3372 e: mdouglas@bbgh.org

Contact: Vicki Rutter p: 308-436-3228 e: vrrutter@charter.net

COLUMBUS Stroke and Brain Injury Group

When: Fourth Wednesday from 12-1pm

Where: Columbus Wellness Center 3912 38th St., Ste. A.

Contact: Meghan Jantzi p: 402-562-3333 e: mmjantzi@columbushosp.org

Refreshments provided. Feel free to bring your lunch.

COUNCIL BLUFFS Vision Support Group

When: Second Tuesday at 10 am

Contact: Chris Stewart p: 402-890-7126 e: chris@biane.org

GRAND ISLAND Stroke/Brain Injury Support Group

When: Every other month on the 3rd Thursday from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. Where: St. Francis Conference Room 6A

Contact: Kristy Farley p: 308-398-6507 e: kfarley@sfmc-gi.org

Please call before attending

KEARNEY

When: Fourth Thursday from 6:30-8 pm

Where: Good Samaritan Hospital, Conf Center, 2nd Flr

Contact: Miechelle McKelvey p: 308-865-8300 e: mckelveyml@unk.edu Contact:
Kristine Einspahr p: 308-627-1731 e: keinspahr@esu10.org

LINCOLN

When: Second Friday 6:30-8:30 pm

Where: Call for location. Mix of activities/topics.

Contact: Karen Hux p: 402-573-3700 e: Karen.Hux@qliomaha.com Contact: Gina
Simanek p: 402-327-0120 e: gsimanek@neb.rr.com

LINCOLN

When: Third Tuesday from 6-7:30 pm

Where: Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, Sheridan Room 5401 South St Contact:

Brooke Murtaugh p: 402-483-9891 e: bmurtaugh@madonna.org

NORFOLK

When: First Monday (time varies, call to check)

Where: Faith Regional Health Services (East Campus), Prairie Room, 1500
Koenigstein Avenue

Contact: Margaret Jensen p: 402-843-2318 e: mmjensen@gpcom.net Contact: Paige
Luebbert p: 402-870-2876 e: pjluebbert15@gmail.com

NORTH PLATTE

When: Second Monday at 2 pm

Where: Great Plains Health, Conference Room, 601 W. Leota

Contact: Judy Nichelson p: 308-532-7451 e: judy_nichelson@outlook.com

A snack provided

OMAHA

When: Second Tuesday at 6 pm

Where: CHI Immanuel, Centennial Room, Event Center. (back of hospital)
6901 North 72nd St.

Contact: Anne Hupka p: 402-680-7861 e: ahupka@yahoo.com

Nebraska Young Brain Injury Survivors Group

Contact: Katie e: 12katiebug1294@gmail.com

PAPILLION Family Caregivers of Survivors of BI Support Group

When: Third Thursday at 6:30 pm

Where: Village Inn at 72nd and Giles

Contact: Anne Hupka p: 402-680-7861 e: ahupka@yahoo.com

Recreation & Social Opportunities

After a brain injury, re-establishing enjoyable social and recreational activities may at first seem insignificant. However, participation in leisure activities is an important part of the recovery process, both for children and adults. Recreation can be especially meaningful for persons with brain injury who are unable to continue with work activities.

Assess Interests and Abilities

First, assess your interests and abilities. What recreational skills have you maintained and what has been impacted or lost? What physical, emotional, social or cognitive limitations has brain injury placed on you? Are you ready and willing to try new activities? What are you looking for – fun, friendships and/or learning? Before engaging in a new sport or physical activity that involves any risk, it is advisable to check with your physician or other appropriate medical professional.

Therapeutic Recreation

Therapeutic recreation is an integral part of the rehabilitation process. Therapeutic recreation can empower and inspire you to try new things and pursue your interests. Try to find programs that best fit your goals and match your interests and schedule. Be sure that a recreational program meets your medical, social, safety and mobility needs. Many hospitals have therapeutic recreation departments that can assess your recreational interests, skills and goals. You can talk to the hospital about getting an assessment or getting a copy of an assessment you had in the past.

Community Integration

Community integration programs provide recreational opportunities for persons with disabilities as well as those without. At times, a person with a disability will be able to use modified equipment or assistance from peers to participate in integration programs. Integration promotes awareness of persons with disabilities, teaches respect for all people and increases self-esteem for all participants. Integrated activities can increase the quality of life for all people involved. Contact BIA-NE to learn more 844-423-2463.

Adult Day Programs

Adult Day Programs are constructive, therapeutic activity programs available on an outpatient or day service basis. These programs offer opportunities for socialization and recreation through structured activities such as arts and crafts, cooking, exercise, and group discussions.

