



Participant & Family HANDBOOK

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Welcome to the Vista Centre Brain Injury Service (VCBIS) Family.

Hello,

This handbook will provide you with information about what our organization offers to individuals with an acquired brain injury and their families. Among other things, it talks about our services and programs, your rights and responsibilities, health and safety issues, our approach to service delivery and what you can expect now that you are part of VCBIS.

If you have any questions, at any time, please don't hesitate to contact our staff, our Program Managers or me so that we can work together with you to provide the highest quality levels of individualized service possible.

Sincerely,

David F. Walls
Executive Director
VCBIS

Who We Are



Vista Centre Brain Injury Services (VCBIS) is a not-for-profit charitable organization, which has been providing specialized services and support to persons living with the effects of Acquired Brain Injury for more than 25 years.

VCBIS offers a range of services which includes:

- Assisted Living Services
- Personal Support Independence Training
- Adult Day Services
- Support groups

VCBIS receive most of its funding from the Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

VCBIS also supports participants on a **Fee-for-Service** basis where funding is available from a **third party payor**, insurance settlement or personal funding.

VCBIS has been accredited with **Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada** for our most recent accreditation 2012 – 2016. VCBIS has consistently shown progress, commitment, and accountability in providing quality participant and family-centered services. 'Exemplary standing' is the highest level awarded by Accreditation Canada.

VCBIS is actively involved in the larger acquired brain injury community and has partnerships with many other organizations locally and provincially.

OUR MISSION...

VISTA CENTRE BRAIN INJURY SERVICES provides quality, caring, continual support to persons living with the effects of Acquired Brain Injury.

We help them enhance their relationships, personal abilities, and life skills, while assisting them to maximize their potential within the community.

OUR VISION...

VISTA CENTRE BRAIN INJURY SERVICES provides the highest quality levels of service to the maximum number of participants in a cutting-edge facility, and is recognized as the leading service provider to the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) community in the Greater-Ottawa area/Champlain LHIN.

OUR PHILOSOPHY...

VISTA CENTRE BRAIN INJURY SERVICES believes in an individual's ability to develop and to participate in society. **VISTA CENTRE BRAIN INJURY SERVICES** provides each participant with the opportunity to move towards his/her maximum emotional, social, vocational, educational, cognitive, spiritual and financial potential, with dignity and confidence.

VCBIS SERVICES



Acquired Brain Injury Day Services

A social leisure, community integration and skill development program for individuals who have an ABI. The program encourages participants to develop leisure lifestyle skills, broaden their community awareness, improve self esteem and develop social relationships. Programs and activities are designed with participant input.

Acquired Brain Injury Day Services participants describe their experiences with VCBIS:

"The day program means a lot to me as it is the only program that I am currently attending. I have been coming ever since it started. It gets me out of the house twice a week and I get to see friends, some of whom I have known since the program began."

- Wilf

"I am very happy to be back at the day program! I was too ill to come for a period of time. The day program allows me to take part in activities such as playing the drums on gesture extreme and playing bingo. I also get to see friends and have different snacks."

- Raoul

"I would give the day program a score of 100 out of 100! Everyone is very friendly. We get to play games and have coffee together. It gives me a reason to leave my house."

- Jody

"The day program is wonderful for a number of reasons. First, through the program I have made new friends. Second, we get to have treats (I especially enjoy them when they are sweet). Third, I enjoy getting to play games like bingo, even when I don't win! Fourth, I enjoy getting to play different sports in the gym. Fifth, the staffs are very friendly and seem like they are happy to be here. Sixth, I like having a scheduled activity."

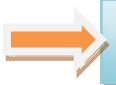
- Greg

"The day program allows me to integrate with other people. Now that I can't work, it gives me the opportunity to try new activities and socialize."

- Steven

"The day program is a great place to make friends!"

- Nabil



Assisted Living Program

VCBIS currently operates one residential home that is located in the Westboro area. The home provides staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Each participant is involved in developing their own rehabilitation goals with assistance from the Residential Counsellors. All programs and scheduled activities are created based on the participant's needs and interests. **Individuals are encouraged to maintain an independent lifestyle.** The role of the residential counsellors is to assist participants with a variety of tasks, including activities of daily living, socialization, participating in meaningful, productive activities and establishing frequent community involvement. An individual's rehabilitation is based on the mutual effort between the participant, family members, staff and partnerships in the community.



Personal Support Independence Training

On an outreach basis, VCBIS offers individuals with the opportunity to fully participate in their community, by providing support in their own environment. VCBIS encourages participants to establish and direct their own services, with support from fully trained counsellors. Participants receive individualized support to determine their goals in relation to work, education, home and leisure activities. Services include:

- Development of a plan outlining an individual's goals and the steps necessary to accomplish these goals.
- Assistance with planning and learning strategies to increase independence.
- Support to complete daily activities; e.g. budgeting, groceries and meal planning, cooking, home organization.
- Strategies to improve learning, problem solving and memory limitations.
- Maintenance of existing support is encouraged



Support Groups

VCBIS offers a variety of group activities specifically designed to meet the various need and interest of our participants, here are a few examples.

Adjustment Group

The main objective of the VCBIS Adjustment Group is to promote cognitive development and social/emotional adjustment to individuals recovering and living with the effects of an acquired brain injury. This is achieved through the sharing of experiences among participants and their active participation in the discussion of educational material presented and facilitated by a staff member, in a non-judgemental and non competitive environment.

Healing HeART

- A therapeutic form of communication for individuals who might otherwise have a difficult time expressing themselves
- A Symbolic self-expression of various thoughts, emotions, memories and feelings.

Although workshops are therapeutic, we are not art therapists. Participants are there to create and express without a counsellors interpretation.

Anger Management

A 16 week program, designed to explore ways to express anger constructively, debunk some common myths surrounding anger and learn effective skills and strategies to improve communication with others as well as reducing the presentation of anger.

Our Staff

VCBIS has a staff of approximately 50 individuals. Each staff member has a university degree or college diploma. Many are educated in areas such as behavioural science and technology, recreation, psychology, and social work.

What kind of training do VCBIS staffs have?

VCBIS staff members receive intensive on-site training where they learn about participant support, and agency systems and procedures. During the first three months at VCBIS, staffs participate in intensive orientation training session where they are introduced to the agency's philosophy and approach to service. They also receive training in a number of other areas including:

Skills for working with Participants and Families

- Brain Injury Basics
- Skills for Collaboration
- Brain and Behaviour
- Errorless Learning
- Sexuality and Brain Injury
- Family-Centered Support
- Boundaries in the Staff/Participant Relationship
- Medication Management
- ABI Rehabilitation Certificate
- Neurorehabilitation: Assisting Recovery and Function in Everyday Life Following Brain Injury (Level 1)
- Neuronehavioural Disorders: Their Origin, Nature and Rehabilitation (Level 2)

Health and Safety related

- First Aid / CPR
- Safe Management
- Infection Prevention
- Prevention of Workplace Musculoskeletal Injuries

Who will be my main contact person?

