

Did you know...

- 70% of survivors of TBI complain of mental fatigue.
- Incidence varies from 32% to 73% at 5 years post injury (Ziino & Ponsford, 2005)
- Stress, chronic pain, too little exercise, poor nutrition, depression, anxiety and poor sleep can all make fatigue worse.
- 80% of brain injury subjects reporting sleep disturbance also reported problems with fatigue (Clinchot, *et al*, 1998)

Brain Injury & Fatigue

Fatigue is a common complaint amongst clients with Brain Injuries. There are two types of fatigue associated with brain injury – physical and mental. **Physical fatigue** happens when the body becomes tired upon activity. For example, relearning to walk takes a considerable amount of effort to coordinate the muscles and build up strength. **Mental fatigue** happens when the client becomes tired from concentrating on tasks. After a brain injury, it may take longer for the brain to make the connections when problem solving, concentrating, etc., so the brain is working harder. Managing fatigue is important in order to have appropriate energy for therapeutic, daily and social activities.

What can we do about it?

Energy Conservation techniques should be discussed and practiced throughout the day. Some basic principles are:

Save your energy:

- Be realistic – limit what you can do during the day and do not do unnecessary tasks.
- Increase your activity slowly as your stamina increases.
- Take small breaks throughout the day instead of trying to do as much as you can and then “crashing” for the rest of the day.
- Alternate hard tasks with easy tasks.
- Plan ahead and organize your work.
- Sit during tasks when possible.
- Use the right tools for the job (i.e. electric mixers, electric screwdriver)

Prioritize:

- Prioritize what you want to do in the day, so you have the energy for the most important things.
- Do activities that make you tired at the times of day when you have the most energy. Many people find the morning is the best time to do big tasks.

Pace yourself:

- Do a little bit at a time. Break down tasks and do each part separately, with rest periods in between. For example, vacuuming one room then taking a break.

Pay attention to what triggers your fatigue

- Learn to identify the early signs of fatigue, such as becoming more irritable or distracted. Stop an activity before getting tired.
- Get more sleep and rest. Set a regular sleep and nap schedule throughout the day.



STAFF UPDATE:



Nicole Beauchesne (nicole@blockbuilding.ca) is accepting new referrals for children and adults requiring personal care assessments, OT discharge planning, as well as on-going therapy and consultation for clients with brain and spinal cord injuries. She specializes in complex medical management all over the province (including the Brandon area) and enjoys working alongside other case managers and professionals.

Ashlyn Bohonos (ashlyn@blockbuilding.ca) will be on maternity leave starting October 1, 2011. She will be away until spring 2012 at which time she will be re-allocated her files.



Lisa Page (lisa@blockbuilding.ca) is completing her maternity leave and will return permanently in January, 2012. Lisa continues to specialize in vocational rehabilitation and is happy to take on new referrals in this area.



Stephanie Lacasse (stephanie@blockbuilding.ca) specializes in acquired brain injury as well as personal care assessments. She will complete the PGAP training in November, 2011. Stephanie also offers French Language Services and is accepting new referrals in all areas.



Gloria Dueck (gloria@blockbuilding.ca) will once again provide school based occupational therapy for the Lord Selkirk School Division for the 2011-2012 school year.



Ian MacLennan (ian@blockbuilding.ca) is the newest addition to BBT. He will be doing Northern Fly-Ups and School Therapy. He is also available for complex mental health/ young adolescent clients and is accepting new referrals all over the province and in remote communities.



April Mickelson (april@blockbuilding.ca), also new to BBT April is available to provide personal care assessments, occupational therapy assessments and consultation for clients in the southern Manitoba area (Morden, Carman, Winkler, Brandon and Portage La Prairie). She can be reached at 204-332-0260.



Kristen Proskurniak / Cindy Campbell (kristen@blockbuilding.ca and cindy@blockbuilding.ca) are both part-time/casual staff doing private pediatric referrals in the community. Cindy will also be doing personal care assessments and home visits.

For further assessment, therapy, consultation and/or education on brain injury, please contact Block Building Therapies at:

Phone: 231-0785

Fax: 231-4442

Email: info@blockbuilding.ca

Referral forms for new assessments are also available online at our website: www.blockbuilding.ca

Block Building Therapies thanks you for your continued business.

Sincerely,

Nicole Beauchesne

Nicole Beauchesne, O.T. Reg. (MB)
Manager & Senior Occupational Therapist
Block Building Therapies

Block Building Therapies is pleased to announce its upcoming conference with guest speaker

Dr. Tim Feeney, PhD

Helping People without Making Them Helpless: Supporting Individuals with Disabilities to Develop Self-Regulation

April 19 & 20, 2012
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Greenwood Inn & Suites
Conference Centre
1715 Wellington Ave.
Winnipeg, MB



For more information and to register, please visit our website www.blockbuilding.ca.