

Returning to Work After Brain Injury

Introduction Study Questions

1. Brain injury, refers to an injury sustained by the brain _____ birth, resulting in some degree of damage to the brain.
2. What are the causes of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)?
3. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a classification of Acquired Brain Injury that refers to damage sustained by the brain as a result of _____ .
4. Why is brain injury often referred to as the “Silent Epidemic”?
5. T F A number of individuals with psychiatric disabilities, substance abuse problems, or other disabilities may have had a brain injury that was overlooked or not reported.
6. What are some of the most common causes of Traumatic Brain Injury?
7. Recovery from brain injury, measured in weeks, months and years, is often _____.
8. What type of changes can occur following a brain injury?
9. T F Following a brain injury, some individuals are able to return to their former careers, some need to identify new jobs based on their current set of skills, and others need ongoing supports to be successful with any type of work.

Cognitive Study Questions

1. Job coaches frequently mention problems with _____ as the biggest obstacle a client faces when returning to work.
2. What specific memory problems should be explored in persons with brain injury?
3. List the five steps for learning new tasks.
4. When teaching a worker a task, what should you do if the worker makes a mistake?
5. Most individuals learn best when presented with information verbally combined with _____ instructions and _____.
6. If necessary, break down the task into _____ steps and practice each step until learning has been achieved _____ continuing.
7. Why does linking tasks together help a person learn?
8. Describe and give a work related example (different from the one in the module) of each of the following strategies:
 - a. Mnemonic strategies
 - b. Visual imagery
 - c. Verbal rehearsal
 - d. Number grouping

9. Give three examples of visual strategies that could be used as memory aids:
10. How can supervisors and coworkers support a worker with memory deficits?
11. Tips for using memory aids include:
- Choose the type of devices that will work best for the _____ and the _____.
 - _____ the worker how to use the memory aid.
 - Develop procedures for routinely _____ the memory aid and for remembering to bring it to _____ each day.
12. How would you use job restructuring to accommodate a worker with memory problems?
13. Family members should be encouraged to support their loved one to use the same strategies at _____ that you are teaching on the job. “To do for” their loved one or remind him/her of activities as they occur, will not promote _____ success.
14. Following brain injury, workers may be distracted by the _____ and/or their own _____.
15. One strategy to support individuals who are easily distracted is to use _____ systems to signal the client to focus on the task.
16. T F Asking a worker to repeat information that was just heard helps to ensure that the conversation or instructions were understood.
17. _____ refers to the ability to take information or skills learned in one situation and carry over that knowledge to a new situation.
18. What are some challenges that difficulty with generalization can present for workers with TBI?
19. Difficulty paying attention to details impacts the _____ of work performed.

20. _____ include skills such as initiation, planning, decision making, self-correction, and time awareness.
21. Describe at least one strategy that you have used (or could use) at a job site to help a person with difficulties in each of the following areas of executive functioning. Describe the task and the strategy.
- a. Planning and Organization
 - b. Initiation (ability to begin activities)
 - c. Decision Making
 - d. Time Awareness
 - e. Self-Correction
22. Which of the following are examples of perseveration?
- a. The worker may begin discussing a topic with co-workers and have difficulty moving on to a new topic.
 - b. The worker may have a disagreement with the supervisor and be unable to “let it go.”
 - c. The worker may begin a job task and be unable to switch to the next task.
 - d. The worker may perform a task incorrectly and despite correction from the supervisor, continue to perform the task incorrectly.
 - e. The worker may experience an emotion (anger, sadness, happiness) and may be unable to get past this feeling – to the point that it interferes with work performance.
 - f. All of the above
23. Workers may be unaware of when they are perseverating and benefit from _____ to let the person know the behavior is occurring.
24. T F Advise workers who are inflexible to avoid arguing with their supervisors about changes in the work environment or tasks. It is okay to discuss issues, but the supervisor has the final word.
25. T F Whenever possible, provide workers who are inflexible with advanced warning or information about upcoming changes.

Emotional and Behavioral Issues Study Questions

1. _____ and _____ issues are the most common reasons workers with brain injury lose or quit their jobs.
2. What problems can a lack of awareness of strengths and limitations create for a person with TBI when returning to work?
3. Strategies to assist a person in developing awareness of their strengths and limitations post injury include:
 - a. Provide immediate _____ (both positive and negative) about work performance.
 - b. Ask how they think they will do before completing a task. Provide immediate feedback. _____ how they thought they would do and how they actually performed.
 - c. Have the person _____ performance throughout the day.
 - d. Develop _____ to avoid social improprieties.
 - e. Encourage the worker to _____ from mistakes.
4. If a worker with TBI is a “conversation hog”, support him/her by:
 - a. Providing positive _____ for appropriate conversation
 - b. Developing an external _____ to let the person know he/she needs to stop talking.
 - c. Saying, “We need to keep this conversation brief. It’s time to get back to work.” Share the strategy with _____, _____, and _____ as appropriate.
 - d. Suggesting that the person ask others what they think in order to promote _____ conversations.
 - e. Teaching co-workers and supervisors that it is acceptable to politely _____ the person who speaks non-stop.
5. How can you support workers who have trouble initiating conversations or asking for help?
6. How would you teach a worker with TBI about social boundaries?
7. What is egocentricity and what behaviors might tell you that a person has this tendency?