Please check your 'MY SUPPORT TEAM-CONTACT SHEET' which is in the front pocket of this folder. If you have any questions about who to call for what, please contact VCBIS main office and they will be able to help you.

Person and Family Centered Care

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Vista Centre Brain Injury Services (VCBIS) decided to make Person and Family Centered Care (PFCC) the foundation and principle aim of the organization.

In an effort to improve quality of care and safety, VCBIS realizes the importance of including the perspective of patients and families. The experience of care, as perceived by the patient and family, is a key factor in health care quality and safety.

Bringing the perspectives of patients and families directly into the **planning, delivery and evaluation** of services and thereby improving its quality and safety is what PFCC is all about. Studies increasingly show that when health care administrators, providers, patients and families work in partnership, the quality and safety of health care rise, costs decrease, and provider and patient satisfaction increase.

WHAT IS PFCC?

PFCC is an approach to the planning, delivery and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among patients, families, and health care providers. It is founded on the understanding that the family plays a vital role in ensuring the health and well-being of patients of all ages. In patient and family centered care, patients and families define their “family” and determine how they will participate in care and decision making.

*Patient and Family Centred Care is:
Working **with** clients and families, rather than just doing “to” and “for” them.*

WHAT IS MEANT BY “FAMILY”?

Person or persons who are related in any way (biologically, legally, or emotionally), including immediate relatives and other individuals in the client’s support network. Family includes a client’s extended family, partners, friends, advocates, guardians, and other individuals. The client defines the makeup of their family, and has the right to include or not include family members in their care, and redefine the makeup of their family over time.



THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF PFCC:



DIGNITY AND RESPECT

- Health care providers listen to and honor patient and family perspectives and choices.
- Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into care planning and decision-making.

INFORMATON SHARING

- Health care providers communicate and share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in ways that are affirming and useful.
- Patients and families receive timely, complete, accurate information in order to effectively participate in care and decision-making.

PARTICIPATION

- Patients and families are encouraged and supported in participating in care and decision-making at the level they choose.

COLLABORATION

- Patients, families, and providers collaborate in policy and program development, implementation, and assessment; in health care facility design; and in professional education, as well as in the delivery of care.

BENEFITS OF PFCC - Patient's Perspective

- ▶ Better quality of care (according to providers and clients)
- ▶ Better clients and family satisfaction
- ▶ Fewer conflicts/complaints, misunderstandings
- ▶ Increase client empowerment for self-management
- ▶ Improved client functional outcomes (e.g., emotional well-being, independence)
- ▶ Greater involvement of family and support systems
- ▶ Increase adherence to care/support plan clients co-create

MOVING FORWARD WITH PFCC

Establishing patient and family centered care requires a long-term commitment. This approach to care is a journey, not a destination— one that requires continual exploration and evaluation of new ways to collaborate with patients and families.

VCBIS will ensure that everyone associated with the organization (patients, family, senior leaders, front line staff, students, volunteers etc.) is familiar about patient and family centered care approach.

VCBIS will actively seek **Engagement of patients and families to be involved in a PFCC Steering Committee/Working Group and act as Patient or Family advisors.**

WHAT IS A PATIENT AND FAMILIES ADVISORS

An advisor is a patient or family member that has used the services of the organization; whom has been asked to become a partner to provide direct input and influence on policies, programs, and practices affecting care and services for patients and families.

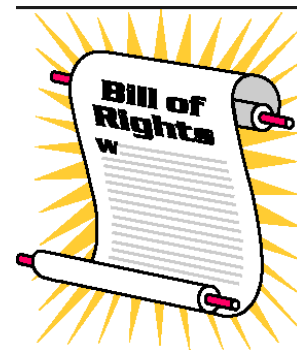
Clients and families actively engaged in the PFCC Steering Committee maybe involved in the following:

- Developing and updating the mission/vision, strategic plan, philosophy of care statements and policy outlining client/family rights and responsibilities
- Co-design of programs and services
- Co-designing new space and determining optimal use of current space to best support comfort, recovery, and safety
- Developing/refining assessment and care planning processes and templates, hiring processes, policies, procedures, guidelines, professional development /education, documentation/communication process
- Evaluation and quality improvement initiatives
- Dissemination of quality improvement/evaluation results
- The process to select evidence-informed guidelines that are appropriately linked to improved client experience and outcomes
- Participating as members of the governing body

Your Bill of Rights

HOW ARE MY RIGHTS PROTECTED?

Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long -Term Care has a law called the Long -Term Care Act. The Act contains a Bill of Rights. This is a set of rules about how people who receive services should be treated. VCBIS adheres to this Bill of Rights.



WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

There are nine important rights that you should know about. These rights belong to you, by law, and are as follows:

YOUR BILL OF RIGHTS

1. Courtesy, Respect and Freedom From Abuse
2. Privacy and Freedom to Make Your Own Decisions
3. Recognition of Your Individual Preferences
4. Information and Answers About Your Support
5. Participation in the Development and Evaluation of Your Service Plan
6. Right to Give or Refuse Consent to Service
7. Freedom to Speak Out
8. Knowing VCBIS' Rules and Policies
9. Confidentiality of Your Personal Information

The booklet that comes with this Handbook will tell you more about each of these rights. It is called 'KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.'

If you ever feel that one of your rights is not being respected, please follow the guidelines in the VCBIS' Complaint Procedure on pages 12.

What Are my Responsibilities?

As a participant of VCBIS, you also have a number of responsibilities. Some of these expectations are outlined in the **Service Agreement** that you sign when you first begin working with VCBIS, and they are also listed below:

1. Active Participation

VCBIS staff will work with you and your family to develop a **Service Plan** to help you meet your goals and identify supports if you are in the PSIT, Assisted Living program or Day program. VCBIS cannot make this happen without your involvement. You are expected to actively participate in setting goals, planning for your support, and working with support staff toward meeting your goals.



2. DO NOT use alcohol or drugs

Research indicates that substance use and brain injury do not mix. VCBIS believes that you may not fully benefit from services if you use alcohol or street drugs or misuse your prescription drugs. If you are under the influence of these substances during a time when you are scheduled to meet with a staff member or participate in a VCBIS activity, the session may be discontinued or you may be asked to leave. If this becomes a frequent problem, VCBIS may request that you seek substance abuse counselling either before continuing with VCBIS services or at the same time. For more information please refer to Page 32: the 'Alcohol and Drug Use' section.



3. Treat other participants and VCBIS staff with respect

You are expected to treat all staff members and participants with courtesy and consideration and to remember that they have the same rights and responsibilities that you do.



VCBIS Complaint Procedure

VCBIS works hard to provide the best possible service and always strives to improve. You can help us do that by letting VCBIS know how you are feeling about your support.

1. Talk to any staff member.

VCBIS expects its staff to respect your rights and treat you with dignity. If you feel that you are not being treated respectfully, or if you have questions or concerns about your support, please talk to a staff member. Often the best place to start is to speak directly with your Primary Counsellor or another front-line worker that you feel comfortable talking with. You may also speak with another representative of VCBIS, such as a Manager. All staff members have a responsibility to report your concerns to their supervisors so you know your concerns will be heard.



