Oklahoma Pledge

Office of Disability Concerns

Summer 2014

June, 2014
Traumatic brain injury (TBI), also known as intracranial injury, occurs when an external force traumatically injures the brain. TBI can be classified based on severity, mechanism (closed or penetrating head injury), or other features (e.g., occurring in a specific location or over a widespread area). Head injury usually refers to TBI, but is a broader category because it can involve damage to structures other than the brain, such as the scalp and skull.

TBI is a major cause of death and disability worldwide, especially in children and young adults. Males sustain traumatic brain injuries more frequently than do females. Causes include falls, vehicle accidents, and violence. Prevention measures include use of technology to protect those suffering from automobile accidents, such as seat belts and sports or motorcycle helmets, as well as efforts to reduce the number of automobile accidents, such as safety education programs and enforcement of traffic laws.

Brain trauma can occur as a consequence of a focal impact upon the head, by a sudden acceleration/deceleration within the cranium or by a complex combination of both movement and sudden impact. In addition to the damage caused at the moment of injury, brain trauma causes secondary injury, a variety of events that take place in the minutes and days following the injury. These processes, which include alterations in cerebral blood flow and the pressure within the skull, contribute substantially to the damage from the initial injury.

TBI can cause a host of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral effects, and outcome can range from complete recovery to permanent disability or death. The 20th century saw critical developments in diagnosis and treatment that decreased death rates and improved outcome. Some of the current imaging techniques used for diagnosis and treatment include CT scans computed tomography and MRIs magnetic resonance imaging.

Depending on the injury, treatment required may be minimal or may include interventions such as medications, emergency surgery or surgery years later. Physical therapy, speech therapy, recreation therapy, occupational therapy and vision therapy may be employed for rehabilitation.

Traumatic brain injury is defined as damage to the brain resulting from external mechanical force, such as rapid acceleration or deceleration, impact, blast waves, or penetration by a projectile. Brain function is temporarily or permanently impaired and structural damage may or may not be detectable with current technology.

TBI is one of two subsets of acquired brain injury (brain damage that occur after birth); the other subset is non-traumatic brain injury, which does not involve external mechanical force (examples include stroke and infection). All traumatic brain injuries are head injuries, but the latter term may also refer to injury to other parts of the head.

However, the terms head injury and brain injury are often used interchangeably. Similarly, brain injuries fall under the classification of central nervous system injuries and neurotrauma. In neuropsychology research literature, in general the term “traumatic brain injury” is used to refer to non-penetrating traumatic brain injuries.

TBI is usually classified based on severity, anatomical features of the injury, and the mechanism (the causative forces). Mechanism-related classification divides TBI into closed and penetrating head injury. A closed (also called nonpenetrating, or blunt) injury occurs when the brain is not exposed. A penetrating, or open, head injury occurs when an object pierces the skull and breaches the dura mater, the outermost membrane surrounding the brain.

Brain injury is...

“...a puzzle, all the pieces are there but in the wrong order.”

- Barbara
Scooters and motorized wheelchairs offer a great deal of mobility options and improve quality of life. Face it, they are downright fun! With advances in control, batteries and motors the devices have become more affordable for a wider audience. These mobility devices are common sights in our community. Like most specialized equipment they are expensive, powerful devices and provide additional opportunity for injury to both the driver and the public. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

Know your scooter / wheelchair or mobility device
- On soft gravel or sand, take care when making turns and allow extra space to stop and start.
- Know the space required for turning.

Check your scooter/wheelchair manual for its rating maximum slope gradient or incline. Keep within this rating and approach all slopes directly. It may be hard to judge slope, so always be cautious and safety minded.

Check your scooter/wheelchair manual for the weight of the device. Avoid temporary structures such as wooden platforms or ramps unless you are certain they can withstand the combined weight of yourself and your scooter / wheelchair. Public conveyance and private taxi hoists may have a maximum load weight that they can accommodate, it is best to call first.