Medical Care, Hospital Care and Rehabilitation of Brain Injury

Process of Medical Care after a Brain Injury

The medical and rehabilitation care needed after a brain injury can be overwhelming to navigate because it is a journey, not a single event. The brain is complex and there is not a straight path from injury to recovery. It is impossible to predict what impact a brain injury will have on a person - both immediately following the brain injury and in the long term.

It is also important to recognize that the severity of the injury largely determines the duration and level of medical care, hospital care and brain injury rehabilitation that is needed. Other factors that influence a person's recovery from brain injury include:

- Emergency response to the injury
- Age of the person
- Health of the person prior to the injury
- Education, experience and personality of the person prior to the injury
- Family support
- Financial resources and insurance coverage
- Timing and access to medical and rehabilitation services.

The hospital works to create stability in a person's medical condition. After a person is stabilized, they often are discharged from the hospital. Some medical problems are not identified until sometime after an injury occurs. As a result, the responsibility of accessing quality, comprehensive medical care is shifted to the patient. Be sure to stay in communication with your primary care doctor. Many persons with brain injury experience significant changes as they go through the rehabilitation process. For example, persons with brain injury may struggle with problems related to memory, cognitive skills, learning new skills, emotional changes, vision and many other aspects of physical and mental health that may not be apparent until after hospital discharge.

What is Neuropsychology?

Neuropsychology is an area of clinical psychology that deals with cognitive thought and personality as related to the way that the brain functions. Neuropsychology is used in many areas, including rehabilitation, behavior, employment, return to school, relationship building, determining eligibility for government benefits, driving and general treatment planning.

A neuropsychologist is a specialist who evaluates, through comprehensive testing procedures, the mental functions of a person's brain and how the brain injury has impacted those functions. A neuropsychologist will work with a person to plan treatment programs that can help his or her brain return to an optimal level of functioning as quickly as possible.

Rehabilitation team

Depending upon the injury and issues a patient faces, some or all members from various therapeutic disciplines may be involved in their treatment plan. Alongside the physician, additional members of the team include: physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, recreational therapists, certified athletic trainers (ATC), neuropsychologists, nurses, school/vocational counselors, teachers and coaches. And of course, the individual and their informal network including family.

Each individual from the following categories plays an important role in the management of a patient with a TBI.

- **Physical therapists** assist in optimizing functional mobility, balance, strength, flexibility, endurance, coordination, etc. depending upon a patient's need.
- **Occupational therapists** will provide interventions to assist in improving Activities of Daily Living often referred to as ADLs. Many will incorporate vision therapies as these are common deficits seen in TBI.
- **Speech therapists** are important to evaluate both cognitive and communication abilities following a TBI and can enhance higher level executive functioning.
- **Recreational therapists** assist in focusing on leisure activities enjoyed by patients and improve their social functioning by including sport, music, art and humor.
- **Athletic trainers and coaches** are particularly important when dealing with athletes who have sustained a concussion and provide assistance when monitoring these patients return to sports.
- **Teachers and guidance counselors** are invaluable in developing modifications after the student returns to school following a TBI. In collaboration with the doctor and other professionals, the family and the student; an individualized protocol is implemented that is adjusted as the brain heals.
- **Neuropsychologists** are able to conduct formal testing modalities to assess underlying behavioral and cognitive deficits, identifying specific areas which need to be focused on during the comprehensive treatment plan.
- **Family** support system plays a major role for those affected with TBI as they may be providing the daily care, reminders and emotional support for their loved one who has experienced a TBI.
- **Individual** that has experienced a TBI. Rehabilitation, especially at the beginning of treatment, can be tremendously taxing, physically, mentally and emotionally. The will of the individual and the support they receive to do the work it takes to improve their condition does make all the difference. This is not a single event but an on-going commitment.

Legal Rights

Your Legal Protections

Legal issues always have the potential to be complicated. It is important for individuals' who have experienced a brain injury and their families to understand the legal concepts and protections and what can be done to advocate for your rights under the law.