2. Your concerns may be brought to the Executive Director.



If you are not satisfied with the way your questions or concerns have been addressed so far, you may bring your concern to the Executive Director, David Walls. David can be reached at **(613) 729-9379** or by e-mail at **dfwalls@vistacentre.ca**. You can also write him a letter addressed to **211-214 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5**.

3. Your concern may be brought to the VCBIS Board of Directors.

VCBIS has a Board of Directors, which is made up of volunteer community members. If you are not satisfied with the Executive Director's response, you may lodge your complaint with the chairperson of the VCBIS Board of Directors. They can be contacted in writing at: **211-214 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5**.



4. The Health Services Appeal and Review Board (HSARB)

If you are still not satisfied after receiving a response from the VCBIS Board of Directors, you have a legal right to take your complaint to the HSARB. The HSARB is an independent body made up of members of the general public. For general information about the appeal process, you can visit their website at **www.hsarb.on.ca**. You can contact the HSARB by telephone at **416-327-8512** or by e-mail at **hsarb@ontario.ca**. To start the appeal process, you must write to the HSARB and ask for a hearing. They will tell you how to do this. The HSARB will tell you when your hearing is scheduled and what you need to do to prepare. After the hearing, the HSARB will send you a letter about its decision.

If I file a complaint, will my services be affected?

The Bill of Rights states that you have the right to raise concerns or recommend changes about your services. VCBIS will not refuse or reduce services to you if you file a complaint.



VCBIS takes all complaints seriously.



VCBIS Commitment to Privacy

Confidentiality

Confidentiality means keeping your personal information private. Information about you will only be shared under the following circumstances:



1. Within your VCBIS support team

The staffs at VCBIS work as a team. Team members may share relevant information with each other to make sure that you get the support you need.

2. With the consent of you or your substitute decision maker

If VCBIS staffs are asked to release verbal or written information about you or your support to anyone outside of VCBIS, they will need permission from you or your substitute decision maker. VCBIS will only share information that is relevant to the specific request.

3. In exceptional situations

VCBIS' employees may be required to share confidential information (possibly without your consent) in the following situations:

- if required to do so by a court of law (e.g. a subpoena)
- if you require emergency medical attention
- if you are in a situation that results in police involvement (e.g. missing person)
- if VCBIS believes that you or someone else might be in danger, for example, if the situation involves abuse or potential self-harm.

VCBIS Personal Information Policy

At VCBIS, we are committed to protecting your privacy. We collect and use your personal health information to provide the best service possible. VCBIS recognizes the importance of privacy and the sensitivity of your personal information. We are committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected through practices and policies that relate to collecting, using, sharing, and keeping personal information, consistent with Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004.

Why does VCBIS need your personal information?

Personal and financial information are collected in order to:

- Determine your eligibility for service, your eligibility for subsidy, and your service needs.
- Provide you with individualized services that relate to your needs.
- Maintain a list of applicants waiting for services.
- Satisfy legal requirements.
- Improve the quality of our services including the management of risk.
- Teach students and other professionals.
- Make referrals on your behalf to other healthcare providers for additional services.
- Do research to improve our knowledge in acquired brain injury.

What personal information does VCBIS collect and keep?

- Your personal information related to the service(s) provided or being requested.
- Reports on your goals, progress, support needs, medical and psychological information that relate to your service plan. This information is most often shared with you or persons acting on your behalf on a regular basis.
- Personal information about you received from other sources where the information helps us have a better understanding of your needs and your progress.
- Your personal information profile that provides important contacts and personal health information for everyday staff use and for use in an emergency.

How does VCBIS collect your personal information?

- We receive your personal information from other agencies and organizations, which have obtained your consent to share information with us.
- Personal information is collected in the form of the 'Request For Service' or 'ABI Participant Community Profile' submitted by you or a person acting on your behalf.
- We may also receive personal information from other health professionals, service providers, and family members, both written and verbal, supporting your application.
- Personal information is collected during your screening interview with VCBIS intake and assessment team.
- Ongoing information is shared with us by others who are providing you with continuing service.

When does VCBIS disclose personal information?

- VCBIS only discloses your personal information for the reason it is collected unless you give us your consent to disclose for other reasons, or we are required or authorized to do so by law.
- Our staff, students and volunteers are provided access to your personal information in order to provide service and/or carry out their assignments. However, the amount of personal information made available is limited to what is needed to carry out the assignment or to provide the service.
- You further direct the disclosure of personal information to others involved in your support through the service planning and service agreement process.
- In the event that you are at some risk of serious harm or your actions would put someone at serious risk of harm, VCBIS will disclose, without consent, personal information necessary to reduce the risk of harm to the individual or individuals.
- VCBIS makes referrals on your behalf to other health care or community service providers for additional services or to apply for financial benefits.

What choices do I have regarding my personal information?

- You may withdraw your consent for some of the above-mentioned use and disclosure.
- You may direct us to share or not to share some or all of the personal information about you to certain people or agencies.
- In certain circumstances limiting our ability to collect information may impede our ability to provide comprehensive service.
- You can request access to and seek correction of your personal information

What steps does VCBIS take to protect the security of my information?

VCBIS takes steps to:

- Ensure that everyone who works or performs services for us protects your privacy and uses your personal information only for the purposes to which you have consented.
- Protect your personal health information from theft, loss and unauthorized access, copying, modification, use, disclosure, and disposal.
- Complete audits and investigations to monitor and manage our privacy compliance.

Who do I contact for more information?

VCBIS' Privacy Officer can tell you more about how we protect your health information. If you have questions or concerns, contact Tammy Kuchynski, Privacy Officer:

Telephone: (613) 237-4747, ext. 25

E-mail: tammy@vistacentre.ca

Address: can be contacted in writing at: **211-214 Bronson Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6H5.**



If you believe that your privacy rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario:

Telephone: (416) 326-3333

Address: 2 Bloor Street East, Suite 1400

Toronto, Ontario

M4W 1A8

Web: www.ipc.on.ca

Working Together for Safety and Health

At VCBIS, concern for everyone's health and safety is at the centre of everything that we do. VCBIS management is committed to supporting your health and safety; however, at the same time, they need to provide a healthy and safe work environment for staff who work at VCBIS sites and in the community. We are constantly checking to see how we are doing in this area, as part of our commitment to quality improvement at VCBIS. We will be most successful at creating a safe and healthy environment for everyone if we all work together. Participants, families, staff, and volunteers all make up the VCBIS safety team.

What is VCBIS Doing to Keep the Focus on Safety and Health for Everyone?

Staff Training:

Staff members are trained regularly about providing services in a way that is safe for you and for them. You will see some examples in the information below. Staff members also receive regular training in First Aid and CPR, to equip them to deal with medical emergencies.

