Emotional Well-being After Brain Injury

*This workshop is not intended to provide professional mental health services. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency contact your local mental health agency or go to your nearest emergency room.*
Impact on our Mental Health

- Neurochemical Changes
- Relationship Changes
- Financial Changes
- Grief and Loss
Brain Neurons

- Dendrites
- Cell body
- Axon
- Axon terminal
- Synapse
Brain Neurons

“Shearing”: Neuron Damage due to Brain Injury
Neurochemical Changes

Injury causes

Decrease in neurochemical activity

Changes to mood, pleasure, sleep, motivation, self-esteem
Frontal Lobe Injury

- Common Injury to the Brain
- Impacts
  - Executive Functioning
    - Attention, Processing, Planning, Decision-Making
  - Emotional Regulation
    - Impulse Control, Agitation, Irritability
  - Difficulty Understanding Others
Relationship Changes

- Marital Strain
- Loss of Friendships
- Change of Role within the Family
Financial Changes

- Inability to Work
- Fixed Income
- Medical Costs
Grief is a normal and natural emotional reaction to loss.
Grief and Loss

- Mourning your former self
- Change in ability (self-efficacy)
- Accepting new roles in family, work, community
Table Discussion

Complete the Emotional Health Assessment.

How have your emotions changed since your brain injury?

(15 minutes)
## Emotional Health Assessment

**How have I been feeling since my brain injury?**

Please circle all the words that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confused</th>
<th>Tired</th>
<th>Resilient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>Grieving/Sad</td>
<td>Afraid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Hopeless</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Hopeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grateful</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now that we know our challenges....

How do we deal?
“Seeing a Mental Health Therapist is a recognition of how emotionally challenging it can be to have a brain injury. It does not imply that you are weak or mentally ill rather, grief is normal but people tend to handle significant life changes better when they can discuss them with others.” (Niemeier & Karol, 2011)
Professional Services

- Therapy
  - Individual Therapy
  - Group Therapy
  - Assessment
- Psychiatric Services
  - Medication Management
- Alternative Therapies
  - Biofeedback, Acupuncture, Yoga
- Social Worker
  - Case Management, Advocate
Things you can do on your own!

- Attend a support group
- Become involved in something
- Take care of your body
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Take time for self care & recreation
- Practice positive self-talk
- List your goals and accomplishments
Table Discussion

What are you doing that’s working?
Discuss your current coping skills.

(10 minutes)
Group Discussion

Share your table’s ideas and feedback on good coping skills and strategies.

(15 minutes)
Additional Information & Resources

- TIP Card
- Community Resources
Relaxation Exercise

Sit back, get comfortable, and enjoy....