Depending on your circumstances, you may have certain legal rights that may include the following:

- To receive notice about decisions that affect your care and treatment
- To direct and actively participate in planning for your care and treatment
- To appeal decisions that affect your care and treatment
- To have your privacy protected
- To have access to your medical records
- To be free from abuse
- To live, work, learn, etc. in the most integrated setting
- To be free from discrimination in employment, housing, transportation, education, etc.
- To have obstacles removed that limit your access to locations or services
- To obtain reasonable accommodations to help you work or learn successfully

Laws/Rules Pertaining to Brain Injury

The above legal protections and rights may arise from a number of different rules and laws from a variety of difference sources including the following:

Federal

- *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* protects basic civil rights and prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. The ADA guarantees people with disabilities the same opportunities as other Americans in areas such as employment, state and local government programs and services, transportation, telephone services, and public accommodations.
- *The Fair Housing Act (FHA)* prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing against people who are handicapped.
- *Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA)* provides special education to children with specific learning disabilities
- *The Rehabilitation Act* prohibits organizations that receive federal funding from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities because of their disability. The Rehabilitation Act requires employers and educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations.

State

- *The Nebraska Fair Employment Practice Act (FEPA)* prohibits discrimination against employees (or job applicants) on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or marital status at workplaces with at least 15 employees.

Advocating for Your Rights

Advocacy, simply put, means fighting for a cause. In this case, the cause is your health, your well-being and your future. And, since you understand your situation better than anyone else, you are your best advocate. People with brain injury and their loved ones have the right to advocate for themselves. We, at the Nebraska Brain Injury Alliance, and other professionals can assist you in understanding your options; however, always remember that you are the authority and final decision maker on what is best for your situation.

Hiring a Lawyer

It is important to the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska to link individuals with brain injury and their families to effective resources including attorneys who comprehend the physical, cognitive, emotional and financial toll brain injury inflicts on innocent victims and their families. Recognized Brain Injury Attorneys have a proven track record with brain injury experience and are rated in Martindale-Hubbell at, www.martindale.com

Impact of Brain Injury on Children and Teens

Impact on Children

The most common way children sustain a brain injury is through falls, motor vehicle crashes, sports concussions and abuse. When children are hospitalized after brain injury, the child's medical care team will discuss discharge location and accommodations with the parents/guardians. Many children will experience rehabilitation in a hospital setting, through inpatient rehabilitation, and throughout returning to school with the support of school professionals.

It can be difficult to know how a brain injury is affecting infants and very young children as they are still developing. Professionals say children grow into their injuries as the impact of brain injury can be seen as the child struggles to meet developmental milestones. Children who have had mild brain injuries may be seen in urgent care or the emergency room and then sent home. It is important to note repeated mild brain injuries occurring over an extended period of time can result in more severe injuries.

Children may experience cognitive, emotional, or physical change. As the child grows and expectations of greater independence emerge in school, symptoms of brain injury may become more evident. Sometimes it will take a child longer to learn a new skill or to reach a developmental milestone. It is critical that parents and guardians speak with their primary care doctor and school team about any concerns regarding development. It is also important to remember the brain injury may be impacting a child's ability to learn new information at the same rate as their peers. When children experience a significant change in social relationships or academic performance after a brain injury it can be important to know how to ask for support for your child.

Impact on Teens

Teens should receive information on their medical diagnosis and have the meaning of that explained by a knowledgeable professional (e.g. their neuropsychologist). Throughout this process, they will need support from parents/guardians and school professionals. It is recommended that teens be part of meetings with school staff and medical professionals as they prepare for greater independence at college and in the community.

A critical aspect of being a teenager is that teens are working towards independence from their parents and part of this independence is marked by social acceptance from their peers. A brain injury can make people feel less confident, which can lead to a loss of friends, decreased involvement in extra-curricular activities and an increase in depression. In addition, brain injuries that are sustained during the adolescent years may lead to a teen needing a few more years to meet the emotional or cognitive milestones of their peers.

Changing Family Dynamics

It can be challenging for the entire family when a child has a brain injury. Unique new roles arise due to unexpected traumatic changes. Even after a child's medical condition has stabilized, their doctor's appointments and rehabilitation will continue to require additional time, resources and attention. Sometimes, parents will need to take leave from work or change dynamics in their spousal/co-parenting relationship as the demands within the family have greatly increased.

When the immediate crisis has resolved many siblings continue to feel like they are not getting the same attention from their parent but may feel guilty to openly discuss their feelings. This can be an important time for the entire family to seek support from loved ones, extended family, friends and helping professionals. During this time, it is often important for parents and guardians to remember to take care of themselves so they can continue to support their child and family.

Education Supports and Rights

Available school supports and services

School interventions can vary from general accommodations in the classroom to more extensive modifications that may require customized special education services and the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Determining appropriate accommodations often depend upon the severity of injury, how the injury impacts the student's functioning and the length of time the student is symptomatic.

