Getting your head around ABI

Learner Guide

Acknowledgments

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1.1 Introduction

Welcome

> It has always been challenging to become informed, but as information proliferates and knowledge grows more complex and specialized, it becomes increasingly difficult to stay informed. Therefore, the struggle you are engaged today as a novice is not so much different than the struggle you'll be engaged in throughout your professional career.

> Do not despair! More to the point, do not allow your incomplete grasp of all aspects of a situation (or of a text) to deter you from entering the conversation or providing your own best response at any given time.

> —from Writing @CSU, Colorado State University[1]

The writers of this Learner Guide found the above advice inspiring—we hope you do too. Welcome! *Getting your head around ABI* has been developed for people who may be working in the field for the first time or who may already have some experience in other areas of the Department of Human Services or community services organisations. The learning and information resources may also be consulted by staff wishing to obtain new knowledge or 'refresh' their knowledge of current Acquired Brain Injury information. We hope that the general community and carers will also find the information useful and valuable.

What's the Learner Guide for?

This Learner Guide is designed to help you to work through the Resource Manual and the activities provided for *Getting your head around ABI.* The Learner Guide may also help you to:

- Plan your learning induction (perhaps with the support of a workplace supervisor)
- Build your skills as a learner
- Plan ways to apply and practise what you learn
- Keep a record of completed activities and tasks
- Apply for skills recognition.

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[1] http://writing.colostate.edu/references/processes/response/com2b2.cfm

What's in the guide?

Part 1   About the learning program

You should read through Part 1 carefully and refer back to it again after you complete each task.

In Part 1 you will find:

- Background to the learning program

- Summary of *Getting your head around ABI* and its content areas

- Tasks and activities for completion for skills recognition purposes.

What's covered	What to do
1 The learning materials	• Check that you have all the right bits for the learning program, including the CD–ROM, and know what each piece is for
2 The course	• Check that you are clear on what this learning program is about, what you'll learn, where it leads, and where it fits into your continuing professional development
3 Skills recognition tasks	• Find out what you are required to do and when • Look for any information, hints and tips about doing the skills recognition tasks

Figure 1—Things to do

Part 2   Resources

Part 2 of this Learner Guide provides:

- Learning tips to get the most from the learning program

Getting started

To complete your learning program you will need to access the following components:

- Resource Manual for *Getting your head around ABI*

- Case study vignettes

- This Learner Guide.

You can download a copy of the Resource Manual or this Learner Guide from the CD–ROM. It is also envisaged that some organisations will provide intranet access to the resources—you should ask your supervisor about this.

Using the Resource Manual
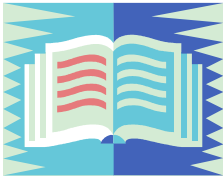
The Resource Manual for *Getting your head around ABI* contains all the relevant content of your learning program. You will need to consult the Resource Manual for each of the program topics, work through the material and then return to this Learner Guide and complete any skills recognition tasks that are required as part of your formal study program (if you are enrolled in a Certificate IV unit) from the Community Services Training Package CHC02).

Learning activities

The learning activities in the Resource Manual describe what you have to do—exercises, self-tests, readings, etc—to check your knowledge as you go. These activities are a key part of your learning—they help you test your understanding and provide practice along the way. In the Resource Manual you will also find a summary of each of the case study vignettes located on the CD–ROM.

Skills recognition tasks

These signal the points where you need to prepare for assessment against the criteria for identified units of the Community Services Training Package (CHC02). If you are intending to seek formal skills recognition for your work in *Getting your head around ABI* you will need to save your completed tasks or project work in a folder for submission to an accredited workplace assessor from a registered training organisation. Details of this process are provided later in this Learner Guide.

1.2 Check your learning program details

Pathways

Getting your head around ABI is a learning program of approximately 8 hours. You begin the program by planning your own pathway in consultation with your supervisor, who will maintain contact with you and support you during the program. If you are working in DHS or at a community services Non-Government Organisation (NGO), you might meet again with your supervisor when you have completed the program, to plan the next steps in your continuing professional development.

