

# What is an Acquired Brain Injury?

An Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is an injury that has occurred after birth, in childhood or adulthood.

As many as 19,000 brain injuries happen in Ireland every year from causes including stroke, road traffic accidents, falls, assaults and brain tumours. That's 52 people every day – men and women of all ages – acquiring a brain injury that can affect their lives and those of their family for months and years after the initial injury. This often results in a dramatically altered life at home, in work or in social settings.

Often people after brain injury can look fine but may be experiencing problems which impact on their day-to-day lives. Returning to education, training and work can be challenging. This may affect not only the individual themselves but also their families, employers and colleagues. Acquiring a brain injury can cause a wide range of functional changes affecting thinking, sensation, language or emotions. Brain injury survivors can experience difficulties with:

- Memory and reasoning
- Touch, taste and smell
- Communication, expression and understanding
- Depression, anxiety, personality changes, aggression, acting out and social inappropriateness



## About Us:

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland is the country's leading provider of community rehabilitation for those of working age (18-65 years) living with and recovering from an acquired brain injury. Access to personalised community rehabilitation services like ours is vital to rebuild lives after hospital. Because every brain injury is unique.



**Acquired Brain Injury Ireland** is an internationally recognised and accredited provider of community based neuro-rehabilitation services for people affected by brain injury.

## My contact details

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For a full list of our current support groups please go to our website.

[www.abiireland.ie/on-with-life](http://www.abiireland.ie/on-with-life)



**ACQUIRED  
BRAIN INJURY  
IRELAND**

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**ACQUIRED  
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## On With Life

Support Groups for Family & Friends

- Peer to Peer Support
- Practical Coping Strategies
- Mind Body Health



This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund



## We're here for you

At Acquired Brain Injury Ireland we believe in a person-centred approach. This means we pay attention, not only to the needs of brain injury survivors but also to the needs of family carers and friends. We have learned a lot about what helps a family carer carry on this valuable role and how carers need support too. We are here to share this information with you to help you understand more about brain injury and the new life you are currently living.

## About *On With Life*

Living with and caring for someone with a brain injury is a life-changing event. Our *On With Life* support groups give family members and friends an opportunity to share experiences, information and support each other.

We take a proactive approach to reduce stress, anxiety and caregiver burden for families and friends caring for a loved one with brain injury. Our support groups provide a safe space where participants can express emotion, acknowledge feelings or question thoughts and beliefs. We help people focus on helpful actions they can take to support themselves.

If you are newly impacted as a family by an acquired brain injury, you will benefit from hearing from families with more lived experience as they share information and talk about the coping skills they used to support themselves through this change in their lives. People attending the groups find this support beneficial. Our Support groups will initially be facilitated by staff members to ensure the groups are run to the highest standards.

## The benefits to you



Our brain injury support network will give you an opportunity to share the reality of living with an acquired brain injury in the family, in a confidential, safe place.



We will provide you with information on steps to take to keep yourself physically and emotionally healthy.



We aim to cover a range of topics to educate and support families and friends as they cope with the challenges of brain injury and we will invite guest speakers from time to time.

## We understand

We know that caring for a loved one with brain injury can be difficult without any help or support. Many family members and friends are thrust into the role of carer without warning. In addition, many of you may also be looking out for the health and wellbeing of other family members. Or you may have a job outside the home. Juggling all of these challenges is not easy. We're here to help you get '*On With Life*'.



## Who can come along?

*On With Life* is open to family members of brain injury survivors living with an acquired brain injury. You may already be linked into our services and now wish to avail of our new brain injury support groups. Or joining our *On With Life* support group network may be your first introduction to Acquired Brain Injury Ireland. You are all welcome. At any time you can contact our *On With Life* Co-ordinator Dolores Gallagher, if you wish to discuss coming to the group or to see if it's right for you.

## Support for everyone who needs it

Our ambition is to establish a network of *On With Life* support groups all over the country, thanks to funding approved by the Government and the Dormant Accounts Fund.