Symptoms resulting from most mild brain injuries/concussions are temporary and resolve within a few days or weeks. General Accommodations can be short-term and may include a shortened school day schedule, minimal/no homework, rest breaks, quiet environment, extended transitions between classes, and preferential seating.

504 Accommodations

For students with more long-term issues, a Section 504 Plan might be implemented. Parents can request that their child be evaluated for a 504 Plan. The school district has a legal responsibility for learners who qualify for 504 accommodations, and once eligibility has been determined, a Section 504 Plan is prepared and implemented in accordance with applicable regulations, including the identification of accommodations to the environment, curriculum, materials and instructions in the least restrictive environment.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

If the student's educational needs resulting from a brain injury are chronic and/or severe, a parent or education staff can request a special education evaluation. Determination of eligibility for special education services must be established before those services can be provided. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be written and annually reviewed by the educational team, of which parents are a vital part.

Concussion Protocol

Concussions, or mild traumatic brain injuries (mTBI), impact millions of Americans annually. Over the last approximately 10 years, increasing attention to the potential seriousness of these injuries has resulted in unprecedented litigation, regulation and legislative activities both in Nebraska and across the nation.

Legislation

Following the implementation of Washington's law, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have passed concussion legislation with the state of Mississippi being the final state in 2014. The Nebraska Concussion Awareness Act, passed by the Nebraska legislature in 2011 and implemented on July 1, 2012, focuses on three primary areas: Education, Removal from Play and Return to Play.

Education: Coaches education must be readily available and Athletes and Parents must be provided concussion information prior to participation on an annual basis including signs and symptoms, risks, and actions to take if a concussion occurs.

Removal from Play: Any athlete "reasonably suspected" of having sustained a concussion must be removed from participation and may not return until evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care professional.

Written and Signed Clearance for Return to Play: Before returning to play after being "reasonably suspected" of having sustained a concussion, an athlete must receive written and signed clearance from an appropriate licensed health care professional and from the athlete's parents.

In 2014, an addendum was passed that incorporated Return to Learn.

Return to Learn: Requires schools to have in place a protocol for assisting students recovering from a concussion to return to school including informal or formal accommodations, modifications of curriculum and monitoring by staff (teachers, school nurses, etc.) until the student is fully recovered.

An important note about Nebraska's legislation is that it was the first state to cover athletes not only in school related sporting activities but it also applies to "any city, village, business, or nonprofit organization sponsoring a sport activity and having athletes 19 years old or younger, where there is a cost to participants or where such costs are sponsored" so this legislation also applies to those in club sports, select teams, parks and recreation programs, etc.

PTI Nebraska has staff with personal and professional experience to answer questions about working with statewide schools and accommodations for students with special needs. Call **(800) 284-8520** <https://www.pti-nebraska.org>. The PTI primarily serves birth to 21-year-olds.

Returning to Work and Continuing Your Education

Returning to Work

Depending on the nature and severity of your brain injury, you may or may not be able to return to the same job you had before your brain injury. Before returning to work, you should assess your job skills and abilities, as well as any changes you may have experienced. It is also helpful to get professional feedback from your doctor, rehabilitation therapists or a vocational rehabilitation counselor regarding your return to work.

Working with your Current Employer

If the nature of your brain injury allows you to return to work at your current job, you will want to discuss the timing of your return to work with your doctor and rehabilitation team. Sometimes, people with brain injuries return to work full time sooner than they should, which can negatively impact rehabilitation and successful return to work. Follow your doctor's instructions and take the time you need to heal before returning to work.

It is very possible that your current employer does not have the knowledge about brain injury that is needed to assist you in returning to work. Provide information in writing to your supervisor and human resources representative so that he or she can better understand how your brain injury has affected you and how he or she can help you return to work successfully. If you need assistance communicating with your employer, the Nebraska Brain Injury Alliance can answer your questions.

Looking for New Employment

When looking for a new job, seeking and finding work that best meets your interests, needs and ambitions while using your skills can be challenging. A brain injury can change a person's abilities, greatly influencing work life. You want to be reasonable and realistic in your self-assessment and expectations. Some people with brain injuries have trouble with organization, distractibility, decision-making, impulsivity, fatigue, stamina, learning difficulties and relationships with co-workers. For people who have significant changes due to brain injury, seeking assistance from Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation Services) may be necessary.

Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Nebraska VR is an eligibility program that helps individuals with disabilities to identify their strengths and abilities in order to find success in the world of work.

They work with job seekers to identify individual barriers to employment, find solutions to help you use your skills and abilities, and match you to the right job.