Check your scooter/wheelchair manual for its rating maximum slope gradient or incline. Keep within this rating and approach all slopes directly. It may be hard to judge slope, so always be cautious and safety minded.

Check your scooter/wheelchair manual for the weight of the device. Avoid temporary structures such as wooden platforms or ramps unless you are certain they can withstand the combined weight of yourself and your scooter / wheelchair. Public conveyance and private taxi hoists may have a maximum load weight that they can accommodate, it is best to call first.

To navigate curbs and ramps approach slope straight up or down not at an angle.

On Sidewalks
- Beware of vehicles backing out of driveways.
- When driving up behind a pedestrian, call out or honk the horn to let them know you are there. Some mobility devices can travel very quiet and cannot be heard.

On Bike Paths
- You are allowed to use dedicated cycle paths that are not on city streets, however, keep to the right and be aware of the high speed of some cyclists.
- Listen and if available use your rear view mirror to stay traffic aware.

On the Road
- Use caution when operating your scooter/wheelchair on rough edges of roads.
- Avoid congested areas.
- Travel slowly, about walking pace, especially in busy areas.
- If you are able to walk short distances, it may be easier to leave your scooter/wheelchair outside stores or designated accessible restrooms.
- When passing parked cars, watch out for doors or other vehicles moving without warning.
- Important to remember that drivers may not see you.

Parking Your Scooter/Wheelchair
- When parking your scooter/wheelchair remember to leave clearance around the device for those trying to maneuver baby carriages or shopping carts. You should try not to cause an obstruction to other pedestrians.
- Remember to turn switch to off and take your key with you.
- Remember to park in a sheltered spot if possible.

Using Your Scooter/Wheelchair at Night
If you use your scooter/wheelchair at night, lights and reflectors should be installed. We recommend:
1. A flashing or steady light clearly visible for 200 yards from the front.
2. A flashing or steady colored light clearly visible for 200 yards from the back.
3. A red reflector clearly visible for 50 yards from the rear of the scooter as reflected by a car's low beam.

Crossing the Road
- When traffic-control signals are not in place or not in operation, the driver of a vehicle shall yield the right-of-way, slowing down or stopping to a person using a mobility device crossing the roadway within a crosswalk. (See 47 O.S. § 11-502)
- Every person operating a scooter/wheelchair that is crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked crosswalk or within an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection shall yield the right-of-way to all vehicles upon the roadway. (See 47 O.S. § 11-503)
- You shall move, whenever practicable, upon the right half of crosswalks. (See 47 O.S. § 11-505)
- You should not cross the road without making sure you can get back onto the sidewalk on the other side of the road.
- Try to cross the road at traffic signals, cross walks, or an intersection with stop signs.
- Drivers cannot always see you behind a parked car. Always take extra caution when driving in parking areas and crossing the road. A high safety flag makes you more visible.
- Never cross the road where you cannot see the on-coming traffic because of a hill or curve in the road.
- If there are no curb ramps onto the sidewalk, cross as other pedestrians would and keep as close to the curb as possible until you find a curb ramp or driveway.
- It is best to avoid intersections where there are no sidewalks or curb ramps.
Technology News

New and Exciting Things for the Disability Community

A future with self-driving cars has been anticipated since Norman Bel Geddes showcased his ‘Futurama’ exhibit at the 1939 New York World’s fair. The display, a miniaturized model of a city propped 50,000 robot vehicles and controlled by centralized radio waves, boldly predicted that cars would be driverless by 1959.

The prediction may have been a few decades off, but thanks to technological advances from Google, it’s finally one step closer to becoming a reality.

Google’s “moonshot” autonomous car project (which, like Google Glass, originated in the secretive Google X lab) started in 2009, and has come a long way in five years. The vehicles have driven over 700,000 autonomous miles, and have mastered staying in a lane and maintaining speed on the highway.

Now, with freeway travel under the car’s belt, researchers are addressing the complexities of driving on a city street.

