

HOW CAN HAVING A ROUTINE HELP ME?

- **Having a set schedule helps someone remember daily events.**
Changes in memory are common after a brain injury. When events happen according to a familiar, set schedule, people tend to remember them better than if the order of things is constantly changing.
- **When someone has a routine way of doing things, it helps with problem solving through activities.**
A person's ability to organize, sequence steps, and problem solve through an activity are often affected by a brain injury. If individuals do things the same way, in the same order each time, it helps with regaining such skills.
- **Tools can be used to create structure in one's day, allowing them to plan ahead.**
Planning is a high-level thinking skill that is often impaired after a brain injury. When individuals have difficulty planning, it can be a challenge to structure their own day and complete everything needing to be done. When people have tools to prioritize and organize their day, they are better able to develop a routine.
- **With a framework for structuring their day and the opportunity to be involved in developing their schedule, people are given a sense of control.**
Following a brain injury, you or your loved one may feel a loss of control over events that happen in your day. This can create a lot of stress for you and the person with the brain injury. One way to reduce stress and give the person with the brain injury a sense of control is to include them in creating daily schedules and routines.
- **Having a routine can prevent the development of unwanted behaviors**
Loss of control, certain cognitive deficits (e.g. poor insight into their deficits, poor judgment and decision making), and having lots of free time can lead to unwanted behaviors. For all of us, when we know what events are, we know how to behave. But if we don't know what events are or what to expect, we are left to figure out how to behave on our own. For persons with brain injury, this can often lead to agitation, impulsivity, and other unsafe or unwanted behaviors. Having a predictable, familiar, and structured daily routine helps to prevent unwanted behaviors.
- **Having a daily routine allows caregivers to more seamlessly fit themselves into the individual's schedule.**
When an individual has multiple caregivers, it can be challenging to coordinate everyone's schedules. However, when the focus is on developing and sticking to a patient's routine,

multiple caregivers can insert themselves into the one schedule at the times that work best for them.

- **Identifying the type of assistance needed and who can provide that type of assistance helps pair the right task with the right caregiver**

Many factors need to be considered when you identify persons to help with daily routines. For each activity, you need to know the type of assistance the activity requires, and the type of assistance the caregiver can provide. Some tasks require a “set of eyes”, while others require “hands-on” assistance. Some caregivers cannot lift but are able to provide a “set of eyes” for supervision. Other caregivers are able to lift and provide “hands-on” type of assistance. Some caregivers can offer a few hours, while others can offer many hours. When a daily routine is planned for and consistent, multiple caregivers can be identified to help out with the different types of supervision, assistance, and time needed for routines.

- **Having a daily routine helps to make us feel productive and have enjoyment in our day.**

Doing things we enjoy helps improve our mood and give us a feeling of achievement. Scheduling tasks that are easy to complete such as having a cup of tea, taking the dog for a walk, going to lunch with friends, or folding clothes gives us a sense of accomplishment and that we are getting things done. Scheduling activities you enjoy and that make you feel productive gives you a plan for the day, gives you control over how much or little you want to do, and gives you purpose for your day. We then feel good about ourselves and want to continue to do more.