If you are already working, Nebraska VR helps provide the accommodations you need to continue to be a successful employee.

Nebraska VR is currently in what is called Order of Selection and all priority groups are closed. This means they do not currently have the funding to write a plan for employment and pay for the services identified in the plan. That is why it is really important that you make an appointment to meet with an employment specialist. You are basically reserving your spot to receive employment services down the road. Also, as part of the process we will identify community resources that may be able to meet your needs. You will leave the appointment with a list of community resources and you will be referred to other agencies and partners in the workforce system like an independent living center, the American Job Center, or other community resources.

Learn more about Order of Selection at http://vr.nebraska.gov/job_seekers/index.html

Volunteering

One excellent way to restore stamina and endurance and explore job skills, interests and work habits is through volunteering. Voluntary work can provide valuable experience and be extremely rewarding. Volunteering can build your resume and help you feel more connected to people while you make a significant contribution to the world around you.

Attending/Returning to College and Community Education Services

If you are returning to college or plan to attend for the first time, call the main telephone number of the institution and ask for the office or person in charge of working with students with disabilities, often called the Disability Services Office. These offices have support staff that coordinate services and accommodations for people with disabilities.

Under the ADA, post-secondary institutions are required by law to provide any reasonable accommodation or modification necessary for students with disabilities to have equal access to educational opportunities and services as those of non-disabled students. Examples of available accommodations may include alternative format testing, note taking, priority registration or accessible housing. You will need to provide recent medical documentation of your disability in order to request reasonable accommodations. Students should expect to self-advocate for their needs with individual instructors.

Housing

Possible Living Options after a Brain Injury

After a brain injury, many individuals experience difficulty with judgment, behavioral symptoms, memory, attention span or confusion that may lead to unsafe living situations. Individuals and families may need to create an environment that encourages safe practices regarding cooking, the use of electrical equipment, answering the door, telephone and any other activity that could pose a safety risk. The following housing options are organized from most to least independent living situations.

Possible Living Options:

- A person may choose to:
 - Live independently
 - Live independently with informal assistance from friends or family
 - Live independently with formal assistance from an agency
 - Live in a rehabilitation setting
 - Live in a nursing facility

- Family members or friends of a person with brain injury may:
 - Provide all care
 - Provide care with informal assistance from the extended family and friends
 - Provide care with formal assistance from an outside agency
 - Provide care with informal or formal arrangements for respite
 - Provide oversight and information to improve care in a rehab or nursing facility.

Returning Home and Home Modifications

If you are returning home or going to live with another family member and the home needs modifications or alterations to make it accessible, discuss how this can be done prior to the discharge plan being prepared with the social worker at the hospital or the care facility. Home care services including nursing to set-up medications, Occupational Therapy, OT, and Physical Therapy, PT, can visit the home and see what measures may need to be taken to accommodate the individual in their home.

Respite

The purpose of respite care is to provide short-term care for individuals with disabilities and brain injury while giving a temporary break to their family members providing on-going care.

Assisted Living

Assisted Living facilities are usually privately owned and offer a variety of support services and independent living assistance based on the individual's needs and ability to pay.

Adult Foster Care/Extended Family Homes/Host Homes/Group Homes

Each option is intended to be a long-term living arrangement and each has criteria for payment and accessibility. It is important that the needed time and attention is taken to ensure a good match. The concept is adults live in a family-like setting with other individuals. These settings may be owned by the person/couple that provides the needed care and support or the property may belong to an agency that pays staff to assist the individuals with their special needs. In many of these settings, residents contribute to the operation of the house by doing chores and preparing meals. Some people in these settings also leave during the day to work, volunteer, or go to day programming as part of their activities of daily living.

Financial Supports

Financial Planning

Brain injury can greatly affect the financial situation of the individual and their family members. There may be a change in earning potential and the projected income from salary/wages. Income from government benefits, legal settlements and other sources may become necessary. Change in expenses, such as medical care, transportation, and personal care, may also affect finances.

Although it can seem like a lower priority when the brain injury has occurred, it is imperative to take time to develop a comprehensive plan for meeting current and future financial needs. This information needs to be revisited frequently, because it is an important step in making sure you are able to continue to have the adequate needs met to live in the community. A social worker in the hospital or county employee in the financial services setting can help you make plans for this and discuss some future plans for you as well as assist in finding the additional financial resources you may require.