Qualifications

Getting your head around ABI has been 'mapped' against one competency unit at Certificate IV level from the Community Services Training Package. Participants may, if they choose, apply for skills recognition by a qualified workplace assessor from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), based on completion of the activities and tasks prescribed in the learning program (see later pages of this Learner Guide). Competency assessment is optional—you may wish simply to complete the learning program for your own benefit.

Outcomes

We hope that once you complete the reading in the Resource Manual and the learning activities, you will have sufficient knowledge on how to support someone with an acquired brain injury, so that they receive the best possible care. It is also possible that by learning more about Acquired Brain Injury you may be in a position to encourage others to embrace difference and to want to learn more about ABI and its effects on our community.

Getting your head around ABI is designed to help you identify, analyse and meet the needs of people with ABI and their families. In many cases, this is far from a simple matter. People with ABI sometimes present to community service agencies for a range of reasons that may have to do with accommodation, drug and alcohol abuse, mental health, and so on. You may have no more than a suspicion that the person seeking your support might have an acquired brain injury—in some cases, the person concerned might not know themselves that they have an ABI.

This learning program will enable you to identify key characteristics of people with ABI and to match their needs with the community services available.

Competency framework

The following competency unit has been identified as the standard against which *Getting your head around* ABI has been developed:

> (CHCCS6B) Assess and deliver services to clients with complex needs.

This unit describes skills and knowledge for workers who need to undertake assessments of more complex clients' needs and match them to community services available.

Elements of this competency unit are as follows.

CHCCS6B/01—Assess and analyse client needs to ensure they can be met

CHCCS6B/02—Identify and provide for the delivery of services to meet client needs

CHCCS6B/03—Evaluate client service delivery.

By mastering the information and activities contained in the print-based and electronic resources, you will be able to:

- Identify the major areas of the brain and the function of each

- Describe the nature and incidence of ABI

- Describe the broad stages of ABI treatment and recovery

- Recognise the special needs of people with ABI and their families

- Identify the roles and responsibilities of carers who support people with ABI and their families

- Identify relevant legislative requirements and provisions

- Outline client assessment procedures and standards

- Match relevant service provider networks to the specific needs of people with ABI and their families

- Apply person-centred planning principles to specific case study vignettes of people with ABI and their families

- Define principles of best practice in the delivery of services to people with ABI and their families

- Evaluate provision of services to people with ABI and their families.

Background to the learning program

Over the past few years, serious concerns have been raised by service providers, clinicians, carers, the Office of the Public Advocate, police, magistrates and others, regarding the difficulty of providing services to people who have multiple and complex needs.[2] This group of people includes adolescents and adults who may have various combinations of mental illness, intellectual disability, physical disability, behavioural difficulties, social isolation, family dysfunction, alcohol or other substance abuse and an Acquired Brain Injury.

It has become a matter of some urgency that workers understand more about acquired brain injury and the often complex needs of people who experience this condition and their families. Service responses are currently provided on a case-by-case basis and are often reactive—provided during a crisis—rather than fully planned and coordinated. Knowing more about ABI and the various services available in the community will help you to provide a more person-centred approach and to tailor a response that better meets the needs of the person who has come to you for assistance.

Whether your role is that of a member of an Intake/Response team, an accommodation officer, a social worker, alcohol and other drugs worker, community worker, a supervisor or manager of a service, this learning program will provide the knowledge and skills needed to deliver value-adding services to people with ABI.

Fortunately, you are not alone. There are many information and support networks that can help to meet the needs of people with ABI and their families. This learning program will encourage you to join networks and to seek information and contact with such groups. You will also be encouraged to work closely with your supervisor (if you have one) and people in your organisation who may have special knowledge and experience regarding ABI.

Pre-requisites and RCC

There are no pre-requisites for this learning program. Participants who have worked in other areas of the Department of Human Services may wish to claim Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) for some parts of the program. You should talk to your supervisor about this.

