

What to Expect During Nebraska VR ABI Interview



The following includes information about brain injury, what you can expect in the interview, and why it is important.

Acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain that happens after birth. An ABI is not inherited from a parent, is not present before or at birth, or progressive. ABI includes both traumatic brain injury (TBI) and non-traumatic injuries.

- TBI is a type of brain injury caused by trauma to the brain from an external force. Common causes include falls, being shaken or choked, motor vehicle accidents, sports related injuries, or military combat injuries.
- A non-traumatic brain injury is a type of brain injury caused by internal factors, such as lack of oxygen, illness or exposure to toxins. Common causes include stroke, tumor, infections and near-drowning.

ABI happens more often than you might think! Many people who have had an injury to their head like a concussion or an illness do not lose consciousness, so they don't know how serious it might be. Symptoms that result may seem unimportant at first or may take a while to develop. They may even be mistaken for stress or something else. Having several injuries over time can add up and make things even worse.

ABI can result in some common physical symptoms:

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Feeling dazed or confused
- Vision changes
- Ringing in the ears
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Seizures
- Pain in the head, face or neck

Long-term symptoms of ABI can make it difficult for a person to:

- Remember appointments or assignments
- Pay attention or focus
- Organize and get things done
- Follow conversations
- Feel motivated and make decisions
- Fall asleep or stay asleep
- Manage emotions
- Relate to family or coworkers

All these things can get in the way of preparing for, finding, or keeping a job. Nebraska VR staff pay attention to barriers like these so they can help you develop a plan to do your best and reach your job goals. They can also help you get more information about ABI and other resources you may need.

What You Can Expect

You'll be asked to recall injuries or illnesses that affected your head, face or neck, including any times in your life when you were hit or injured repeatedly over a period of time. You'll be asked to give as much detail as possible. If you were very young at the time, you may be asked to recall what others have told you about it or if you have a family member or friend who can recall more details.



Why This Is Important

- Asking about traumatic and non-traumatic injuries helps Nebraska VR uncover “hidden” injuries or illnesses in your past that may cause barriers to your success now. It's important to remember that Nebraska VR does not diagnose ABI. This interview does not take the place of medical attention if you need it.

You'll be asked to recall if you lost consciousness, were dazed or confused, or had memory gaps.

- These details help Nebraska VR understand how severe the injury or illness may have been at the time. Typically, the longer a person is unconscious, dazed or confused, or has memory gaps after an injury or illness, the more likely it is that they may have long-term symptoms and develop challenges like the ones listed on the first page.

You'll be asked about any changes in how you think or act that may have occurred since your injury or illness.

- Understanding the kinds of challenges you experience after an injury or illness can help you and Nebraska VR decide if further assessment may help as you plan your job goals. It also helps to determine if there are strategies or accommodations to reduce or overcome them. Having this information will help you and Nebraska VR plan ways to remove the barriers that get in the way of your success.

We All Need Help Now and Then

If you have challenges that may be related to a past ABI, the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska has educational information and offers free Resource Facilitation services to help you connect with other programs and supports. Call (844) 423-2463, email info@biane.org or visit <https://biane.org>.

Please contact your Nebraska VR Employment Specialist if you have further questions.

vr.nebraska.gov