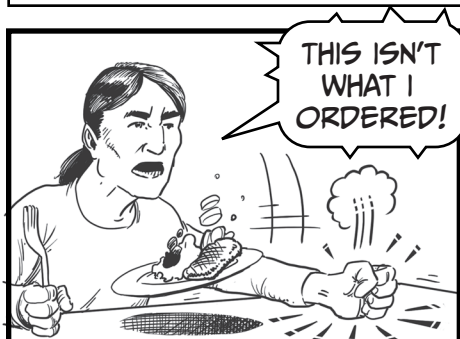
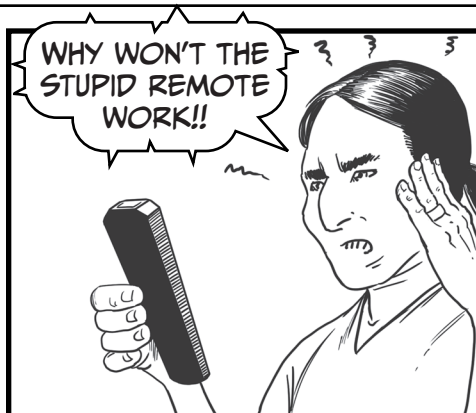


Irritability, Anger, and Aggression After a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

After Len's TBI, his wife, Winnie, noticed that he gets irritable, angry, and aggressive more easily.



Irritability is an emotional state in which a person has a short temper. As a result, they are easily annoyed or angered.



Anger is a strong and intense feeling of displeasure.



Aggression is a type of behavior that is often an expression of anger. It may include insults, cursing, and acts of violence.

In need of advice, Winnie visits her friend, Dakota, whose adult son had a TBI as a teenager.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO, DAKOTA. LEN'S IRRITABILITY IS SUDDEN AND HARD TO PREDICT. HIS AGGRESSION IS HARD TO CONTROL.



I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, WINNIE.



Dakota also tells Winnie that anger, irritability, and aggression are more common in people with TBI.

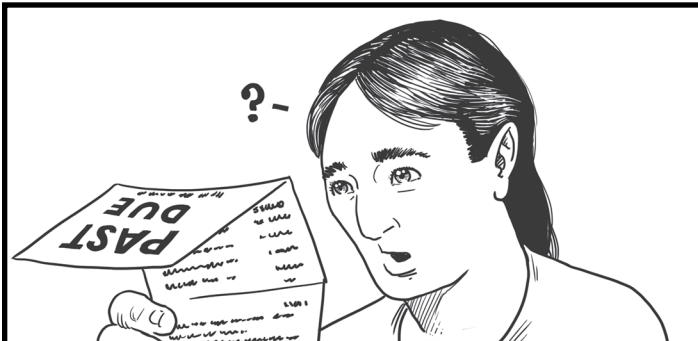


TBI can affect the parts of the brain that manage emotions. This can lead to emotional struggles, not being able to fully recognize emotions, or misunderstanding others' emotions.



TBI can change how the person thinks. This is due to slowed thinking, trouble focusing, and poor memory. This may cause frustration.

Irritability, Anger, and Aggression After a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)



TBI can be hard to cope with. This may be due to new limits in activities and responsibilities. For example, people may not be able to drive or pay a bill. It may also be hard to cope with pain, fatigue, and poor sleep after TBI.



TBI can cause sensitivity to surroundings. For example, the person with TBI may be more sensitive to light or noise. This can lead to irritability.

Dakota also tells Winnie that anger, irritability, and aggression after a TBI can have a negative effect on life. It can affect:

Health



Anger may cause a faster heart rate. The person may be in a constant state of alert.

Relationships



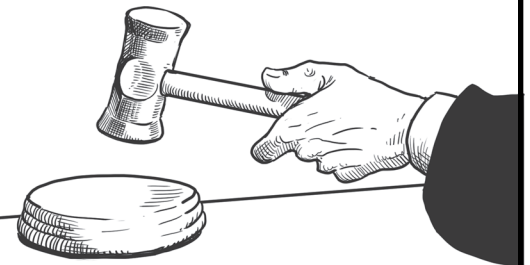
A person with a TBI may have reactions that are hard to predict. This can affect their relationships.

