

Considerations for Survivors with Acquired Brain Injury and Stroke

- Help keep a conversation on track. People with acquired brain injuries may digress or change course during a conversation. Redirect them using appropriate cues and reminders of the topic when necessary. Always ask if the survivor wants to continue discussing the sexual assault and always respect if they do not wish to continue the topic.
- Repeat important information about resources and options after a sexual assault. It may be necessary to remind the survivor of items discussed during court appointments, counseling sessions, phone conversations, etc.
- Keep the environment free of distractions. Try to talk with the survivor in quiet spaces where there will not be interruptions or suggest having phone conversations during quieter times at the survivor's home.
- People with acquired brain injuries may experience impulsiveness, irritability, or egocentric behavior. These are behavioral symptoms that can be consequences of the disability. With survivor permission, these symptoms may need to be discussed with law enforcement, county attorneys, support counselors before interviews or court dates for these interactions to be as beneficial as possible for the survivor.

(obtained, in part, from CALCASA: Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault with Disabilities, 2010)