Government Financial Resources

There are public benefits available to persons with disabilities. Some of these resources place limits on income and certain types of assets but in order to find out more about how to qualify it is always good to reach out to your county human services department and ask questions to see if these resources are available to you. You may also contact the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska for more information.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

To qualify for Social Security Disability Insurance, a person must have a physical or mental impairment that is expected to keep him or her from doing any substantial work for at least one year, or a condition that is expected to result in death. The amount of a person's SSDI payment depends upon how much he or she has worked and how much he or she has paid into the Social Security system through taxes.

It is advised that you apply for SSDI benefits as soon as possible due to a six-month waiting period. If a person has qualified for SSDI, benefits begin on the sixth full month after the application is accepted. It is important to understand how complex the application process for SSDI can be. A disability attorney can help you apply for SSDI or appeal an initial denial. To apply call your local Social Security Administration (SSA) office.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a strictly need-based federal assistance program for persons with disabilities who have limited insurance. The program is intended to guarantee a minimum monthly income to person with disabilities who have little or no income and resources.

Persons with disabilities can be eligible for SSI even if they have never worked. Age is not a factor. If a person is eligible for SSI, he or she is automatically eligible for Medicaid. People receiving SSI must meet certain income and resource/asset limitations to be eligible. Insurance policy payments, court settlements, worker's compensation and other financial resources may limit your eligibility for SSI.

SSI/Disability assistance <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-apply-ussi.htm>

Medicare

Medicare is a federal health insurance plan that provides for people with disabilities that are determined to be eligible for SSDI due to disability. People will qualify for Medicare two years after being awarded with SSDI benefits. Medicare is not based on income. Medicare has four components: hospital insurance (Part A), medical insurance (Part B), Medicare Advantage Plan (Part C) and Prescription Coverage (Part D), Local Social Security Administration officers process applications and provide information about the program.

Medicaid

Some people will be eligible for Medicaid. Nebraska Medicaid is available to certain low-income persons including persons who are aged, blind, disabled, children, and others who meet eligibility requirements. Contact your local Department of Health and Human Services Office for additional information and assistance to apply for Medicaid. <https://medicaid-help.org/>.

Health Insurance resources if unemployed:

Nebraska Comprehensive Health Insurance Pool: <http://nechip.com>

Transportation

Driving

People use many skills when driving, including attention, visual processing, reaction time, judgment, spatial orientation and motor skills. A brain injury may greatly impact the way the brain functions related to many of these abilities. Persons with brain injury should use caution when deciding to continue driving after a brain injury and listen to recommendations given by medical professionals. State law requires that a person be seizure free for three months before they can return to driving.

Some service providers offer detailed driver assessment programs in which program staff work on and off the road to determine a person's ability to drive. Other programs offer individuals the opportunity to relearn driving skills. Your primary care physician can also advise you in regards to your ability to relearn how to drive safely.

Vehicle Modification

When physical limitations are the primary restriction of driving, there are several ways your vehicle can be modified. Vans can be modified to fit wheelchairs. Vehicles can be modified so that acceleration and braking controls are located on the steering column rather than the floor. Qualified professionals need to assess and recommend adaptive equipment. When choosing a company to modify or adapt a motor vehicle, be sure to ask questions to ensure that the company is qualified and reputable.

Public Transportation Vehicles

All public transportation vehicles are required to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Some public transportation systems offer discount rates for persons with disabilities. Many cities also have programs where a van will pick you up at your door and transport you to your appointment for a reasonable fee if you call in advance. Contact the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska for available transportation near you.

Long Distance Traveling Information

Plan in advance when traveling as an individual with a disability. Transport systems can usually provide printed or voice information about special needs. Services may be available at airports and train stations to assist you in locating and getting to the proper gate and concourse. Call ahead if physical accommodations are necessary.

Resource List

For specific resources within your area please call Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska at 844-423-2463 or www.biane.org

Housing Contacts

Access Nebraska

<https://dhhs-access-neb-menu.ne.gov>

Toll Free: (800)383-4278

Lincoln: (402)323-3900

Omaha: (402)595-1258

Section 8 Low Income Housing Guide

<https://section-8-housing.org/>

(402) 492-3100

Regions for Mental Health Housing

Behavioral Health Housing Manager
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Behavioral Health
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026
Phone: (402) 471-7824

Homes for Heroes

www.lincolnheroes.com

(402) 235-8235

Provides extraordinary savings to local heroes (military, fire, police, teachers, peace officers, healthcare workers) who provide extraordinary services to our community every day.

Advocacy/Legal Contacts

Hotline for Disability Services

(Client Assistance Program Director)
402.471.3656 or 800. 742.7594

Recognized Brain Injury Attorneys

www.martindale.com

Legal Aid of Nebraska

www.legalaidofnebraska.com

1-877-250-2016

Provides legal aid for those whose income is 125% of the poverty level or less. Usually represents for civil legal matters. Represent victims of domestic violence regardless of income level.

