



## Create a Supportive Community for People Who Experience Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- **Identify local resources and areas of need.** Communities help through housing assistance, meal programs, public transportation, and other important services. Assess your community and if an important service is not offered, invite a group or organization to take it on as a community project.
- **Organize local resources so they are easy to find.** Develop a central location (both locally and on the Internet) where helpful resources may be easily found. Promote networking among local agencies, organizations, and churches to help share information.
- **Conduct fundraising activities or community drives.** Efforts to help with rehabilitation costs, home adaptations, and daily living needs are especially important when a survivor is unable to return to work. Always ask before organizing an event.
- **Be inclusive.** Encourage the inclusion of survivors and family members in community activities, clubs, and advisory boards. Support businesses that hire survivors or provide flexible schedules to accommodate specific needs.
- **Create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect throughout the community.** Model respectful language and appropriate behavior toward survivors or family members in community groups, at community events, or in local stores.
- **Ensure accessible buildings, activities, and events.** Attention contributes to an environment that is more accommodating for everyone. Be sure to clear sidewalks of snow and store aisles of obstacles for people who use wheelchairs or devices for walking. Consider accessibility (e.g., sidewalk access) when planning events.
- **Integrate important supports in group activities.** Implement strategies to make the group experience more pleasant for everyone. Some ideas include asking all speakers to use a microphone, encouraging participants to wear name tags, and discouraging side conversations.
- **Acknowledge those who demonstrate a commitment to survivors.** Nominate businesses, organizations, or individuals in your community for awards or grants. Or, you may officially recognize efforts through newspaper stories or letters to the editor. A simple thank you (public or private) lets an individual know you have noticed the effort.
- **Become a TBIoptions community** (<http://www.TBIoptions.ksu.edu>). TBIoptions: Connecting to Resources provides state-wide recognition of your community's support for survivors of traumatic brain injury. Initiate or coordinate the effort to become a TBIoptions community as a member of your local church, service club, or group.
- **Promote public awareness and education about TBI.** Organize promotional activities to coincide with Brain Injury Awareness Month (March) to promote increased awareness about the importance of community. See <http://www.biausa.org/index.htm> for more information.

---

This material is based upon work supported by the Rural Health and Safety Education Competitive Program of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grant number 2010-46100-21790. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. Publications from Kansas State University are available at: [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu). In each case, credit Debra M. Sellers, Ph.D., and Jane Mertz Garcia, Ph.D., *Create a Supportive Community for People Who Experience Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)*, Kansas State University, August 2012.

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**  
MF3041 August 2012

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, John D. Floros, Director.