The Lexus SUVs are packed with about $150,000 of equipment to help in this endeavor, including a $70,000 radar-like LIDAR system, lasers, and cameras. These devices help create detailed 3D maps of the environment. So far, about 2,000 miles of roads have been mapped.

LIDAR is not an acronym, it is a word that describes the technology used by the car to sense its surroundings. The technology combines laser and radar used by the Google car.

Cameras also take pictures of objects surrounding the car. Google’s software then sorts the objects into four categories: moving vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and static objects like signs, sidewalks, curbs, and parked cars. The technology has become so advanced that it can now read stop signs (including those in the hands of a crossing guard,) detect sudden stops, swerve around construction cones, and can see cyclists motioning a turn. So far, there have been no accidents.

Despite these advances, researchers are still testing the vehicles and working out some kinks, like driving in variable weather that could affect the sensors.

If autonomous cars do become mainstream, they could ultimately usher in an era of safety. Studies have shown that 90 percent of automobile accidents are caused by human error, and that annually there are 33,000 automobile related deaths in the United States. With sensors and pre-planned strategies to deal with issues as they occur, autonomous cars have the potential to reduce this number.

Self-driving cars can also help provide elderly and the disabled with more mobility, keep beginner drivers safe, and also decrease the number of deaths and accidents from distracted driving due to texting, using a cell phone, or eating and drinking.

But despite the potential benefits, the road to getting these autonomous cars to the mass consumer will be a bumpy one. There are multiple political and social issues that need to be dealt with first.

Having a self-driving car on the market is still about six years away according to the Google team, so there is still time to hash out these issues. They will also, in that time, have to get more roads mapped, bring down costs, configure designs to be more consumer friendly, address privacy and security questions, and solve the weather-related problems the car still displays.

Ms Abilities America visits Office of Disability Concerns

Katherine Loos
Ms. Abilities Oklahoma
From Owasso. She has mild cognitive disabilities. When she was 3 the doctors in Missouri said she would not read, write, or go to school.

She has never let her disability stop her. In 8th grade she started with the Owasso Band color guard and was on the squad for 4 years. Took Drivers Ed at 15 1/2 passed and now has her own car. She attended Roger State University. Planning on getting married next year. Kattie is very excited about the opportunity to let everyone know that everyone has the opportunity to do anything in life if they want to do. Her platform is to educate individuals about not utilizing the R word.

Vanessa Alsup
Ms. Abilities America 2013-2014
From McAlester, Oklahoma. She has visual impairments. She has two children and a wonderful husband.

This year, Vanessa Alsup is advocating for Equal Employment for individuals who happen to have disabilities. She has started her own business named Dot-to-Dot Braille Transcriptions.

Sassy: The Service Dog

My name is Sassy, and I am a service dog. When I was 6 weeks old in human years, I learned that I had a very special calling in life to be a service dog for a human who was in a wheelchair. This human was interested in finding a dog that she could train to help her with her balance, retrieving items, making sure she could become more self sufficient in life.

For more information about Sassy you can check out her book “Sassy: The Service Dog” available at Amazon, Barnes&Noble, Lulu and other on line retailers.
Client Assistance Program  CAP
CAP can:
- Assist you in conveying your concerns to appropriate Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) program staff
- Work through problems you may have encountered in the rehabilitation process
- Explain your legal rights and responsibilities in your own rehabilitation effort
- Assist you in your relationship with projects and programs providing rehabilitation services
- Assist you in advocating your employment goals

I had the opportunity to meet a delightful young man who enjoys dance and the performing arts. Everett Burk is 15 years old and lives in Tahlequah, OK. He has been going to dance for about 4 years and has taken both tap and ballet, but he really prefers ballet. Everett says Ballet makes him feel powerful and strong.

I was able to see Everett dance at the On Stage Dance Studio Spring Recital in Tahlequah. In fact, he was in three numbers including a solo. Everett did tell me that he likes the guy to girl ratio in dance since he is the only guy!