Work

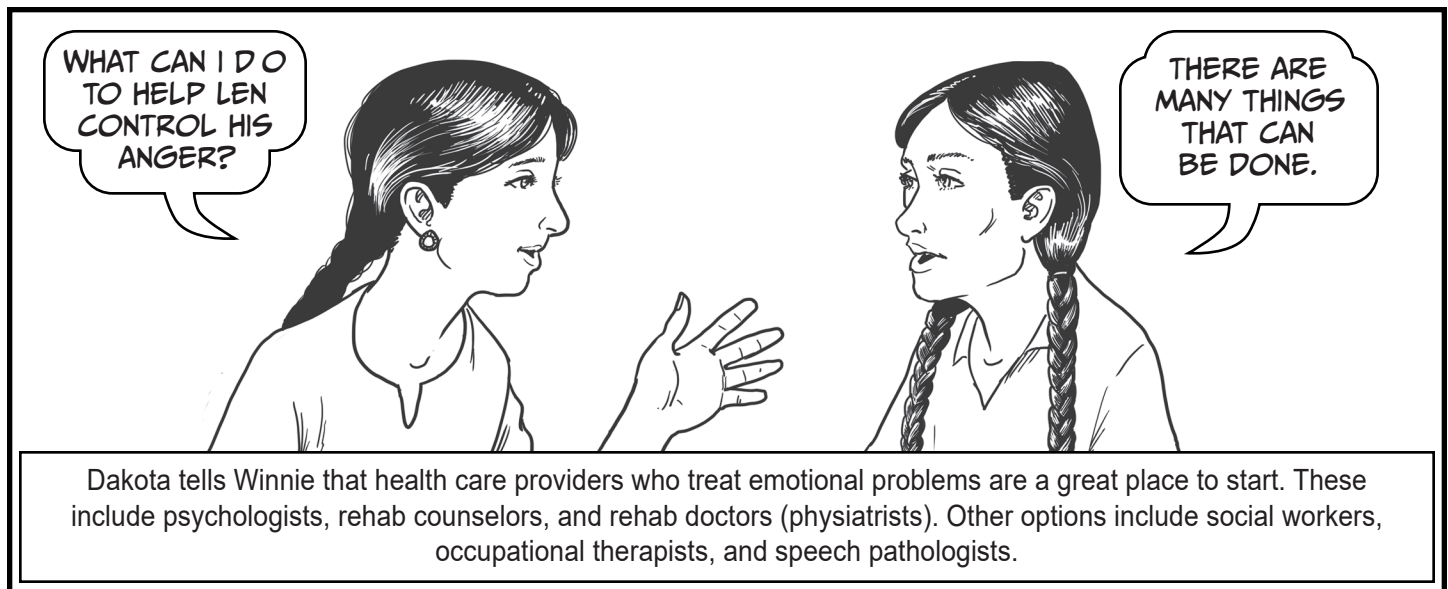


A person with a TBI may have trouble controlling their emotions. This can lead to friction with peers and employers.