Assessment & Support Planning:

Participants at VCBIS go through an **assessment process** and have an **individualized Service Plan** that helps us identify and plan for their specific safety and support needs. **Support procedures, routines, scripts and protocols** may be developed with you, to help you do certain activities in the safest way.

Your PSIT Counsellor will also do a Home and Community Safety Assessment when he/she comes to visit your home, to see if there are safety hazards for you or for them.

Participants in the ADS program go through a brief sampling assessment to see if they might need extra support to safely participate. If you have special needs, that information is recorded in your Service Agreement and in the Information Profile that staff use. It might mean that you will need to bring a support person with you to safely participate in the program.

Reporting, Investigation and Tracking of Incidents:

Safety-related issues, incidents, and 'near-miss' incidents are reported, investigated, and tracked to make sure that VCBIS makes the improvements that are needed to keep things as safe as possible for everyone.

Staff Workgroups and Development of Policies:

A number of workgroups, such as the Participant Safety and Wellness Workgroup, Community Safety Workgroup and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee review VCBIS policies and practices and make recommendations about how we can all do things in a way that is safer for both participants and staff.

Education and Information:

There is a '**Safety at VCBIS**' bulletin board in the VCBIS' offices. This board provides up-to-date information for participants, families, and visitors regarding various safety issues.

What Participant Health and Safety Issue Does VCBIS Focus On?

Although we at VCBIS are committed to addressing all health and safety risks, these are some of the main areas that we are working on:

Falls Prevention:

VCBIS has a Falls Prevention Program because we know that falls are one of the major causes of injury-related hospitalizations.

Please read the brochure included with this Handbook, and found on VCBIS website, to learn more about what we can all do to prevent falls and the related injuries.

Infection Prevention and Control Program:

Staff members receive regular training on infection control practices such as hand hygiene, housekeeping procedures, and monitoring of infection rates.

- ***Did you know that hand washing or using hand sanitizer is the single most important thing we can all do to prevent the spread of germs and infectious illnesses?***



Choking Prevention and Management:

Choking is a serious risk for anyone, but individuals with brain injury can be at an increased risk because of challenges with swallowing, impulsivity and poor judgment.

Specific training is provided to staff to help them prevent incidents and intervene, if needed.

Medication Management:

VCBIS recognizes that mistakes involving medications can be very serious and put your health at risk. Staff members that are involved with giving participants medication, receive extensive training regarding safe administration.



Emergency Preparedness and Response System:

VCBIS has developed agency plans and procedures and regularly holds practice drills to ensure staff know what to do in an emergency.

The system includes **Fire Plans** for all VCBIS sites, a **Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan**, an **Influenza Pandemic Plan**, and an **Inclement Weather Policy**



What are your Health and Safety Responsibilities?

Safety for VCBIS Staff in your Home and Community:

There may be safety hazards in your home and community that can put you and your PSIT Counsellor at risk for injury.

If you have a PSIT Counsellor that visits your home, **you need to prepare for the home visit by using the 'Your Community Safety Responsibilities'** checklist provided in the front pocket of this Participant and Family Handbook. The checklist tells you what you need to do in your home environment to make things as safe as possible for you and the VCBIS staff members who come to your home.



The Falls Prevention Program brochure, provided with this Handbook and on the VCBIS website, has many helpful tips for reducing the risk of falls for you, VCBIS staff, and others. Please review the brochure to see what you can do.



Please tell your VCBIS staff if you experience any health changes that may put you at greater risk of falls. Staff may be able to help you do things to reduce your risk of falls, or may refer you to a health practitioner or therapist that can help.

Equipment Safety:

If you have assistive devices to help you to get around, like walkers, canes, or wheelchairs please use them and keep them well maintained.



Medication Safety:

- If your PSIT Counsellor is providing support to you related to your medications, please make sure to let him/her know about any medication related changes.
- It will be important to talk with your doctor(s) if you notice any negative side effects. Don't make changes to your medications without talking to your doctor, as this could affect your health.
- Learn what each of your medications looks like and what it does, especially if you give it to yourself. This will help to reduce medication mistakes, which can be serious. Your doctor or pharmacist can help with that.
- Use a strategy that helps you to take the right medications at the right time. Your VCBIS PSIT Counsellor or pharmacist will have some ideas that could help.



Be Prepared for an Emergency:

- Go to the website www.ontario.ca/emo to learn what you can do to prepare for an emergency. There is also special advice for individuals living with a disability.
- Emergencies can occur suddenly and without any advance warning. Individuals and families play a very important role in preparing for times of crisis when emergency services, government resources and VCBIS resources may be strained. It is important to prepare to be self-reliant for at least three (3) days immediately after or during an emergency.



Infection Prevention and Control:

There are many infections that can spread from person to person causing much illness in the community. People get infections such as 'pink eye' and the common cold frequently. There are other more serious febrile respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia or influenza that we also need to be concerned about. We need to work together to reduce the risk of infection for everyone.

How to protect yourself and others:

- Talk to your doctor about getting the flu shot every year
- Sneeze into your sleeve - not your hand
- If you are sick with a fever or other flu-like symptoms, or if your doctor tells you that you have an infection that can be passed on to others, **please stay home, and**
- **Do call** the VCBIS staff member who is scheduled to visit you in your home.



Hand Washing or using hand sanitizer is the one most important thing we can all do to prevent the spread of infection-causing germs.

Wash your hands:

- Before and after preparing, handling, or serving food.
- After using the washroom.
- After sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose.
- When your hands are visibly soiled.
- After handling garbage.



Other Infectious Diseases

There are some infectious diseases that a person can carry in their blood even if they are not feeling sick; for example, Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS. These infections can be passed to other people, but usually through contact with the blood of an infected person or by sexual contact.

Will it affect my VCBIS services if I have an infectious disease?

- VCBIS will continue to provide services to you as long as you are willing and able to do what you can to not spread your infection.
- In most cases, VCBIS will be able to keep information about your disease confidential; however there are some situations in which VCBIS has an ethical responsibility to reduce the risks to others by informing them with your consent.

For example: If you live in a VCBIS residential setting – the staff who work with you and your roommates may need to be informed of your disease so they can protect themselves from being infected.

- If you are suspected of having an infectious disease, your doctor has a legal duty to report your disease to the Public Health Department. A Public Health officer may contact you to determine if anything needs to be done to protect you and others around you. This may mean informing certain people about your disease.
- As a last resort, if you continue to engage in behaviours that may put others at risk, your VCBIS services may be discontinued.

What if I don't have an infectious disease but am concerned about being exposed to one?

The staff at VCBIS will do everything they can to reduce the spread of infectious diseases. If you want to protect yourself, you can:

- talk to your doctor about getting available immunization shots (e.g. for Hepatitis A and B)
- never use other people's personal items such as toothbrushes or razors or share needles
- always use safer sex practice

Model of Support

VCBIS provides lifelong support to persons with an acquired brain injury through the use of a **Community-Based Living Model**. This model focuses on each participant living within a community environment, accessing generic services, both of a professional/supportive (such as community health care) and personal (e.g., grocery shopping) nature. VCBIS' support efforts include assisting people to overcome impairments within their living environment and while in the community. Rehabilitation efforts include compensatory strategies, such as behaviour management and restorative efforts, such as short-term memory improvement.