Everett is very articulate and well versed in a variety of subjects. We not only talked about dance but also movies, songs, poems, animals and school. He is very willing to share his thoughts, so we had a quite a conversation that afternoon. Everett was anticipating the new movie being released on Thursday about the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. His favorite is Michelangelo because that turtle is clueless and likes pizza. He also thinks everyone should have a favorite animal. His is a walrus and likes that they are big. He also likes boars because they are strong. But he made it very clear he likes to dance.

“Dance is very important to him”, mom, Juliet, explains. “It helps him express his emotions, he has both a happy and angry dance. We really like dance.” Mom added, “His teachers have been wonderful and patient with understanding the passion that Everett has for dance and allow his to express his feelings.”

Everett has two brothers. His oldest brother Isaac is on a mission trip to South Carolina and his younger brother, Ethan, is always around to pester him. His mom, Juliet, is his teacher with home school.

Dad, Reed, stated when asked about Everett in dance he said, “Never expected Everett to take to dance the way he has.”

Everett is a very accomplished young man. He is a singer and poet with videos on YouTube. He is also achieved the rank of Life Scout in Troop 792 with plans on making Eagle.

I asked Everett to give me a quote. This is a very thoughtful young man and he said

“If you don’t have what it takes, then go get it.”
Now that is great thought and words to live by, but then he added
“If you don’t have the skill to pay the bill, go make them…”
That is words we could all listen too.

By the way Everett is Autistic, not that it matters. He is a wonderful and engaging young man with a bright future thanks to his efforts, hard work, and his family.

Dance like you mean it!
Down and Out in Milwaukee

William Ginn

There's us, and there's them. I mean those people over there who are invisible but keep cropping up anyway. Homeless man killed by youth gang. Ugh. More women and families becoming homeless. TMI (too much information).

And sometimes they make movies about the homeless person who recovers and writes about their experience in a best-selling book. And sometimes someone decides to tackle the subject in a totally new way—a way that shocks us in a good way and kind of restores our faith in humanity.

That's what one video company decided to do. They started asking "what if . . ." and didn't stop until they had produced something which will forever change your opinion of homelessness.

Somebody decided to pit two concepts together which we consign to opposite ends of the spectrum and see what happens. Somebody decided to convert a homeless shelter mess hall into a five-star restaurant and create some enchanted home. shelter mess hall into a five-star restaurant and create some enchanted

And sometimes they make movies about the experience in a totally new way—a way that shocks us in a good way and kind of restores our faith in humanity.

Somebody decided to take on the subject in a totally new way—a way that shocks us in a good way and kind of restores our faith in humanity.

That's what one video company decided to do. They started asking "what if . . ." and didn't stop until they had produced something which will forever change your opinion of homelessness.

Somebody decided to pit two concepts together which we consign to opposite ends of the spectrum and see what happens. Somebody decided to convert a homeless shelter mess hall into a five-star restaurant and create some enchanted evening for 50 homeless people.

They said it couldn't be done. They took an all-white dining area with round tables and green chairs and went with the green theme with interior decoration. Cloth tablecloths and napkins with real silverware (as in polished silver). Nothing but the best for the down and out in Milwaukee.

"Table for three?" quips the maître-d in crisp, clear English. "How lovely to see you two again." He kisses the back of her hand. Yes, I'm talking the red carpet treatment, and these lucky homeless shelter residents were blown off their feet.

The old man dressed in tattered jeans sincerely says he would have dressed better. "No problem. You're welcome as you are." Nobody has ever had this kind of treatment. Nobody has ever become visible and accepted and respected and admired and . . . Well you know the rest.

There's a heck of a lot more going on here than eating a filet mignon steak served by waiters in a tuxedo. There's all those good things that make life worth living. The intangible things we all want but so few of us get enough of. To be accepted for who you are. To be respected as a human being. To love and be loved by others. (That's not unique to the homeless.)