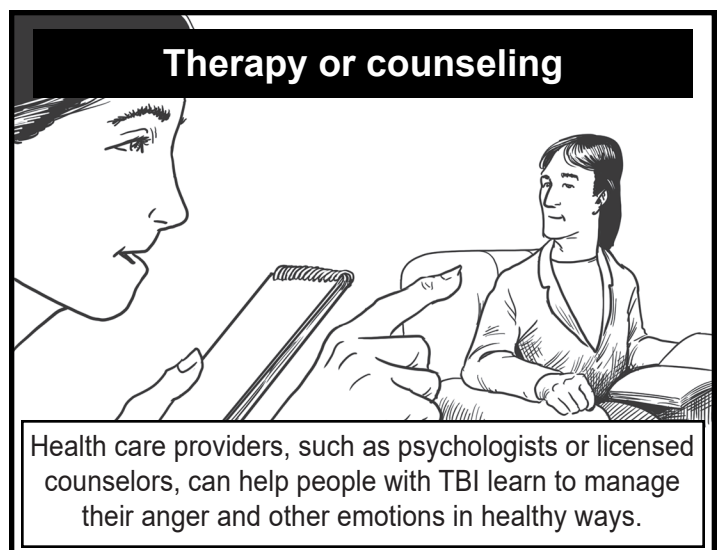
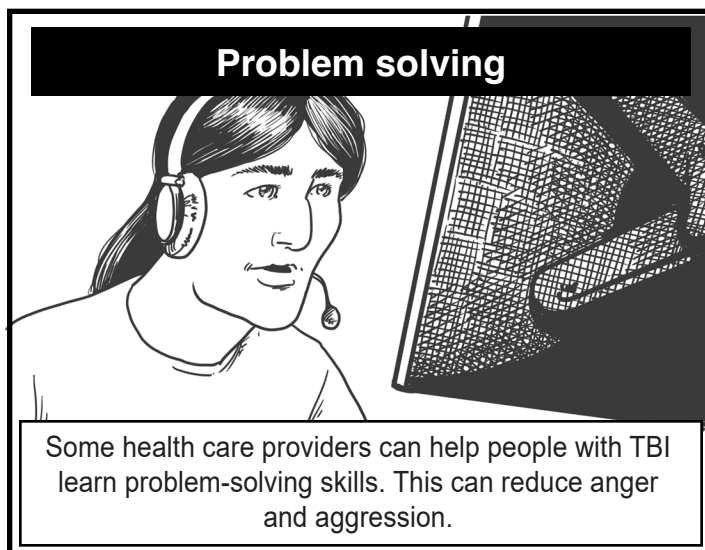
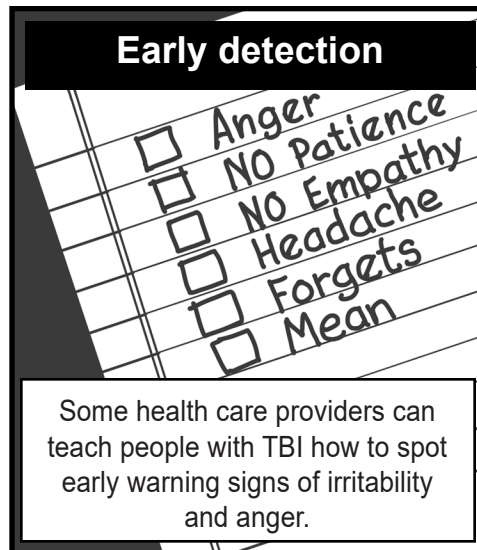
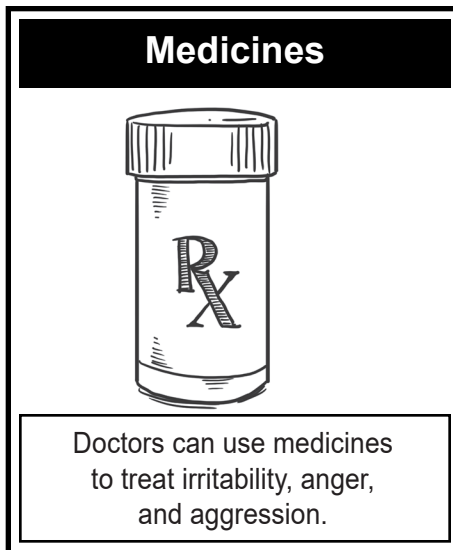
Legal issues



A person with a TBI may have trouble controlling their impulsive reactions. This may cause them to break the law.



To help reduce anger and aggression in people with TBI, these providers may offer...



Dakota shares ways for Len to reduce anger and irritability.

Rest and relax



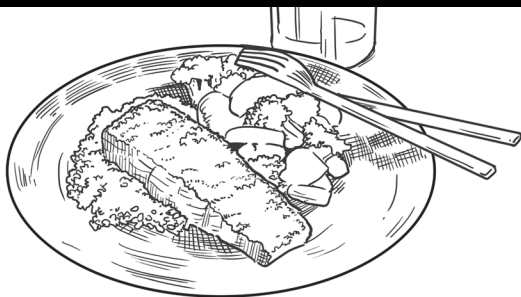
Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep every night. Practice relaxation exercises, like deep breathing, every day.