By using the community-based living model (see below) in conjunction with a clinical approach that incorporates an eclectic use of intervention strategies, as discussed below, VCBIS is well equipped to support persons with an acquired brain injury who experience moderate to severe behavioural challenges. All needs, requirements, and special considerations are identified within the Individual Service Plan, a document that provides a holistic rehabilitation and maintenance plan.

Whatever it Takes: A Model for Community-based Services

Barry Willer and John D Corrigan Brain Injury, 1994, Vol 8, No 7, 647-659

Although this article was first presented as a new concept in 1994, the principles are still relevant to this day.

The model proposed that:

- Maximum self-determination is the desired goal for persons with a brain injury despite the cognitive and behavioural deficits that may interfere with the options available and the process of informed choice
- Community integration requires the development of programs and interventions that are both practical and innovative

10 Principles

Presented as an ideal model for community programs.

1. No two individuals with acquired brain injury are alike

- Brains, pre-injury characteristics, coping behaviours and injuries all differ, we are all unique
- Personalized programs that are uniquely responsive to a person's needs, should be the norm
- Group activities are good for learning social skills and coping strategies, for support from others and for having fun but should not be used in the absence of individual activity

2. Skills are more likely to generalize when taught in the environment where they are to be used

- Due to cognitive changes and learning difficulties the ability to generalize will always be an issue after brain injury i.e. being able to apply a skill or behaviour learned in one setting to another
- Skills should be taught in the environment where they will be used

3. Environments are easier to change than people

- Environments can be enabling or handicapping. Both of the following examples are handicapping: A flight of stairs to the washroom for a person who uses a wheelchair; eating a meal in a noisy, cramped busy cafeteria for a person with attention difficulty
- Modifying the environment and providing adaptive equipment can transform a handicap into an ability

4. Community integration should be holistic

- Identify strengths in addition to deficits both for the individual and the environment in which they live
- Community integration includes: control over ones' home environment, integration into a social support network, and meaningful activity
- Aim for active participation in a broad range of community activities

5. Life is a place-and-train venture

- Provide supports to make the persons preferred living situation work and where possible limit moving the person from one place to another
- Provide supported employment by placing the person in a work site, providing a job coach, then training how to do the job, on the job

6. Natural supports last longer than professionals

- After a brain injury the persons support network tends to shrink
- Think of ways to build a social network e.g. "circle of friends" concept
- A combination of natural supports (unpaid) and minimal support by paid helpers is likely to be the best long term solution

7. Interventions must not do more harm than good

- Examine each and every intervention to determine whether potential harm outweighs the benefits e.g. medications, institutional care, overzealous involvement
- Care must be taken not to create dependency by allowing maximum freedom and risk

8. The service system presents many of the barriers to community integration

- There is ignorance in the general population about brain injury
- There is fragmentation of service responsibility and no single authority responsible for all programs that address the needs of persons with brain injury
- The most important assistance needed to accomplish community integration is coordination of the services that are available and advocacy for those that are not

9. Respect for the individual is paramount

- At all times think about the language and labels that are used
- Provide multiple options and opportunities to ensure true choice and enhance self respect

10. Needs of the individual last a lifetime; so should their resources

- Services must be planned for the life of the person, or until they are no longer needed
- Family members and the person involved should be well informed about, and fully involved in, the long term consequences of using up treatment resources

Your goals are the key to Service Planning


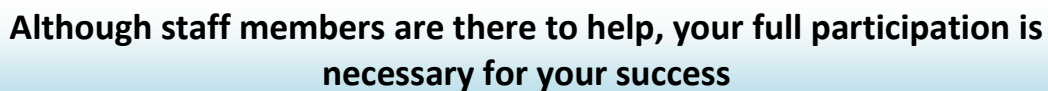

Services are planned in partnership with you, your family and other service providers you would like to include. Your goals and ongoing service needs are the focus of the Individual Support Planning Meeting. Long-term goals for community living or specific short-term goals for new experiences are recorded in your Support Plan and you and your team can review and update it regularly. Please note that Service Planning only occurs if you are in the PSIT or ALS program.

How will the staff at VCBIS help me to reach my goals?

Staff members are encouraged to use a '**mentoring**' approach when working with you to learn new skills. Unlike school, there are no quizzes or tests! Mentoring means that staff members will give you information, answer your questions and help you figure things out - there is no guessing involved. By working side-by-side with staff members, you can develop supports and daily routines that are right for you.

How much support will I get?

When you are admitted to VCBIS services, the number of hours of service you are eligible to receive will be reviewed with you. Your staff will carefully plan with you and your team to make sure this time is used to help you work on goals and supports that are important to you, that help you feel productive and that promote your independence.



Although staff members are there to help, your full participation is necessary for your success

Managing your risks

Risk-taking is a necessary part of life for everyone. We all take risks to reach new goals, experience new things, and reach new levels of independence. Often this can be exciting and wonderful; however, it is important to recognize that although some risk-taking is necessary for growth, other risks may create problems or safety concerns that you should avoid. The challenge is learning how to anticipate situations that may be risky for you, and making a plan to manage that risk in a way that helps to keep you safe.



What risky situations should I be aware of?

Everybody is affected differently by their brain injury, and it is impossible to list all the situations that could be risky for different people. These are a few examples that may be relevant for you:

1. Vulnerability in the community

Difficulties with memory and judgment may make you more vulnerable to dishonest people in the community. It may be harder for you to resist forceful sales people or to figure out if someone is really acting in your best interest. Some temptations like alcohol, drugs, and promises of sex or easy money may also be harder for you to resist. It is important to recognize these as risks to your money, health, and emotional well-being.



2. Increased risk of being injured

Some of the physical challenges that result from an ABI include **ataxia**, reduced muscle control, and poor balance. This may leave you at higher risk for certain kinds of accidents. You and your support staff may need to think of strategies to reduce your risk for injuries

3. Increased risk associated with making poor decisions

Because of changes in the way you think, you may have difficulty making good decisions. For some people this includes challenges with judgment or impulsivity, e.g. you may find that you act before thinking, get angry more easily, or make questionable financial decisions.

What can I do to manage risks in my life?

- **Get to know your strengths and limitations.**

It's important to have a realistic view of yourself. It often helps to talk to people you trust, such as family members or VCBIS workers.

- **Use compensatory strategies.**

This means using tools to make up for challenges that you may have in certain areas; for example, if you have a poor memory and are worried about getting lost, you may choose to write down directions to where you are going and bring along a cell phone.

- **Ask for help and advice.**

It isn't always easy to ask for help, but when you are not sure about something, please ask. VCBIS' staffs are understanding and will take your concerns seriously without judging you.



How does VCBIS address risk taking?