Financial Assistance Contacts

Access Nebraska

<https://dhhs-access-neb-menu.ne.gov>

Toll Free: (800)383-4278

Lincoln: (402)323-3900

Omaha: (402)595-1258

Social Security Administration

604 N 109th Ct

Omaha, NE 68154

866-716-8299

Lincoln Social Security Office

100 Centennial Mall N #240

Lincoln, NE 68508

866-593-2880

Social Services Across the Lifespan

Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

844-423-2463 or www.biane.org

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Central Office (Lincoln)

<https://dhhs.ne.gov>

Main Switchboard: 402-471-3121

Physical Address: 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska

Information on:

Behavioral Health

Children & Families

Developmental Disabilities

Medicaid and Long-Term Care

Public Health

Nebraska Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)

<http://nebraska.networkofcare.org>

Call (844) 843-6364 to locate the nearest ADRC.

Early Development Network (EDN) Serving children Birth – 3 Years old

<http://edn.ne.gov/cms/>

ChildFind

1-888-806-6287

Department of Health and Human Services

Program Coordinator

402-471-1733

Department of Health and Human Services

Program Specialist

402-471-6536

Nebraska Department of Education Early Childhood

Special Education Specialist

402-471-0817

League of Human Dignity – Centers for Independent Living

<http://leagueofhumandignity.com>

402-441-7871

Area Agencies on Aging (Offices on Aging)

State Unit on Aging

Department of Health & Human Services

P.O. Box 95026

Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

Toll Free Phone: (800) 942-7830

Local Phone: (402) 471-2307

E-mail: DHHS.Aging@Nebraska.gov

Lutheran Family Services

If you, or an adult you care about, are struggling with mental health issues or substance use, review our programs to find an expert or call (855) 659-2706.

For all Lutheran Family Services:

<https://www.lfsneb.org>

Salvation Army – Enter town or zip code

<https://www.salvationarmyusa.org>

Community Action of NE

<http://canhelp.org>

Helping People Change Lives-through Community Action Partnerships

County Veterans Service Officers

<https://veterans.nebraska.gov/cvso>

Assist with VA benefits and local resources

Crisis Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7/365

Women's Center for Advancement (WCA)

<http://www.wcaomaha.org/>

(402) 345-6555

24/7 Hotline: (402) 345-7273

Support for women and spouses experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault or transition issues

Hotline for Disabilities

Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP)

<http://www.cap.nebraska.gov/>

1-800-742-7594 (Statewide)

402-471-0801 (Lincoln)

CAP is a free service to help you find solutions if you are having problems with any of the following programs: State Vocational Rehabilitation, NE Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Centers for Independent Living

NCBVI (Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired)

Empowering blind individuals, promoting opportunities, and building belief in the blind.

www.ncbvi.nebraska.gov

Contact information:

Carlos Serván, Executive Director

(402) 471-8104

Toll-free (877) 809-2419

carlos.servan@nebraska.gov

NCBVI is the Vocational Rehabilitation agency for Nebraskans who are blind or visually impaired.

Services we offer include training in the skills blind people use for independent living, mobility, literacy and communications. We also offer vocational rehabilitation assistance with job readiness, finding and maintaining employment.

Questions to ask:

Do I have trouble with mobility due to unreliable vision?

Do I have trouble seeing the screen on my computer, phone or tablet?

Do I find myself having trouble using appliances within my home because I cannot see the controls or knowing where hot and sharp objects are in relation to my body?

Am I at risk of losing my job because I have difficulty seeing to perform my duties?

Is there a consumer group that I can engage with for self-advocacy and mentoring?

Health & Human Services

Answers 4 Families

www.answers4families.org

Provides information, opportunities for dialogue, education and support to Nebraskans with special needs and their families.

Nebraska Local Health Departments

<http://nalhd.org/about-us/nebraska-health-departments.html>

(402) 904-7946

Promotes Safety, Health and Wellness across all Nebraska Communities

Social Security Administration

www.socialsecurity.gov

Wounded warriors may be eligible for SS benefits

State Department of Veterans' Affairs

<http://www.vets.state.ne.us>

(402) 471-2458

Provides assistance to Nebraska veterans and their dependents in acquiring county, state, and federal benefits to which they are entitled by virtue of their service to this country.