Move your body as much as you can



Make sure to do some exercise, such as walking or yoga, every day.

Eat a healthy diet



Drink eight glasses of water every day, eat healthy foods, and avoid drugs or alcohol.

Remember to take your medicine



Make sure to take the medicines your doctor prescribes. Set a reminder if you need one.

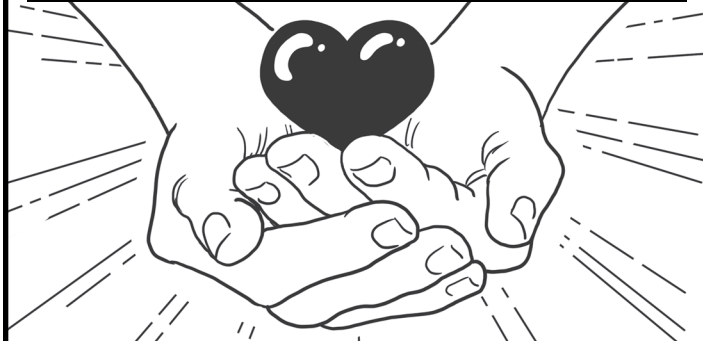
Dakota tells Winnie that there are things she, her family, and friends can do to help Len reduce his anger and irritability."

Notice patterns



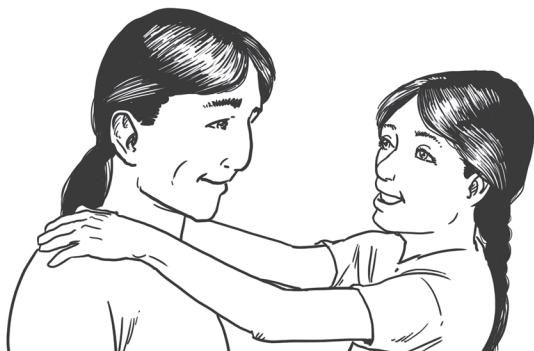
Be aware of what causes irritability and anger. Triggers include being overstimulated or tired.

Practice empathy



Try to understand where the person with TBI is coming from and what is causing them to be upset.

Reward positive behavior



Reward positive behavior, such as when the person calmly expresses their feelings.

Create ground rules



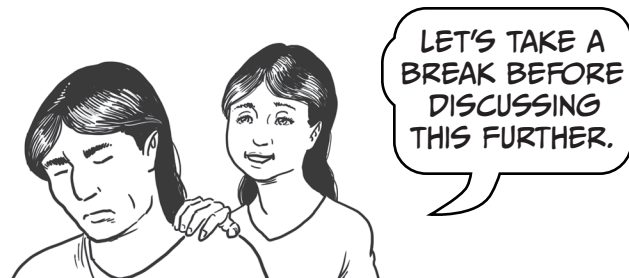
Agree to treat each other with respect. Speak calmly without yelling or any other aggressive behavior.

Put safety first



Your safety and the safety of other family members is important. If you feel unsafe, talk to your doctor or another health care provider.

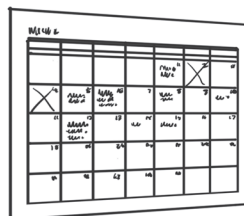
Manage your expectations



Make sure your expectations for the person are realistic. Try to remain calm in response to anger and aggression. Suggest a break until everyone has calmed down.

Don't take things personally

YOU ALREADY SAID THAT. QUIT REMINDING ME!



OH, I WAS JUST TRYING TO BE HELPFUL.



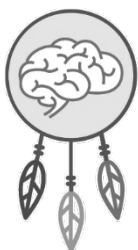
Keep in mind that the TBI often makes it hard for the person to manage their anger. Knowing that it is not personal may help you remain calm.



Source: The content of this infocomic was adapted from the factsheet entitled *Irritability, Anger, and Aggression After TBI* was developed by Dawn Neumann, PhD, Shannon R. Miles, PhD, Angelle Sander, PhD, and Brian Greenwald, MD, in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (<https://msktc.org>).

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of the infographic were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DPKT0008). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this infographic do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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**Traumatic Brain Injury
Resource Bundle**
for American Indians

