

SKILLS TO ENABLE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

GENERAL INFORMATION SHEET

What is STEPS?

Skills To Enable People and Communities (STEPS) is a Queensland-wide information and skills program for adults with Stroke or Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and their families and friends. The effect of brain injury or stroke on a person's life can be extensive, and can also result in changes in their family, social and community networks.

- ◆ STEPS aims to develop networks of support for people with ABI or stroke, and their families.
- ◆ STEPS will help people understand the effects of acquired brain injury, how to look after themselves, and how to participate more in their communities.
- ◆ The STEPS Program Model aims to help establish sustainable, self-managed networks of support for people with ABI and their families in local communities around Queensland.

"I think as time goes on you face a whole lot of different challenges... it was good to talk to other people that had an injury like me... it doesn't make you feel...left out"
Stroke survivor, Gayndah, Qld



Why do we need STEPS?

People who have sustained an Acquired Brain Injury are a large and diverse group whose needs are currently not well met in Queensland. Causes of ABI may be traumatic (e.g. car accident, fall, assault, etc.) or non-traumatic (e.g. stroke, tumours, poisoning).

The effects of brain injury on a person's life can be extensive.

- People with ABI commonly report having to deal with more than one type of impairment following their injury. These may include physical, cognitive, sensory, emotional, communication and behavioural impairments.
- The impact on family and community is also profound. Commonly, people with ABI experience deterioration in their family, social and community networks.
- Service and support opportunities in Queensland are limited and community attitudes restrictive. Subsequently, people with serious brain injuries face significant social and rehabilitation problems e.g. unemployment, greater risk of alcohol and drug abuse, mental health problems and inappropriate accommodation (e.g. nursing homes).
- These problems are further compounded for people with ABI in rural areas due to a paucity of community services and the geographical dispersion of available services across vast areas.
- The enormous task of family members in caring for a person with ABI is compounded by the lack of community awareness. Rehabilitation and community integration would be easier if the community within which they live was more able to understand and respond to their needs. The success of families to support members with ABI is often dependent on the ability of the local community to accept the person with a disability and support the family.

How Does STEPS Operate?

STEPS Participants

The STEPS Skills Program is a FREE, 6- week interactive group program. It includes a workbook for everyone to use and follows a structured Program Outline. People with brain injury or stroke and their families and carers are welcome to attend.

The benefits for participants in the STEPS Skills Program (Program Information) might include:

- working with others in the group-work sessions on issues that will positively influence your health and well-being both now and into the future
- thinking about ways to look after yourself
- learning ways to get the support you need
- enhancing relationships with family, friends, and others in your life
- sharing everyday life experiences with others in your community
- learning more about acquired brain injury and stroke.

One of the most important features of the STEPS Skills Program is sharing experiences and thoughts amongst other people in the group. The Program is designed for people in the group to share and learn from each others' experiences. People are also given the opportunity to maintain contact with each other after the 6-week program has ended and many go on to establish STEPS Network Groups or other informal means of contact.

STEPS Leaders (this is a link to STEPS Skills Program Leader Role Description)

Leaders can be a variety of people- people with brain injury or stroke, family members or friends, service providers, or other interested people in the community. We offer a 2- day Training course, free of charge, which includes:

- detailed information about the STEPS Program
- practical experience in delivering the STEPS Skills Program, using the Leader Manual, Group Workbook and STEPS Poster
- skills and information about leading a STEPS group
- information about stroke and acquired brain injury
- the level of support and information that you can expect from us once you start delivering the STEPS Skills Program to your group (this is especially important for you as leader of the group)

The training will be provided by staff from ABIOS who are health professionals with expertise in dealing with families and people with brain injury. There is no cost to participants for this training. Training will be delivered in flexible ways depending on communities' different needs across Queensland. We can travel to local communities by negotiation. The benefits to Leaders might include:

- access to a group of professionals with expertise in brain injury for ongoing education and support about brain injury
- being part of a dynamic team of people working to improve the quality of life for people with acquired brain injury and their families and friends
- access to a peer support network of STEPS Leaders throughout Queensland
- developing skills that might be useful for you in other areas, e.g. future work prospects

What next?

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss the STEPS Program further.

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