Using the CD–ROM or studying online

Getting your head around ABI has been designed as a flexible learning package that consists of a CD–ROM, a Learner Guide and a Resource Manual. In some cases, the CD–ROM will have been uploaded to an intranet and you will be able to go online from your workstation or log on (with a user-ID and password) from outside the organisation in which you work. However,

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[2] See Department of Human Services (2003), *Responding to people with multiple and complex needs project: Client profile and case studies report,* DHS, Melbourne

the CD–ROM will probably prove more portable, accessible and convenient for most learners.

Getting your head around ABI may be used as a self-contained and self-paced learning program that you can work your way through, perhaps with the help of a supervisor. It can also be used as a fully searchable information source, for those who simply want to retrieve current information, check a detail or revise their knowledge. The Knowledge Base that underpins the CD–ROM (or intranet) can be accessed and searched with a few mouse-clicks and you can print out any information you need to keep for later use. You can also follow the links on the CD–ROM (or intranet) to visit other sites and obtain further information and resources.

Content

Each topic in *Getting your head around ABI* takes about 2 hours to complete. The duration time includes allowances for reading, literature searching and working through the activities provided, including the case study vignettes on the CD–ROM (or your local intranet). The following table provides an overview.

	Resource Manual (reading and activities)	CD or Online vignettes (skills practice)	TOTAL
Topic 1—Introducing ABI	1.5	0.5	**2.0**
Topic 2—Working with those affected by ABI	1.5	0.5	**2.0**
Topic 3—Assessing needs	1.5	0.5	**2.0**
Topic 4—Delivering and evaluating services	1.5	0.5	**2.0**
TOTAL	**6.0**	**2.0**	**8.0**

Figure 2—Summary of program duration

More details of the content in each topic are provided on the next page.

Topic 1—Introducing ABI (2 hours)

Definition of ABI

Incidence and prevalence

Types and causation

Mechanics of brain injury

Indicators of impairment

      Cognitive, physical, emotional, medical, psychological…

      Case study, assessment checklist

Gathering information for referral

      Tools for gathering information

Relevant reports (medical, nursing, occupational and speech therapy)

      Case study and typical report sample

Common misconceptions

The online component for Topic 1 is a case study vignette— Stephen— intended to demonstrate that people presenting with ABI often have complex needs and that there are rarely any clear-cut solutions. Workers often need to apply some lateral thinking in order to get the best results for the person whose needs they are addressing.

Topic 2—Working with those affected by ABI (2 hours)

Principles of person-centred care

      The human rights background

      Individualised Planning & Support (IP&S)

Principles of home-based and community-based care

Broad stages of treatment and recovery

      Medical/acute

      Secondary/rehabilitation

      Tertiary/community re-entry

      Case study/vignette

Tapping strengths and preserving skills

      Role of the personal carer

      Case study

Tool/checklist

Practicalities of Care

Cognitive interventions

Environmental modifications

Assistive devices

The case study vignette for Topic 2 is about Ahmed and his difficulties. In it you will explore ways to apply the principles of person-centred planning and to consider various forms of intervention and assistance for someone with ABI who is also homeless and inclined to impulsive outbursts..

Topic 3—Assessing needs (2 hours)

Legislative requirements

Relevant Acts

IDPS

Guardianship & Administration

Housing, Health, Child Protection, etc

Guardianship, administration, advocacy

Case study

TAC and WorkCover

Disability State Plan

Privacy Act and Access to Health Records

Client assessment procedures and standards

Administrative processes

Communication

Behaviour that can be challenging and personal safety

Working with families

Service standards

The case study for Topic 3—Bradley—requires some lateral thinking to balance the rights of an individual with ABI and the wishes of family and friends. Issues of guardianship, administration and advocacy cluster around a situation that is complex but not all that unusual.

Topic 4—Delivering and evaluating services (2 hours)

Service provider networks

    ABI programs

    ABI service organisations

Information sources

Matching needs to services

    Features of multiple and complex cases

    Referrals and follow-ups

    Networking

Towards re-integration

    Home and family

    Work and community

    Carer education and support

Towards best practice

    Service organisation quality assessment

The case study vignette for Topic 4—Moira—will consider a case of a person with complex and multiple needs who seeks to regain custody of her child. You will need to consider longer term solutions, ways you can build on Moira's existing skills and interests and various forms of collaboration between service providers.