Comments like "I've never eaten a filet mignon before." and "I've never had anyone treat me like this before." But then the music is over. The violins stop playing. This once-in-a-lifetime event has passed into history.

I can only imagine that when they wake up the next morning, the experience has passed into dream status. Whatever happened the night before fades back into the thousands of "get out of here's" and the "not welcome here's" and the looks of people who see other people as invisible. We're back to the harsh reality which keeps us forever locked into a vicious circle of poverty, dependence, and invisibility. Vital needs unmet and probably never will be.

But, who knows. Maybe someone will decide they are important. Someone will decide they are someone. Someone will break out of that downward spiral because of this experience. Someone will start on a better path. Who knows?

If you'd like to watch this video, go to Youtube. The web address is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-8ee7qyfFO.

Try it. I think you'll like it.

5 Common Misconceptions about Disabled Parking

1. If I have a Disabled Parking Placard I do not have to pay for metered parking.
   Fact: Yes, you do. If the space is a paid parking space, then anyone parking there must pay the fee.

2. 1 out of every 8 disabled parking spaces must be van accessible.
   Fact: The new 2010 ADA Guidelines now stipulates that 1 out of every 6 disabled spaces must be van accessible.

3. It's ok to use someone else's parking placard.
   Fact: It is illegal to use another person's placard and if you are caught, the fine can be up to $500.

4. Painting the international disability symbol in the parking space is the same as a sign.
   Fact: Not true. According to the ADA, the sign is what makes the space a legal disabled parking space. If you think about it, what would happen to that signage painted on the ground if it snowed or a large vehicle parked on top of it? Only the sign posted on a pole or on the building counts. The color or size of the sign is not regulated. The ADA only says that it must be placed high enough to be seen over the hood of the vehicle and be placed directly in front of the designated space.

5. There are a lot of people with Disabled Parking Placards that don't need them.
   Fact: Not all disabilities are visible. Just because a person isn't using a wheelchair, scooter, walker or cane doesn't mean they do not have health issues that require parking near an entrance. People with respiratory ailments or cardiovascular issues may or may not require use of mobility device but would still find it hard to walk a great distance.

For more information on disability parking or any other ADA issue go to: http://www.ada.gov, and type your question into the search engine.
The Quilt called Oklahoma...

No Man's Land - Or the panhandle, is the only part of the present state of Oklahoma that was never part of Indian Territory.

Legally known as the "Public land Strip, the area became part of the United States when the independent republic of Texas asked to be admitted as a state. Since Texas desired to enter the Union as a slave state, all land north of 36 degrees 30 seconds north latitude had to be ceded to the United States in accordance with the Missouri Compromise of 1850. Accordingly "No Man's Land" was ceded to the United States on November 25, 1850.

Because of the lawlessness of the area - as well as several settlers' desire to gain clear title to the land, an attempt was made in March 1887 to organize the Public Land Strip as Cimarron Territory and to reinforce the claim Territorial officers were elected, Beaver City was selected as capital, and a provisional territorial legislature held a meeting. The federal government failed to recognize the organization.

The Organic Act of May 2, 1890, added "No Man's Land" to the Oklahoma Territory as the seventh county. In August 1890, by a vote of the people residing there, the area was named Beaver County. During the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention in 1907, Beaver County was divided into Beaver, Texas and Cimarron Counties.

Greer County - This area was claimed by both Texas and the United States. On February 8, 1860, the Texas Legislature created Greer County, Texas. Only a few families moved into the area. No post office was established in Greer County until 1886. On March 16, 1896 The Supreme Court adjudged this area to be part of the Indian Territory. During the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention in 1907, subdivided the area into Beckham, Greer, and Jackson. After statehood, one more divide of Greer added Harmon County.