8. T F It is important to point out to the client when a co-worker has been offended or turned off by the client's egocentricity, and to do so as soon as possible following the incident.
9. T F Some people with TBI have difficulty interpreting co-workers' facial expressions and gestures and other nonverbal cues.
10. _____ is often the reason that individuals with brain injury fail to progress in vocational efforts. Their responses may be misinterpreted as laziness or depression. However, apathy is not psychological in origin but rather a _____ reaction in the damaged area of the brain that fails to interpret and respond to emotional information in a conventional manner.
11. What is the first step in reducing impulsivity?
12. Strategies to support a worker with impulsive tendencies include:
- a. Provide clear _____
 - b. Use a job _____.
 - c. Encourage the person to slow down and consider _____ consequences.
 - d. Provide external _____ and gestures.
 - e. _____ back to the task or topic.
 - f. Address inappropriate behavior in _____ with _____ feedback and as soon as possible.
 - g. Encourage the _____ and _____ to implement the same strategies.
13. T F Our emotions are neither good nor bad, and they cannot be ignored or prevented; it is the way in which we handle our emotions that is key.
14. What is the first strategy for supporting individuals with TBI who exhibit inappropriate responses to anger?
15. As a job coach, how would you support a worker who becomes angry about a coworker who talks too much?
16. _____ may be a signal that an injured person is becoming more aware of his deficits. This greater awareness can be seen as a sign of hope since without awareness, a person can neither see her challenges nor take steps to help herself.
17. Treatment for depression is _____.

18. What strategies can job coaches use to support individuals with depression?
19. Anxiety is _____ as likely to occur in individuals with brain injury as in non-injured populations.
20. What does anxiety look like?
21. What strategies can job coaches use to support individuals with anxiety?
- Provide _____ that these feelings are common.
 - Educate supervisors and co-workers about the need for _____.
 - Prepare the worker for _____.
 - Encourage _____ - scripts.
 - Provide _____ on performance
 - Encourage _____ and deep _____ exercises
 - Use mental _____.
 - Encourage _____ exercise, _____ beverages, and regular _____ schedule.
22. T F Issues that are only a slight inconvenience for most people, may become very annoying for people with brain injury due to inadequate functioning of the part of the brain that keeps these feelings under control.
23. What strategies are suggested to support workers experiencing irritability when they return to work?
- Start _____ and gradually increase work hours as the client's tolerance for work activity increases.
 - Provide _____ training for co-workers.
 - Help the client develop _____ ways of expressing feelings of frustration.
 - Encourage _____ self-talk.
 - Ask employer to allow _____ when the person is feeling frustrated.
 - Encourage _____ management techniques.
 - Give periodic praise, reinforcement and _____ feedback.
24. _____ are frequently used to reduce the symptoms of emotional lability.
25. Define emotional lability.

Physical Issues Study Questions

1. Physical issues following brain injury are the result of damage to the parts of the brain that control _____function rather than direct injuries to the affected body part.
2. Many of the physical problems that occur because of a brain injury can be compensated for with the use of _____.
3. T F The job coach should assess the appropriateness of assistive devices for the work site and job and relay questions and concerns.
4. _____ is the most common physical complaint reported after brain injury.
5. Strategies to support a worker experiencing fatigue include:
 - a. Begin with a _____ schedule or split shifts.
 - b. Schedule work when the person feels the most _____.
 - c. Schedule frequent breaks, at least five minutes each _____.
 - d. Explain that trying harder will or working longer will not help; _____ will.
 - e. Avoid _____ work sites and _____ distractions.
 - f. Encourage the use of _____ to reduce mental fatigue.
 - g. Encourage _____ meals and snacks.
6. More than _____ of people with brain injury will experience insomnia or other forms of sleep disturbance.
7. What are four indicators a worker is experiencing pain?
8. Strategies to support a worker experiencing pain include:
 - a. _____ between sitting and standing.
 - b. Avoid _____ movements.
 - c. Allow for 30 second _____ breaks.
 - d. Stretch in the _____ direction of the work activity.
 - e. Observe good body _____.
 - f. _____ the weight someone needs to carry.

Other Issues Study Questions

1. Which of the following reasons may contribute to inconsistency in work performance for workers with brain injury?
 - a. Damage to the frontal lobes in the brain (which control executive functions).
 - b. Diminished control over the cognitive, emotional, and physical challenges that result from brain injury.
 - c. Pain and fatigue.
 - d. A bad night's sleep or a headache.
 - e. Reactions to stressors, either at home or at work.
 - f. All of the above
2. T F If a person experiences fluctuations in work performance, the best plan is to find a job that matches a client's abilities on the majority of the days that he is working.
3. Describe the sensations a person may notice when experiencing sensory overload.
4. What environmental factors can contribute to sensory overload?
5. Strategies to support a worker who experiences sensory overload include:
 - a. Find a job in a _____ environment.
 - b. Suggest the person wear clothing that will allow him/her to regulate for _____.
 - c. Request that other employees _____ perfume or after-shave.
 - d. Move the workstation to an area with less _____.
 - e. Use quiet music or _____.
 - f. _____ clutter.
 - g. Schedule the worker when there are _____ workers and distractions.
 - h. Take breaks, perform relaxation exercises to regulate _____, and incorporate _____ activity.
6. _____ identification and intervention for substance abuse provide the best opportunity for a successful return to work.
7. Because denial is a component of substance abuse, what questions could be asked to learn about the workers consumption of alcohol or use of recreational drugs?

8. What strategies may assist the worker in maintaining sobriety?

9. Why is it important to meet the family and see where the strengths lie both within the client and the family?

10. Family members can assist with the return to work by:
 - a. Promoting in-home _____ of behavioral and cognitive strategies.
 - b. Helping the worker become work-ready through daily _____.
 - c. Encouraging physical _____ and _____ meals.
 - d. Allowing _____ periods only as needed.
 - e. Encouraging _____.
 - f. Acknowledging the person's _____ and successes.
 - g. _____ appropriate behaviors.
 - h. Encouraging _____ from alcohol and _____ from alcohol when in the presence of the family member.