

The Impact of Brain Injury on Marriage

A brain injury can deeply change a person and their relationships. It does not just affect the person who was injured. It impacts the entire family and can put a lot of stress on a marriage.

Many couples want to go back to how life used to be, but things often feel very different now. A brain injury can change how someone thinks and acts. It can also cause a partner to become a full-time caregiver. Understanding these heavy pressures can help families make good decisions about their future.

Changes in Personality and Behavior

A brain injury can change how a person acts, speaks, and feels. The person who was hurt might get angry faster than they used to. They might act without thinking or have a hard time controlling their emotions.

For the partner, it can feel like the person they married has turned into someone completely new. These mood changes can make it hard for the couple to feel close or safe with each other.

Moving from Partner to Caregiver

One of the biggest changes after a brain injury is that the marriage stops feeling equal. Instead of being equal partners, one person becomes the caregiver and the other becomes the patient.

The healthy partner may now have to handle:

- All medical appointments and medications.
- Most of the household chores and cooking.
- All the daily planning.

At the same time, the person with the brain injury might feel upset that they lost their independence. This switch in roles can make the caregiver feel totally exhausted, and the romance in the marriage can get lost under all the stress.

Trouble with Communication and Closeness

Good relationships depend on talking and sharing feelings. However, a brain injury makes communication tough. The hurt person might struggle to remember things, lose track of conversations, or have trouble finding the right words. These hurdles cause a lot of arguments and frustration for both people.

Physical and emotional closeness usually changes, too. Extreme tiredness, new physical disabilities, and daily stress make it hard to feel romantic. When a couple stops talking and sharing, both partners can end up feeling very lonely.

Money, Family Stress, and Divorce

The stress of a brain injury spreads to other parts of life, like money and kids. Medical bills and rehab are very expensive. Plus, if the hurt person can no longer work, the family loses money. It is hard to focus on a marriage when you are constantly worried about paying for food and housing.

Children in the family feel the stress, too. They might feel confused or sad because their parent acts differently now. This adds even more weight to the healthy parent's shoulders. All of these outside pressures can push a marriage to its breaking point.

If separation becomes necessary, look for family law attorneys who have experience with brain injury cases or high-conflict divorces. They can advocate for your specific needs, such as requesting accommodations, adjusting timelines, or fighting for medical support in asset division.

You Are Not Alone

If you are feeling overwhelmed by these changes, please know that **you are not alone**. The strain that a brain injury puts on a marriage is huge. Your feelings—whether you are sad, angry, or exhausted—are completely normal.

Asking for help is a smart step to take care of yourself and your family. You can look into:

- **Special counseling** for brain injury recovery.
- **Support groups** where you can talk to people going through the same thing.
- **Trusted friends** who can listen.

You do not have to carry this heavy weight by yourself. Taking care of your own mental health is the best way to find a path forward.

At the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, our trained experts are available to speak with you about your experience, answer your questions, and connect you with the best providers/resources for your needs. Our services are free and confidential.

To get in touch:
Call 1-800-444-6443
Visit biav.net

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This project is supported through state general funds (Contract #16-002A) administered by the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

Content last reviewed: 6/16/2026