Nebraska Resource & Referral System (NRRS)

<http://nrrs.ne.gov>

The NRRS is a statewide database created with input from Nebraska families, service providers and organizations. The NRRS provides 1-800 numbers as well as websites and email contacts to help you connect faster to the services you are seeking. This database provides individuals the opportunity to have a real choice in the diverse selection of service providers by allowing users to more easily locate and compare services of local and state agencies.

Mental Health Assessment

<http://www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org/>

Mental Health Self Assessment

Mental Health Support

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

<https://naminebraska.org>

1-877-463-6264

A nonprofit, nationwide, grassroots organization that works to empower those affected by mental illness to live better lives through advocacy, education, and support.

Nebraska Rural Response Hotline

1-800-464-0258

Crisis Hotline

Concussion Resources

Nebraska Department of Education: Brain Injury Regional School Support Team
<http://www.education.ne.gov/sped/birsst.html>

* Bridging the Gap from Concussion to Classroom: Return to Learn

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services: Concussion Training Modules

* Concussion Awareness Act-Training for Coaches, Parents, Students *
<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/ConcussionManage/Pages/cr00.aspx> *
<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/concussion/Pages/Home.aspx>

Concussion ABC's posted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention *
<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>

The Center on Brain Injury Research and Training, University of Oregon

* The Center on Brain Injury Research and Training. Max's Law: Concussion Management Implementation Guide. Retrieved from <http://www.cbirt.org>

Nebraska Concussion Coalition: A statewide educational collaborative aimed at increasing awareness of current issues and research pertaining to concussion and other types of brain injury.

· For more information call 844-423-2463

REAP Guidelines

<http://www.rockymountainhospitalforchildren.com/sportsmedicine/concussion-management/reap-guidelines.htm> * McAvoy, K. (2013) REAP the benefits of good concussion management. Centennial, CO: Rocky Mountain Sports Medicine Institute Center for Concussion.

Brain Injury Center-DOD

www.dvbic.org
Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Brain Injury Advisory Council

*315 W 60th Street, Ste. 400
Kearney, NE 68845-1504
(308) 865-5012
Email: vr.infobiac@nebraska.gov
Website: <https://braininjury.nebraska.gov>*

Additional Online Resources:

<http://www.msktc.org/tbi>

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/ConcussionManage/Pages/cr00.aspx>

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/medicaid/Aging/Pages/ADRC.aspx>

Formally “Neurology Now” now “Brain and Life” an online magazine

<https://www.brainandlife.org/>

Lash & Associates Publishing / Training, Inc <http://www.lapublishing.com/>

Lash & Associates Publishing/Training Inc. Telephone 919-556-0300

Employment Resources

Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation)

www.vr.nebraska.gov

Check the website for local office contacts, or call 1- 877-637-3422 or 1-877-NE-REHAB (Nebraska only)

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation helps people with disabilities join the workforce. Staff provide direct services for employers and people with disabilities that lead to employment. Vocational Rehabilitation serves U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and refugees/asylees who have legal employment authorization documents.

Nebraska works: <https://networks.nebraska.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>

H3 (High Demand, High Skill, High Wage) Nebraska job training:

[http://h3.ne.gov/H3/Career Solutions](http://h3.ne.gov/H3/Career%20Solutions)

<https://www.careersolutions.org>

Department of Labor (Nebraska)

www.dol.nebraska.gov

Employment Assistance

Employment Assistance

Farmers & Ranchers

[https://farmerandrancher.org/;](https://farmerandrancher.org/)

<https://newfarmers.usda.gov;>

<http://www.legalaidofnebraska.org/>

Legal Aid of NE provides resources to assist with starting a farming operation and estate and transition planning for those farmers and ranchers planning to retire

State of Nebraska

www.statejobs.nebraska.gov

Job openings with the state of NE

Nebraska Ticket to Work

www.nebraskatickettowork.org

Centralized source of information for employment for Nebraskans with disabilities.

Helmets to Hard Hats

www.helmetstohardhats.org

Careers in Construction Industry

Hire Vets First

<http://www.Fedshirevets.gov>

Job search

NE Works

<https://neworks.nebraska.gov>

Job search, career tools, education and learning; career center locations; labor market information, unemployment services and benefits and a whole lot more.

VA-Vocational, Employment and Rehabilitation (VR&E)

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/vre>

VA program for those who may have disability barriers to employment

Vet Jobs

www.vetjobs.com

USA Jobs

www.usajobs.gov

www.military.com/careers

America's Heroes at Work

www.americasheroesatwork.gov

1-866-4-USA-DOL

Job assistance for those that suffer from TBI and or PTSD.

Small Business Administration

www.sba.gov