- VCBIS will respect your rights and support you to make decisions about your life and will also be looking out for your safety and well-being.
- VCBIS deals with all risky situations on an individual basis.
- As mentioned earlier, some risk-taking is necessary to achieve your goals and grow. VCBIS will support you to take reasonable risks to reach your goals.
- When possible, VCBIS staff will problem-solve with you regarding risky situations to try to prevent or reduce the chance of something negative from happening.
- In rare situations, VCBIS may refuse to support you when the risk to you, as a participant, VCBIS staff, or property is too great.



Your Relationship with VCBIS Staff

For many of you, this may be the first time that you have worked with support staff such as those at VCBIS. It can be a confusing relationship in that staff members may feel like friends at times. They are friendly and interested in how you are doing. They may support you in situations that are fun and social and sometimes very personal. However, the relationship is a professional relationship and is different from a 'friend' relationship.

What is a professional relationship?

This means that staff members are there to support you as part of their job and their focus is on your safety, well-being, and your success toward the goals that you have set for yourself. They will support you in the ways that are described in this Handbook.

This also means that staff members will not accept invitations to do social "friend" activities with you, will not go on dates with you, or develop a special relationship with you outside of your VCBIS support. Staff will not share a lot of personal information with you and may remind you about that if you ask. These guidelines are called staff-participant "boundaries."

Why are boundaries necessary?

Most agencies that provide some kind of support or counselling have guidelines (boundaries) like these. These boundaries help us all to know what to expect from each other. They are an important reminder that the focus of the staff-participant relationship is you and your goals. They are also a way to ensure that participants are treated equally and do not receive different treatment because of different relationships.

What about gifts?

The staff at VCBIS will not accept individual gifts for the same reasons. You may instead choose to express your thanks to a group of staff or to VCBIS as an agency. We very much appreciate your positive remarks and encouragement.

Competency and Substitute Decision makers

Since your brain injury, you might have heard people use words such as ‘competency’ or ‘capacity.’ You may have also heard the terms ‘substitute decision maker,’ ‘power of attorney’ or ‘legal guardian.’ This is a complicated legal topic and everyone’s situation is different.

What do ‘competency’ and ‘capacity’ mean?

These words mean the same thing. They simply refer to your ability to understand the information that you need to make a decision, including the positive and negative consequences of your decision.

For example, if you are trying to decide whether or not to have a certain medical test completed, you would need to understand the following:

- what is the test for
- what are the possible risks
- what might happen (good and bad) if you decide to have the test
- what might happen (good and bad) if you decide not to have the test.

If you understand the relevant information related to the decision you have to make, you are considered competent, unless you have been deemed legally incompetent to make the decision you are presented with (e.g. financial, personal care, treatment).

What kinds of situations does this apply to?

There are several kinds of decisions where your competency to make a decision will be considered. Some decisions that relate to your VCBIS services may include:

- Decisions about **personal care or treatment**, for example, support services, medical or psychological treatment, and sharing of information related to these services.
- Decisions about **finances or property**, for example, money management.

Who decides if I am ‘competent’ or not?

There are a couple of different ways for this to be decided:

(1) You can have a formal assessment done by someone called a ‘capacity assessor.’ Sometimes family members, or others who know you, may request this formal assessment if they are concerned about your ability to make decisions.

(2) If no formal assessment has been done, then in situations where you require some kind of treatment, the health care practitioner that you are dealing with can determine whether he or she believes you are able to understand the important information that is being presented to you. This includes understanding the positive and negative consequences of your decision.

What happens if I am found to be ‘competent?’

The law says that you have the right to make the decision yourself. Although no one else has the authority to make the decision on your behalf, it’s often a good idea to discuss important decisions with people you trust.

What happens if I am found to be ‘incompetent?’

This means that someone else will be asked to make the decision for you. This person is called your Substitute Decision Maker (SDM).

What is a ‘Substitute Decision Maker’ and who would be mine?

A Substitute Decision Maker is someone who has the authority to make decisions for you. This might be someone that you have chosen in a **‘Power of Attorney’** document, a **‘Legal Guardian,’** a **‘Public Trustee’** or a family member that is your ‘next of kin’ according to the law. By law, your Substitute Decision Maker is expected to make decisions that they think you would have made for yourself if you were competent. Please refer to the glossary for definitions and clarification of the differences between the terms.

Will I always be considered ‘competent’ or ‘incompetent?’

- Not necessarily. If you have been deemed legally incompetent for finances or personal care, you can challenge the court’s decision, which involves having your competency re-assessed.
- If you have not been formally assessed, you may be competent for some decisions but not for others. For example, you may be able to decide what programs you want to attend and how you want to spend your day, but you may be unable to look after your money.
- People may also be considered competent at one point in time and later be considered incompetent or vice versa.

What does this have to do with VCBIS services?

- When you receive services from VCBIS, you will have a number of things to make decisions about or give consent for, such as signing your Service Agreement, deciding what kind of support you wish to receive, and deciding which programs you would like to attend.
- Upon being admitted to VCBIS, VCBIS will request information about your Substitute Decision-Maker, if you have one, to ensure we are getting consent from the right person.
- VCBIS will also discuss a decision-making process with you and your family so that your rights are being respected and your family is as involved as you want or need them to be.

How VCBIS Works with Families/Significant Others

VCBIS believes in working with participants and families/significant others in a 'family-centered' way. Being "family-centered" means that we encourage your family to be part of your support team, if they are available and you want them to be involved. VCBIS believes that families are a valuable resource because they know a lot about you, such as what you were like before your brain injury and what has gone on since that time. Families are also generally concerned for your well-being and want to support you to do the best you can.



How much information is shared with my family?

That depends. VCBIS generally encourages sharing of information with families, because we have found that family involvement and support is often helpful. If you are competent and make your own decisions about who can receive information about you, you can decide whether your family receives information. If you have a Substitute Decision Maker who makes these decisions for you, that person will decide how much information is shared. It should be noted that competent individuals who give permission to share information with their family members, may later ask that specific information not be shared. This expressed wish to keep specific information confidential must be respected within the limits of confidentiality.

(Please see the pages about Confidentiality and about Competency and for more specific information.)

How is my family involved in making decisions about my support needs?

When it comes to making decisions about your support, it often works best to talk about the decision together with your family and your VCBIS support team. Most of the time, we are able to make a good decision when we work on it together. Occasionally, you and your family may find it hard to agree on a decision. If the decision involves VCBIS services, VCBIS is required to listen to the person who has the legal right to make the decision. That person may be you or it may be your **Substitute Decision Maker**.

How are families affected by brain injury?

Families are very different in how they cope with and adapt to brain injury. It depends on so many different factors, including the type of relationship they have with you and how you were affected by your injury. Your family may experience some of the same feelings that you have experienced since your brain injury, such as loss and sadness that things are not the same as they used to be. They may worry about you and hope that you will be okay. Like you, they may be interested in learning all they can about your brain injury. This information helps them understand what you are going through and how they can best support you.

How will VCBIS support my family?

- VCBIS employees are sensitive to the needs and experiences of families, and will work with families in a supportive way.
- The VCBIS counselors can also provide short-term counselling to help families understand and adjust to the many changes that come with brain injury.