1.3   Check skill recognition tasks

The assessment

In order to obtain Recognition of Current Competency you will need to have access to a workplace where your knowledge, skills and attitudes toward people with an Acquired Brain Injury can be observed and assessed. This can be recorded by a peer or colleague, your workplace supervisor or a trainer from a Registered Training Organisation.

In some instances, you may wish to work on the vignettes in a group situation. Your personal contribution to a discussion, write-up, referral or supervision process needs to be recorded accurately and supported by your group colleagues.

The activities and tasks that we have provided will not be sufficient to obtain a completed competency but you can use them to demonstrate your understanding, explore your knowledge and record any gaps you may have in your work.

A common method of recognising a person's current competency is to provide an evidence portfolio. This means that you keep and maintain your evidence of competency in a portfolio that you update regularly.

An example of how to do this follows.

Sample activity as evidence of current competency

Work though Vignette 1—Stephen, then take the following steps.

1   Collect the information you are using and any sources you consulted.

2   Assess yourself on the three activities provided in the vignette.

3   Print out the vignette and your responses to the activities, along with any thoughts you recorded about Stephen's situation and the services he would need.

4   Go back to the competency unit (there is a complete copy in the Knowledge Bank section of the CD–ROM) and identify where the material can be mapped as evidence of your knowledge and skills.

For example, under *CHCCS6B/01—Assess and analyse client needs to ensure they can be met*, your responses to Stephen's case should demonstrate how you:

- assessed the information you were given

- selected the relevant and important information (analysis of client needs)

- determined the validity of what you assessed

- analysed on behalf of the client.

In most cases, your responses alone would not be sufficient and you would need to have your workplace supervisor verify that your assessment and analysis was appropriate for your workplace.

You should then put your written responses under the correct category of the competency, obtaining further evidence from your workplace supervisor, your colleagues and ideally also print out your job description and a relevant resume.

Submitting for skills recognition

If you wish to have your work recognised by a Registered Training Organisation, you will need to collect your evidence portfolio and approach your Registered Training Organisation (RTO). The trainer may have additional ideas of what you can use as evidence and together you can develop a training plan.

1.4 Learn online

Moving around the program

Getting started

The CD–ROM should open automatically once you insert the disc in the player on your computer. If this Autorun feature does not work, please open the My Computer folder (in Windows) and double-click on the CD icon over the number (usually D:) that represents the CD drive. The program should then begin with the introductory screen shown below.
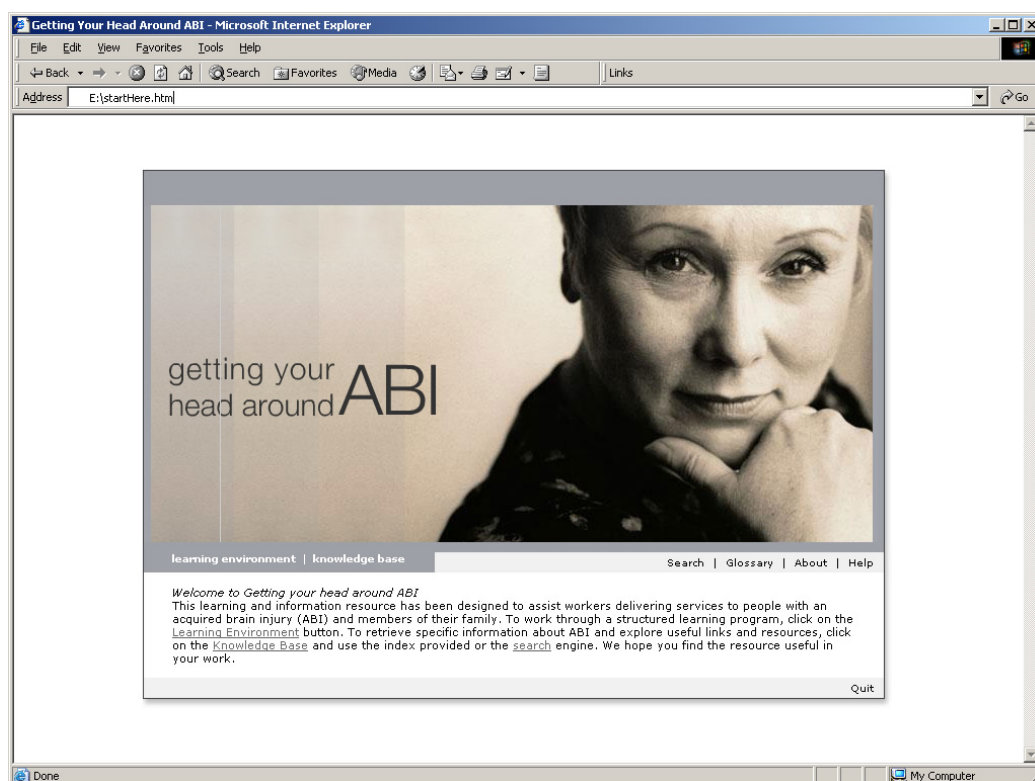

