

# Specialized Substance Use Disorders Treatment Program

No two individuals with traumatic brain injury are alike and individual differences are compounded by the injury severity and location of the damage to the brain, the secondary medical complications, the adjustment to motor, cognitive and emotional effects, as well as the varied relational, environmental and lifestyle factors, past and current.

All of the above may be exacerbated by the self-medication with, or use of, alcohol and other drugs. Balance, walking, talking, impulsivity, seizure susceptibility, memory, concentration, interference with the ability to work or maintain relationships, as well as the risk of further brain injury are also problematic in the client using alcohol or other drugs.

At TBI Solutions, substance use disorders treatment is geared to addressing the challenges inherent in providing treatment services to the client with a traumatic brain injury. It is built on the premise that use of substances after a brain injury is inconsistent with healthy recovery. Studies of clients with a traumatic brain injury and substance use issues confirm that alcohol and other drug use interferes with, and prolongs rehabilitation.

At the initial assessment, clients are given the SASSI-3 (Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition), which research has shown to be a reliable measure of substance use in a client with a brain injury. They are also given the URICA (University of Rhode Island Change Assessment) to determine at what level of change readiness the client comes into treatment: 1. No awareness of any problem 2. Ambivalence about the need to change any behaviors 3. Acknowledgement of problems, but no real plan of action 4. Specific goals are set, and behavior change is incorporated into lifestyle, or 5. The changed behavior is now a part of the client's regular routine.

Treatment services include: individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, family therapy, didactic education, early intervention, early recovery, relapse prevention, as well as 12 Step programs on site. We understand that there are many paths to a common goal, so our wide range of life enhancing groups and activities are offered to replace negative behaviors and replace them with positive ones.

Multiple compensatory strategies are employed to accommodate the learning styles of clients including repetition, review and rehearsal; paraphrasing; visual depictions of concepts; role playing; use of acronyms as mnemonics; rephrasing for generalizability; videos, articles, workbooks to accommodate cognitive abilities and direct feedback regarding inappropriate behaviors. All services are provided by licensed Master's level and above clinicians, documented in a progress note to include date, times, and signature of client.

Clients are not required to be committed to behavior change with regard to their substance use upon entry to the program; rather 'no awareness' and 'ambivalence' are natural stages that clients go through that we can accommodate in our treatment plans. Clients with a brain injury may have limited awareness of their deficits, so treatment needs to vary based on each client's ability to self-reflect and become aware. The TBI Solutions' continuum of care addresses each client's needs specifically at the point that they are at right now, to move them toward a more satisfying life without the use of illicit substances.

An important aspect of treatment is relationship-building (fostering trust and the therapeutic alliance). At TBI Solutions we understand that for the client with a brain injury, relationships with others are often the catalyst that turns information into action. This may be a prolonged process over several months in the client with cognitive and emotional impairments due to the rigidity, concreteness and suspiciousness of the client. Our ethical, caring clinical professionals and our structured team approach to treatment offers each client the positive support to overcome those barriers which leads to positive outcomes.