Challenging Support Issues

INTRODUCTION

Many VCBIS' participants face support issues that can be complicated and sensitive, such as those that will be discussed in this section. These issues have been included because:

- (1) They are issues about which participants and families often have questions.
- (2) They are issues that are complicated in that they involve personal rights, risk, values, and morals.

The issues described in this section include:

- **Alcohol and Drug Use**
- **Tobacco Use**
- **Sexuality**
- **Physical Support**
- **Positive Approaches to Changing Behaviour**

The following section describes how VCBIS will support you in dealing with these issues.

Alcohol and Drug Use

VCBIS understands that using alcohol and other drugs is a personal choice. However, there are a lot of really good reasons to avoid using drugs and alcohol after brain injury. Problems with substance use are very common in the people who have had a brain injury, and VCBIS strongly believes that it is important to help people to prevent the problems that can come with substance use after brain injury.

For these reasons, it is VCBIS policy that no one, staff or participants, may use alcohol or other substances while participating in a VCBIS event or service. If you appear intoxicated when you come to VCBIS, we will help you to find a safe way to get home. We may then begin working with you on a plan that will prevent you from coming to VCBIS in an intoxicated state in the future.



What are the Effects of Substance Use After Brain Injury?

A brain injury kills and/or disconnects brain cells. Because of that, the injured brain reacts differently to alcohol and drugs and this interferes with healing. To recover well, the brain needs all of its resources. Here are some good reasons to avoid drugs and alcohol after a concussion or brain injury:

- People who use alcohol and other drugs do not recover as completely or as quickly.
- Problems with balance, walking and talking are made worse by alcohol and drugs.
- Difficulty with problem solving, memory and other thinking skills are made worse by alcohol and drugs.
- Alcohol and drugs have a quicker and more powerful effect on a person after a brain injury.
- Alcohol increases depression.
- Alcohol and drugs often interfere with medications prescribed after a brain injury.
- Alcohol and drugs can increase the risk of having a seizure after a brain injury.
- Alcohol and drugs can increase the risk of having another brain injury.

How does VCBIS help with Problem Substance Use?

VCBIS staff members can help you to get the services you need or want outside of VCBIS.

VCBIS takes a '**Harm Reduction**' approach to substance abuse problems. That means that you don't have to start out saying that you want to stop your substance use. If you are noticing that there are some problems that come with drinking or drug use - or if you find that others are concerned about your substance use and you want to learn more about it, we'll work with you to set goals for counselling that you can feel good about. VCBIS can support you in this area. Just let your VCBIS worker know you're interested.

Tobacco Use

VCBIS recognizes that although smoking has serious health risks, it is a lifestyle choice that people are free to make. VCBIS discourages smoking, but respects the facts that if you are aware of the risks involved in smoking and choose to smoke anyway; you must be allowed to smoke.



However, there are some limitations regarding smoking that you need to know about:

- There is no smoking in any VCBIS indoor facility.
- If you require staff support to go outside to smoke, you may need to wait until a staff member is available to accompany you.
- If you do not appear to understand the risks of smoking and the benefits of quitting or if you have been assessed to be not competent to make decisions regarding your personal care (as discussed in the Competency and Substitute Decision Makers section), your Substitute Decision Maker and your support team at VCBIS may make a plan that restricts or discourages your smoking.
- VCBIS do not have to provide support to any individual who smokes in their home.

If you do smoke, there are outdoor smoking areas at all VCBIS locations that we ask you to use. Please respect the environment and dispose of your cigarettes in the available containers.

VCBIS staff will gladly assist you in trying to quit smoking, or will refer you to someone who can help if that is one of your goals.

Sexuality is a normal, healthy part of an adult's life. However, this can be a very challenging issue for participants and families following a brain injury. VCBIS understands that sexuality issues tend to be sensitive and staff will provide support in a confidential way. Whether you are in a relationship or not, adults do not generally choose to discuss issues regarding their sexuality with their parents or other family members. However, after a brain injury, families may become more concerned about sexual decisions. Families can know that VCBIS will support participants, as needed, in making responsible decisions involving their sexuality.

As a VCBIS participant, you have the following **Rights** regarding sexuality:

- the right to have your sexual identity accepted and understood
- the right to engage in sexual relationships and intimacy
- the right to privacy
- the right not to be judged because of your sexuality
- the right to be free from unwanted sexual attention.



You also have some **Responsibilities** when it comes to sexuality:

- Do not push your sexuality or your sexual values on others.
- Respect that others may see sexual issues differently than you do.
- Respect the privacy of others.
- Do not make sexual comments or touch someone sexually unless the other person has given their consent.
- Do not make sexual comments or engage in sexual/intimate behaviour in public places where some people may be offended.
- Respect feedback from others about your behaviour. Others may not welcome your comments or behaviour. Remember that "No Means No."
- Under no circumstances are sexual behaviours or comments toward staff acceptable.

Knowing your rights and responsibilities helps to ensure that VCBIS is a safe and comfortable place for everyone.

VCBIS can provide support to you by:

- Supporting you in making choices that will safeguard your health, safety and emotional well-being.
- Helping you get the information and counselling you need about safer sex practices, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, and other sexual issues.

Do you live in a VCBIS residential setting?

Sexual issues become more complicated if you live in a shared residential setting. You have an additional responsibility to consider how your behaviour will affect your roommates. To ensure that everyone living in your residence feels safe and comfortable, a list of guidelines will be developed by you and your roommates about issues such as behaviour in the residence and overnight guests. You have a responsibility to respect these guidelines.

Physical Support

Many people experience physical challenges after brain injury, such as weakness or paralysis, poor balance, and reduced ability to move independently. In fact, you may need to use a wheelchair, walker, cane, or other adaptive aid to help you get around and complete your daily activities more safely. You may also require some physical support to accomplish your activities of daily living, such as bathing, toileting, or participation in an activity in the community, such as swimming or bowling.

What is Physical Support?

Physical support refers to when a staff member helps to support your body weight or prevent you from falling by providing physical guidance, such as during a transfer.

What guidelines do VCBIS workers follow in providing Physical Support?

VCBIS strives to provide physical support in a way that minimizes the chance that you or VCBIS employees will get hurt. To ensure the safety of all involved, VCBIS workers will only provide physical support that has been designed by a qualified professional. If you require physical support, we will ask that you complete an assessment with an occupational or physical therapist during your initial assessment period to ensure that the physical support is safe for you. VCBIS may require the assessment to occur before any support is provided if there are significant concerns. If support needs change, VCBIS may ask for a new assessment.

Are there any limits on the Physical Support that VCBIS will provide?

While VCBIS employees will work hard to find the best ways to provide support to you, VCBIS reserves the right to refuse to provide physical support during an activity if a staff member believes that it presents a risk to you or to the staff member providing the support. VCBIS will make every effort to find other ways to meet your physical support needs for your essential daily activities. However, physical support for participation in optional recreational or vocational activities may be discontinued if the activity is felt to be unsafe for you or VCBIS staff.