Figure 3—Opening Screen

Please note that *Getting your head around ABI* has been designed for access through a browser (e.g. Internet Explorer) and all screens for the program therefore open inside a browser window, with space around them, as in the above example.

The Introduction offers you two pathways through the program—Learning environment or Knowledge base. Let's take the Learning environment first.

Learning environment

This area of the learning and information resource contains the Learner Guide (which you are currently reading) and the Resource Manual—both of which are printable Acrobat documents. Both are also 'readable' (for users with visual impairment) through the Screen Reader provided with most versions of Microsoft Windows.

The Learning environment also contains four vignettes—interactive case studies that provide realistic examples of situations that will need some lateral thinking and problem-solving ability on your part.
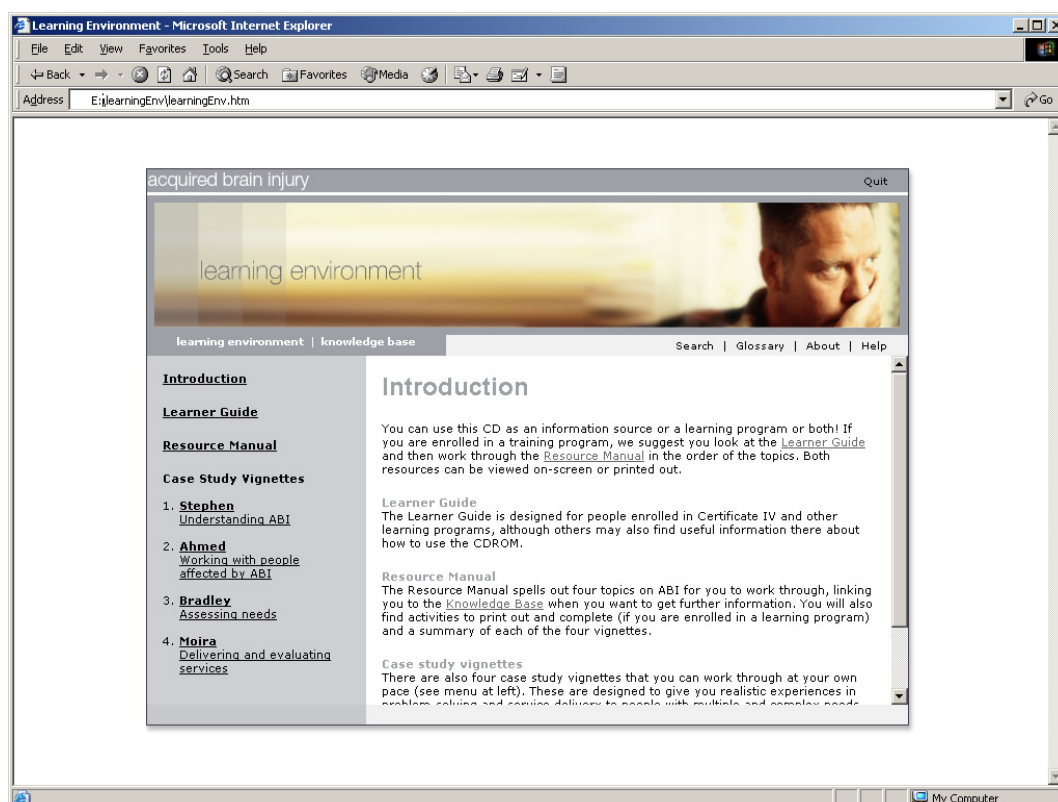

