

## Understanding the Long-Term Effects of a Brain Injury

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In our final installment for **Brain Injury Awareness Month**, we at Rosen Hagood look to the future – and what brain injury victims can expect down the road. Understanding the long-term effects of a brain injury is critical to demanding the compensation that victims deserve. We take the task seriously and put to work both our legal experience and knowledge of the challenges faced by brain injury victims and their loved ones.

Because the brain controls so much of what we think and do, an injury to it can have drastic and permanent consequences. Often, the brain can reorganize itself and compensate following an injury by forming new neurons (nerve cells) and neural connections. This is known as neuroplasticity. However, neuroplasticity has its limitations. Damage to key areas of the brain can cause permanent deficits when recovery is not possible or other areas of the brain are unable to assume the functions that were impacted by the damage.

The timing of symptoms differ from person to person. Some symptoms take weeks or more to manifest, while others begin shortly after the injury. The long-term physical consequences are perhaps the most obvious, at least to others who observe the changes that take place in the victim. They may include:

- Headaches
- Difficulty thinking or concentrating
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Fatigue
- Seizures
- Vision and hearing problems
- Weakness in the arms or legs
- Loss of coordination or balance issues
- Difficulty sleeping or staying asleep

On the other hand, the **emotional, mental, and social effects of a brain injury** may initially be less noticeable but are just as devastating, such as:

- Memory loss and inability to retain new memories
- Inability to stay organized and manage time
- Attention and concentration problems
- Anxiety

- Depression

For many victims, additional symptoms and issues may continue to manifest as time goes on. Eventually, victims may experience behavioral issues that might have been unimaginable prior to the injury. For example, some victims become unexpectedly aggressive towards others or are in a constantly irritable mood. The victim may no longer have any desire to participate in activities he or she once loved. It is even possible for the victim's entire personality to change.

These and other effects of brain injuries can translate into substantial long-term costs for the victim and their families. Some of those costs include the following:

- Medical expenses, including the need for therapy, rehabilitation, prescription medication, adaptive medical equipment, and nursing care
- Lost income from time spent recovering or being treated for the injury
- Loss of earning potential because of decreased productivity or inability to work the same job
- Pain and suffering
- Emotional distress

Demanding fair **compensation for a brain injury** caused by the negligence of someone else does not end with accounting for all of the expenses facing a victim today. Because these and other costs are long-term and may last decades or even a lifetime, expert witnesses may be necessary to provide reasonable cost projections. For instance, a vocational expert can explain how the victim's promising career has been impacted by the injury and the resulting loss of future earnings caused by that impact. A life care planning expert can explain the cost of future medical care a severely injured victim may need for the rest of his or her life.

The attorneys at Rosen Hagood are knowledgeable in this particular area of personal injury. We understand not just the current, observable effects of a brain injury, but also the challenges that the victim and their family will face in the future. We also know every brain injury is different, and that no two victims will be affected exactly in the same way. That is why we take the time to get to know the victim and their family, to understand their problems and the impact it has had on their lives, and how we can best help.

If you have questions about brain injuries or have been injured and need legal guidance, we are here for you.