Positive Approaches for Changing Behaviour

Since your brain injury, you may feel or act differently than you did before. Dealing with these changes can be very frustrating and upsetting for you and the people who care about you. However, a positive approach can make all the difference.

What are Positive Behavioural Supports?

‘Positive behavioural supports’ mean focusing our efforts on preventing the problems that we can prevent. It also means having a good working relationship so that we can get through the difficult times in a collaborative way. Sometimes this means working with a Behaviour Therapist to understand what triggers a problem and then working with you to make changes that help things go better. It might mean changing things in the environment or changing how VCBIS staff works with you. Sometimes it means providing support to you and/or your family for developing new ways of managing strong emotions or difficult situations. Sometimes medication is helpful.

VCBIS’ approach is holistic and, as much as possible; our team collaborates with participants, family members and other health care providers. We want to take into consideration the biological, psychological and social aspects of each individual participant, within his/her environment. We try to use evidence-based practices where they exist. These are interventions that have been researched and shown to be effective. As much as possible, we like to use data. Data is information that we gather about behaviour by observing, asking questions, or having a person fill out a questionnaire. This information helps us figure out what we need to do and whether or not what we are doing is actually making the right difference.

How will VCBIS staff support me to better manage my frustration and anger?

VCBIS staff will work with you to create positive daily routines. These routines will take into consideration your personal preferences and perhaps things like how your environment is set up. Changes like rearranging your room or your schedule may decrease stress in your life. You may find that since your brain injury you have less control over your life. VCBIS staff will provide opportunities for you to make choices and decisions. VCBIS believes that if we are able to work together and compromise, many difficult situations can be avoided.

What if I am still feeling anxious, angry or sad?

We will problem-solve together. Sometimes a simple suggestion by you or a family member may help. Other people who can help including other health care providers. You may choose to work with one or more of these people, either individually or as part of a group. They may also provide suggestions to you, your family, and/or other VCBIS workers. At times medication may be prescribed that can help you to better manage your feelings and behaviours.

How will VCBIS staff respond if I lose control of my behaviour?

VCBIS staff members are trained in Safe-Management and will treat you with respect and dignity. They will listen to what you have to say and will try to support you to gain control again. VCBIS staff will only use physical intervention after all other approaches fail and it is absolutely necessary for the protection of individuals who are at risk of immediate harm.

Can VCBIS help me with goals like exercising more, or meeting people?

Absolutely; VCBIS workers will support you in working toward goals that are important to you. They will work with you to clarify your goal and then develop a plan for achieving it. The plan could include strategies to help you work around any challenges that might get in the way of you achieving your goal, such as memory challenges. For example, if you want to exercise more, staff could help you to decide what exercises you want to do, how often, how much time you want to spend, and where you will exercise. Staff might also help you put your exercise times into your schedule, and also develop a strategy to track your progress toward your goal.

The bottom line is that many people feel that issues with their behaviour stand in the way of them achieving some of their goals, such as getting and keeping a job and making friends. If you feel that there are areas that you want to work on, speak to your VCBIS Counselor, and we can tackle it together.

Glossary

Assessment

A process of determining your skills, abilities and areas of difficulty. This may occur by having you try certain activities or by asking you questions. The assessment helps us identify the areas in which you may want to develop your skills or where you may require support or assistance.

Autonomy

Making your own decisions, including the decision to choose someone you trust to help you.

Capacity Assessor

Assessors are persons who are authorized to conduct an assessment of a person's mental capacity for certain purposes, such as appointing a guardian for property, without going through the courts. They have appropriate professional backgrounds and have successfully completed a training course in capacity assessment. They are independent of the government.

Cognitive Difficulties

Includes difficulties in areas such as memory, perception, thinking, and problem solving.

Consent

Giving your permission or agreement, after you have all of the information that you need to do so.

Fee for Service

A situation in which a person or funder, such as an insurance company, pays for the services that a participant receives.

Legal Guardian - of the Person

A Court may appoint a guardian of the person to make decisions on behalf of an incapable person in some or all areas of personal care. The guardian must be at least 16 years old.

Legal Guardian - of Property (and Finances)

A guardian of property is someone who is appointed by the Public Guardian and Trustee or the Courts to look after an incapable person's property or finances. The person must be at least 18 years old. A guardian is different from an attorney. An attorney is chosen by the individual, before becoming incapable, to act on his or her behalf, while a guardian is appointed after incapacity.

Mentoring

A process in which someone works with you as a coach or guide to help you develop the skills that you wish to gain.

Safe Management

A training program focused on the safe management of disruptive and assaultive behaviour. The program is designed to provide employees with principles and techniques of crisis management in order to gain the confidence necessary to handle crisis situations with minimal anxiety and maximum safety.

Personal Care

Personal care includes health care, nutrition, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and safety.

Physical Difficulties

This includes any changes to your body that affect your ability to perform your daily activities, for example, balance, weakness or paralysis.

Power of Attorney for Personal Care

A Power of Attorney for Personal Care is a legal document in which one person gives another person the authority to make personal care decisions on his or her behalf, if he or she becomes mentally incapable.

Power of Attorney for Property

A Power of Attorney for Property is a legal document in which a person gives someone else the legal authority to make decisions about his or her finances if he or she becomes unable to make those decisions. The person who is named as the attorney does not have to be a lawyer. The power of attorney may be designed to come into force only after the person who gave it is no longer mentally capable.

Public Guardian and Trustee

The Public Guardian and Trustee's role is to act as a substitute decision maker of last resort on behalf of incapable people who have no one who is willing or able to act on their behalf.

Service Agreement

This is a VCBIS document that outlines the support you will receive from VCBIS, your rights and responsibilities as a VCBIS participant, and the VCBIS complaint procedure. You or your Substitute Decision Maker are required to sign this agreement with VCBIS staff prior to receiving services.

Individual Service Plan

Your Individual Service Plan is a VCBIS document that is completed when you begin service with VCBIS and updated on an annual and/or as needed basis. The Service Plan summarizes your goals, your ongoing support needs, and what VCBIS will do to provide that support.

Statutory Guardian

A statutory guardian is a person who is appointed to act on another person's behalf without going to court. Statutory guardianship applies only to property or finances; there is no statutory guardianship for personal care. A statutory guardian can be the Public Guardian and Trustee (PGT) or someone approved by the PGT to replace the PGT as statutory guardian.

Substitute Decision Maker

A person that has the legal authority to make decisions on your behalf, such as a Guardian, someone who has Power of Attorney, or in some cases a family member.

Support Team

Your support team is made up of the VCBIS staff members who work with you to help you reach your goals or participate in VCBIS programs and services. Your support team may consist of a Primary Counsellor, Assistant Counsellor, Intake Worker or Program Manager. Different participants may have different staff on their support team. Please see your 'MY SUPPORT TEAM - CONTACT SHEET' for the names of the people on your support team.

Third Party Payor

Someone, other than you or the service provider (e.g. VCBIS) that pays for the services that you receive, for example, an insurance company.