

■ Preface ■

Preface to the First Edition

About 1 year after finishing my graduate degree in speech–language pathology, I heard that one of my classmates had sustained a severe traumatic brain injury (TBI) from a car accident. At last report, she was living in a long-term care facility, was totally dependent on others for her care, and communicated only through eye blinks indicating “yes” and “no.” Unfortunately, she is only one of many people I know whose lives have been forever changed by TBI. Indeed, one of the hardest lessons for me to learn as a young adult was that life is not fair. TBI can happen to anyone at any time. “Playing by the rules” does not guarantee immunity, nor does knowing everything there is to know about TBI.

The effects of TBI pervade the lives of survivors, families, and communities. Physical, cognitive, communicative, and psychosocial disabilities can persist for years following injury, often never to resolve. The fact that many survivors walk, talk, and are not readily distinguishable from noninjured people is a cruel twist that only those who have experienced TBI on a personal level understand. TBI is often a hidden disability—hidden inside a survivor’s perceptions, personality, thoughts, and feelings.

Preparing professionals to deal with the many consequences of TBI is a daunting task. Service delivery includes emergency services, hospitalization, rehabilitation, long-term care, community reentry, education, and vocational training. The variety of professionals who provide needed services is equally broad: medical personnel; social workers and case managers; physical, occupational, speech–language, and recreational therapists; clinical and educational psychologists; neuropsychologists; school administrators, staff, and educators; and vocational rehabilitation experts and job coaches.

Assisting Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury: The Role of Speech–Language Pathologists is a tool to help prepare graduate students and practicing speech–language pathologists to serve people with TBI. The book is divided into three sections: Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury, Understanding the Role of Speech–Language Pathologists, and Understanding Reintegration.

The first section provides an overview of TBI: definitions, epidemiology, injury severity, and mechanisms of injury. Because TBI does not happen to a random sampling of the general population, professionals need to understand the subgroups of people most likely to sustain such injuries and how and when injuries are most likely to occur. Then, because most survivors of TBI begin the recovery process in a medical setting, professionals need knowledge of the medical terminology and the sequence of medical events associated with acute neurological injury. TBI causes a different pattern of brain damage than other neurological injuries, and an understanding of the nature of cortical and sub-cortical damage will help speech–language pathologists assess and treat the immediate and long-term consequences of TBI.

The second section of the book deals with the major disorders associated with TBI for which speech–language pathologists assume diagnostic and intervention responsibility: coma and posttraumatic amnesia, cognitive–communication impairments, motor speech disorders, and swallowing disorders. An additional chapter addresses the use of augmentative and alternative communication and assistive technology to compensate for various speech, language, and cognitive impairments.

The final section of the book provides information about integrating survivors of TBI into family, educational, vocational, and community settings. The impact of TBI extends beyond survivors; whole families, schools, and communities are affected. Because of this, expertise from many professionals is needed to assist in the reintegration process. Many survivors experience communication, cognitive, and physical impairments that exacerbate psychosocial challenges, breakdowns in family and peer relations, and problems related to a survivor's return to school or work environments. Speech–language pathologists who work in collaboration with professionals from fields such as psychology, neuropsychology, education, and vocational rehabilitation provide better services to survivors of TBI than ones who attempt to treat survivors in isolation.

Preparation of *Assisting Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury* required the contributions of many people. In addition to the professionals who authored chapters, many survivors of TBI and their families contributed by sharing

experiences and stories. David Beukelman deserves special thanks for his role in recruiting me for this project, providing general assistance throughout, and encouraging me during low points. I also thank Nancy Manasse for tolerating the many times I interrupted her work to discuss ideas and for taking time to proofread many of the chapters. The staff at PRO-ED—Jim Patton, Peggy Kipping, and Robin Spencer—offered encouragement, answered technical questions, and tolerated delays with admirable patience. Thank you to all of them.

Preface to the Second Edition

Much has happened regarding brain injury since publication of the first edition of *Assisting Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury: The Role of Speech-Language Pathologists*. Perhaps most important is the public's increased awareness of TBI. This awareness has come at a terrible cost: military personnel and civilians injured because of explosions in Iraq and Afghanistan, athletes badly injured during sporting competitions, and the usual array of injured drivers and passengers involved in traffic accidents. Additions and revisions to this book reflect the effects of these circumstances on the lives of survivors and the people associated with them.

The format of the book remains the same as in the first edition. The first section, *Understanding Traumatic Brain Injury*, provides basic information about the occurrence and effects of acquired injuries to the brain. Chapter 2 includes updated epidemiology information; and both Chapters 3 and 4 have expanded information about the assessment and treatment of mild brain injuries, especially regarding blast injuries and the co-occurrence of posttraumatic stress disorder. The second section, *Understanding the Role of Speech-Language Pathologists*, comprises the major content of the book relating to the multiple cognitive and communication challenges experienced by survivors. All five chapters in this section have changed substantially from the first edition to reflect progress in the profession and current evidence-based practice guidelines. Each chapter provides information according to three general stages of recovery: the acute stage, post-acute rehabilitation, and post-rehabilitation. The final section of the book, *Understanding Reintegration*, has also undergone substantial revision. The five chapters provide guidance to professionals regarding pertinent issues and effective methods of transitioning survivors into family, community, educational, and vocational settings.

Revision of *Assisting Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury* has been a collaborative effort involving many people. I appreciate the efforts and contributions of the professionals who have authored chapters as well as the many survivors of TBI and family members who have shared their experiences. Gina Simanek was particularly helpful in locating hard-to-find details, confirming reference citations, proofreading chapters, and, most important, accompanying me on many long walks while I pondered the numerous dilemmas that arose during the revision process. Thanks for your help!

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