Figure 4—Introduction to the Learning environment

Vignettes

The four vignettes—Stephen, Ahmed, Bradley and Moira—have been developed from actual case histories and dramatised using actors. The aim is to present you with realistic scenarios of people with multiple and complex needs who find themselves in situations where there is no clear-cut or obvious solution.

Each vignette contains three activities for you to work through and a Notepad facility where you can save and print any thoughts you want to record. The pages of the vignette are also printable, although most people will want to stay online to do this work, since there are audio instructions from the supervisor and other members of the large 'cast'.

The 'Supervisor' appears in all vignettes and instructs you on what to do, as well as offering general advice and information on service delivery to people with an ABI and their families. You can move back and forth in each vignette by using the buttons in the bottom right hand corner. The player underneath the Supervisor's photograph has a set of buttons that allow you to move quickly back and forth through some of the longer stories and explanations, with shaded text to indicate where you are within the story.

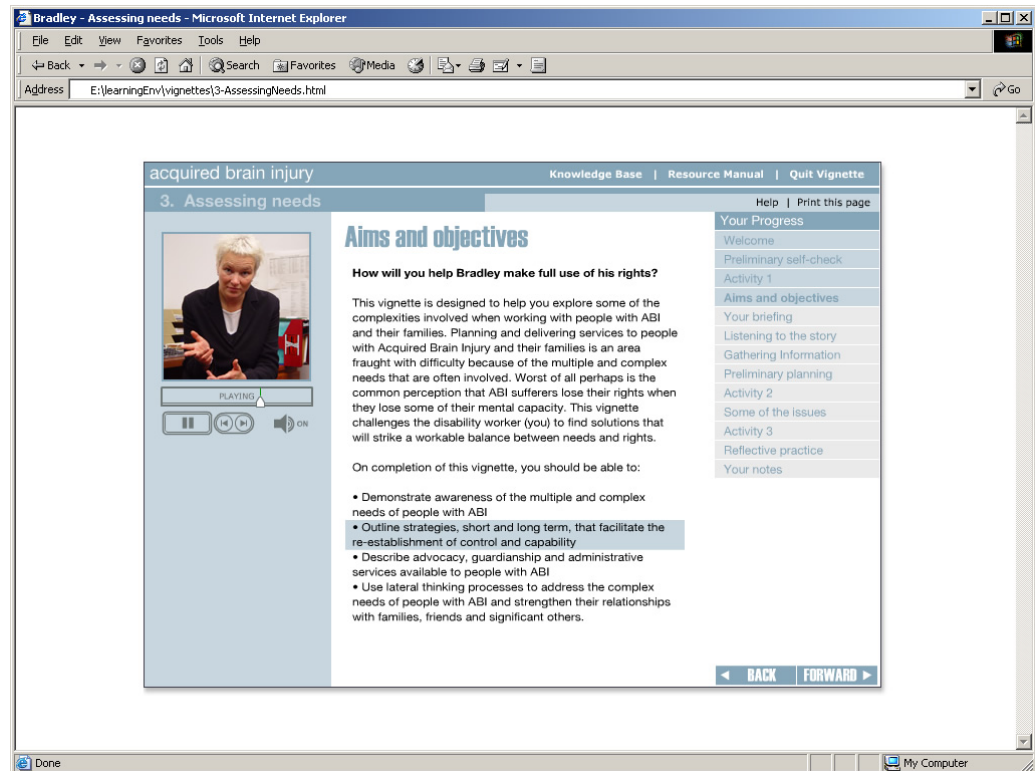A sample page from a vignette is shown below.

