



The ABI Training Programme

Introduction

Acquired Brain Injury - or "ABI" - refers to any damage to the brain that can be caused by an accident or trauma, by a stroke, a brain infection, tumours, a haemorrhage, aneurysm asphyxiation or by toxic substances.

ABI is a disability which touches the lives of a growing number of Europeans, and can dramatically shape and alter personal outcomes, relationships, community accessibility, financial standing and physical, mental and social health, both for the person with ABI and for their families/carers. According to the WHO, ABI will surpass many diseases as the major cause of death and disability by the year 2020.



"...I'm really confused most of the time. I keep forgetting things that I used to know straight off. I keep getting my words mixed up too. Forgetting things is making me feel so useless, also, I have no interest in most things that I used to love doing like playing guitar. I've no energy either but then I get a mad spike of energy but then I come crashing down again...people will think I'm stupid. I used to go to university..." (Mark, a twenty-eight year old man who had been hit by a car while cycling, at the age of twenty-one)

Knowledge of ABI is an emerging and complex field. Within a training needs analysis conducted among ABI service providers and practitioners in 4 countries in 2009, education and training were seen as one of the major gaps and a priority area in the current service ABI delivery system. The ABI sector believe that staff, community members and those who care for individuals with ABI, all need

consistent information about the causes, consequences and impacts of ABI and about intervention strategies and available supports.

A person-centred approach to providing ABI care and support is as important. The emphasis should always be on the person as an individual. People with ABI have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. ABI care and support should build on individual strengths and abilities to maximise and promote independence and should enable people to feel valued and safe. The inherent risks of life should be recognised. However, given the potential vulnerability of some people with ABI there is a need for a good understanding of adult protection requirements.



The benefits of education and training are important for ABI care and support services to consider in many ways:

- Training increases the staff skill set required to deliver consistently high quality and safe care and support.
- Increased skills give staff greater confidence and motivation.
- With training staff learn how to take on increased responsibilities.
- Training leads to improvements in creativity and innovation.
- Providing all levels of staff with training on person-centred care promotes changes in care approaches that are more aligned to the values, beliefs, environment and genetics of the person with ABI.
- Staff who possess diverse skills are generally more satisfied and positive in their jobs which decreases the occurrence of work-related stress.

The ABI Training Programme

In response to the specific needs and issues faced by staff in their every day work, and in collaboration with persons with ABI from five EU countries, a tailor-made training programme was developed. The ABI training programme is the result of a project funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme, which was carried out from 2009 to 2011. The Partnership of the ABI project consisted of 8 partners coming from five different EU countries: Slovenia, France, Hungary, Austria and Belgium. It was led by the Center for persons with ABI Zarja from Slovenia.

The ABI Training Programme is intended for staff working with adult persons with ABI in a wide range of services in the health and social care sector, at different roles, at all levels, and for community members who are involved and/or interested (like attorneys, sellers, teachers, employers, etc.).

The aims of the ABI training programme are to:

- Improve staff knowledge and understanding of ABI-related issues.
- Promote a "person centred" approach to providing ABI care and support.
- Emphasize a positive approach and appropriate attitudes towards people who suffered an ABI, their carers and towards each other.



The ABI training programme consists of ten (10) modules.

The key areas of knowledge covered include:

- Module 1:** Introduction to acquired brain injury.
- Module 2:** Rehabilitation and care process.
- Module 3:** Understand their role in the care process.
- Module 4:** The values of social care.
- Module 5:** Promote a positive and supportive approach.
- Module 6:** Risk assessment and how to work safely.
- Module 7:** Management of behavioural problems.
- Module 8:** Communicating positively.
- Module 9:** Promote and support autonomy.
- Module 10:** Develop as a worker.

The ABI Training programme is supported by:

- **The ABI Training Manual** in 5 languages (English, Slovenian, French, German and Hungarian), which serves as a resource to assist participants at training. This comprehensive manual is a compilation of existing knowledge, experience and best-practice, for those working in all the recovery aspects of ABI.
- **The ABI Trainer Guidelines** in 5 languages as a framework for organizing training sessions.

The ABI Certificate

The ABI Certificate is awarded following successful formal final assessment in the form of a multiple choice questionnaire and an oral examination. The Certificate demonstrates that participants have acquired the necessary knowledge and display the appropriate attitudes necessary to work with brain injured people. Assessment results are recorded on a central database maintained by the follow-up project team. The team was established with the aim to transfer the expertise generated during the project and to ensure the further development, modernization and dissemination of the ABI Training programme.

The ABI certificate is not yet an official award formally recognised by all the project ABI partner countries, but the project ABI Partnership hopes in time the ABI certificate will become recognised across the ABI sector in Europe.

Creating common European quality standards and criteria in ABI training

The project ABI Partnership strongly promotes further effective sharing of training and education programme information. It also encourages partnering and collaboration to develop and adopt common European ABI training standards and guidelines as



it is not clear to what extent internationally available guidance is relevant to ABI care and support in Europe, and how it could be adapted to the European context and to the diversity of European countries.

There are funding opportunities available at EU level that can help identify effective training programmes, promote the development of programmes where none exist and disseminate and transfer best practices (more info on http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php). Furthermore the ABI Training programme itself is transferrable and can be adapted to other regions, countries, sectors and socio-cultural contexts.

For more information please refer to the project ABI website: www.abi-project.eu or contact the project ABI coordinator:

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The Partners in project ABI:

- Center for persons with acquired brain injury Zarja- SI
- Center for persons with acquired brain injury Korak-SI
- Center for persons with acquired brain injury Naprej-SI
- Occupational activity centre Nova Gorica-SI
- Arceau Anjou — Mutualité française Anjou-Mayenne-FR
- Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Centre (BBRZ) Linz-AT
- Regional Social Resource Centre Non-Profit Ltd.-HU
- European Association of Service providers for persons with disabilities –(EASPD)-BE

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