Nutrition is the selection of foods and preparation of foods, and their ingestion to be assimilated by the body. By practicing a healthy diet, you can look better, feel better and be better. Coupon Nutrition University is a free one day workshop for anyone wanting to read and understand food labels. The workshop is facilitated by professional health educators each quarter. To register please visit: www.odc.ok.gov.
Mental Illness and the Paradox of Parity
Doug
The national conversation has been focused on mental illness and awareness for some time with the sudden spike in violent crimes. I came across this article that discusses several important points that need to be included in the conversation.

### Oklahoma Durable Medical Equipment Reuse Program

Oklahoma Health Care Authority and Oklahoma ABLE Tech developed a program that provides refurbished adaptive equipment to disabled children and adults at no charge. Since the development of the program, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority has received more than 1,091 pieces of equipment with a cost value of $730,330.

Important facts to consider about this great program:

- Individuals must submit a durable medical equipment application and documentation from their physician, physical or occupational therapist to begin the process.
- Individuals that receive Sooner Care assistance are given preference for the first 60 days.
- Applicants are not required to meet financial guidelines in order to receive assistance.
- Types of equipment available for applicants are electric and manual wheelchairs, quad canes, nebulizers, shower chairs, walkers, shower chairs, bath benches, standers, communication devices, CPAP machines, and hospital beds.
- All donated adaptive items are sanitized and refurbished to allow the device to operate at peak performance.
- Some public donations may not be fully equipped and will require specialized fitting or accessories.
- The availability of some items varies depending on the need and situation.
- A waiting list is kept for equipment not available and when it arrives the applicant will be notified.
- Technical assistance and training is provided by a staff member or a therapist on equipment usage.
- Equipment drop off or pick-up services are available for central Oklahoma residents only.

Interested? Contact Katie Woodward at 405-523-4810 or 405-522-7300. Applications can be faxed to 405-523-4811. You can also contact ABLE Tech at 405-744-9748 or 1-888-885-5588. Visit the website at http://okabletech.okstate.edu.

---

The Paradox of Parity

When the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) was signed into law in 2008, after decades of debate, advocates for mental health celebrated what was arguably their most important legislative achievement in 50 years. The new law had a simple, ambitious goal: treatment for mental illness and substance abuse disorders would be on a par with treatment for all other medical disorders. If insurance companies covered treatments for depression and diabetes, they could not have different requirements or different deductibles or different reimbursement schedules.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), passed in 2010, included mental health care as an essential benefit and consolidated the 2008 MHPAEA law into a broad mandate for health care reform by removing exclusions based on pre-existing conditions, extending coverage on a parent’s plan for dependents up to age 26, and expanding coverage to the entire population. With implementation of the ACA’s reforms well underway and the release of the implementation rules for MHPAEA late last year heralded most dynamic periods of mental health care change since the 1960’s.

For this to happen, there are many outstanding questions needed to be answered. Under parity, will cognitive behavior therapy be reimbursed at the same rate as pharmacological treatment? How will fidelity, the quality of treatment, be defined? And what about other psychosocial treatments with less evidence, from swimming with dolphins to long-term residential care? If we expect parity of coverage, should we expect parity of evidence? Do we have parity of rigor? Who is responsible for answering these questions? The Food and Drug Administration establishes a regulatory framework for medications and devices, but not for practice. Should there be a regulatory pathway for procedures and therapies?

The paradox of parity is that even with the new laws, in the absence of such a framework, some treatments might not be covered even to the extent that they were covered in the past.

Of course, many providers may look for reimbursement outside of the insurance or Medicaid systems. A recent report from Bishop et al found that only 43 percent of psychiatrists accepted Medicaid and only 55 percent accepted private non-capitated insurance. These figures are much lower than rates for other medical specialties (73 percent for Medicaid and 89 percent for private insurance). And the rates for psychiatrists accepting private insurance are going down, decreasing 17 percent from 2005–2006 to 2009-2010 when these data were collected.

It would be a sad irony if in the era of parity only those who could afford to pay out of pocket could get access to effective psychosocial treatments. But true parity may require that the mental health community take steps to evidence-based treatments, standardized reporting systems, and detailed definition for each evidence-based intervention. It can work looking at the efforts at the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System, having done all of this over the past five years. The results show that when psychosocial treatments are delivered with high quality and fidelity, outcomes improve. That is the parity all of us should be fighting for.
Getting and Keeping a job!

One of life’s great accomplishments is to secure great employment! You look forward to going to work everyday. But sometimes, going to work evokes fear, loathing and down right disgust. Don’t let your feelings go this far, think about the situation in four “alignments”. The alignments include Ambition, Skills, Rewards and the Boss. These are simple and easy things to think about to help you look through your situation and identify opportunities for change.

Alignment with ambition
Are you working for a company and in a role that is getting you closer to your goal? This is a fundamental question to ask yourself and unfortunately most people never do. Because without a goal it’s impossible to know if you are headed in the right direction. I often recommend a “goal first” approach to business planning, but it’s also the first place to start as you think about your own direction. If you have never taken the time to write down where you want to be in three, five, and 10 years, now is the time to start.

Alignment with skills
The most enjoyable jobs fully tap our exiting skill sets and challenge us to grow new ones. Are you a master of the domain you are currently working in or are you on your way? If the answer is yes, you are probably fairly satisfied with the work you do. If the answer is no, your confidence has likely been battered and you are constantly looking over your shoulder. Now, if you are out of your element a good boss and training can counteract any suffering and help you regain your mojo.

Alignment with reward expectations
There are two types of rewards and both are important. Intrinsic rewards are based on the personal fulfillment you get out of a job well done. External rewards include your salary and any other material benefits you receive from your employer. Your reward expectations need to closely match reality for you to be satisfied. If there is a disconnect here for too long, you will grow disenchanted with the work you do or worse. You might not be able to pay your rent or mortgage.

Alignment with boss
It’s in vogue right now to suggest that people do not leave their jobs but instead leave their bosses. As you have already read, there are many reasons for leaving a job that have nothing to do with your boss. However, I agree that an unsupportive boss is at the top of the list driving folks to update their resume. I have left bosses who: chased employees around the office, did not allow their staff to speak with other managers, and threatened retribution when someone quit. Does your boss have your best interests in mind?

Doing Well at your Job!

All of us want to be better at our jobs, right? We all want to be the best, represent the best and do the best we can. These are great motivations and have great benefits with our relationship with our employer. The fact that you want to make yourself better at your job is a great step. Embrace it—you’re trying to be a greater version of yourself!

- to give you a higher chance of getting a raise, a promotion;
- to make you indispensable and valued;
- to grow your professional and personal experience and skills.

There are several easy steps that you can do that will make a difference in your career and growth in your chosen employment field:

Be adaptable to change
Nothing is going to stay the same during the course of your work. With that said, there are always going to be changes in your work environment. The way you work this year may not necessarily be the same with the way you work next year.

Build and sustain your network
Have you ever heard the saying that your income is the average income of the five people who you hang with out the most? Make sure to connect, reach out and develop sustainable relationships with authorities in your field as you’re going to need them to help you work on your skills and knowledge.

Think differently
Don’t be afraid to be a thought leader. Go the extra mile and create productive things related to the industry of the company you’re in. Volunteer to contribute to your company blog, to speak at your company’s events and even to represent your company when you’re invited to be a part of a panel.

Prioritize and get the most important things done
You can easily be overwhelmed by your workload if you constantly face concerns and if you let these concerns easily pile up. Ask yourself: will doing this ultimately make yourself better at your job? Will this make a difference?

Always keep updated with the current industry events
Innovation is one of the factors that can help your company thrive in your industry. For you and your company to succeed, you need to have a significant competitive advantage that can help put your company at the top of the game.

In the end, to make yourself better at your job, you shouldn’t just focus on delivering better reports or spending more time with your bosses. It’s about how you improve yourself and contribute to the companies mission and bottom line. A company is only as good as their employees!