Figure 5—Sample screen from a vignette

Knowledge base

Think of the Knowledge base as your information resource. Here you can search directly for information under any of the four topic headings, which are the same as those in the Resource Manual. The Knowledge base facilitates access to:

- Internet addresses of ABI and other disability service organisations

- Acrobat and Word documents that can be downloaded, printed or read on-screen

- Powerpoint presentations

- Other databases, such as Disability Online and the Better Health Channel.

You can also go directly to a specific Knowledge base address by clicking on the brain icon in the Resource Manual (see example below).

Knowledge Base

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This link to the Knowledge Base provides further information on the effects that an ABI can have on individuals and their families. Browse this link to find stories drawn from actual experience and to review some of the strategies available for supporting people with ABI and their families.

Figure 6—Excerpt from Resource Manual

You will notice that the screens in the Knowledge base are colour-coded differently to those in the Learning environment, as in the sample shown below.
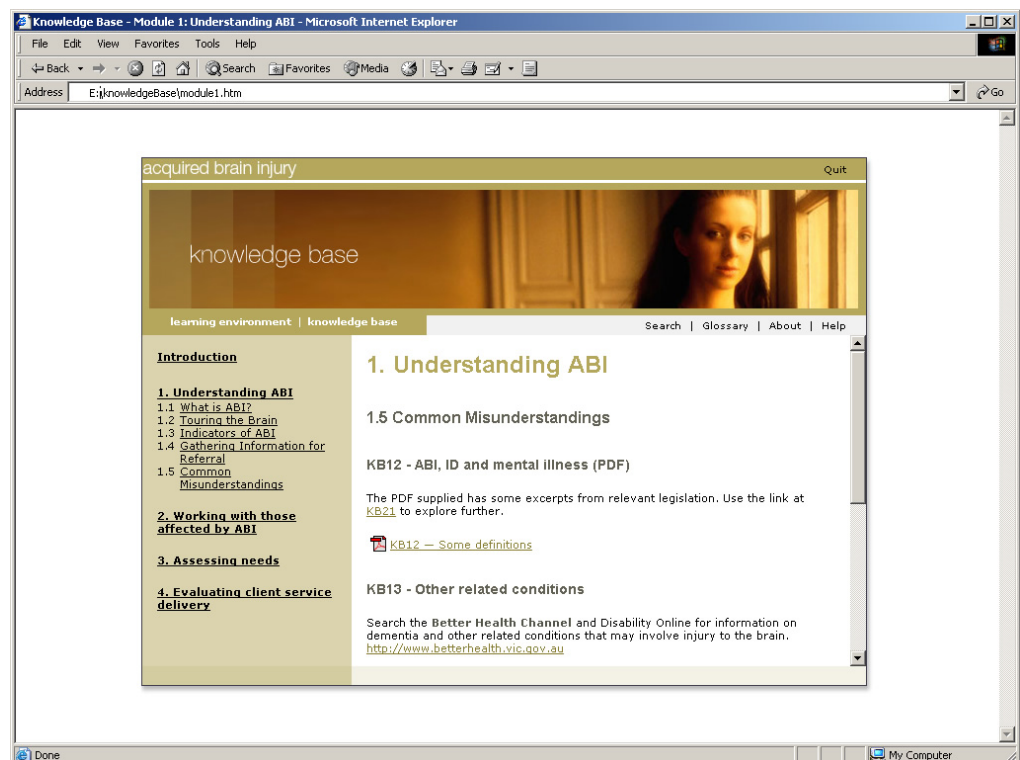

Figure 7—Sample screen from Knowledge base

You can also access the Knowledge base by using the Search facility located on the opening screen of the program and on every screen in the Knowledge base. We will briefly discuss the Search facility next.

Search facility

1.   Internal search

To conduct a search of the CD–ROM itself, enter the search word in the window labelled **Search this CDROM** and click the **Search** button. You will see a list of all the occurrences of that term and their location within the Resource Manual or elsewhere on the CD.
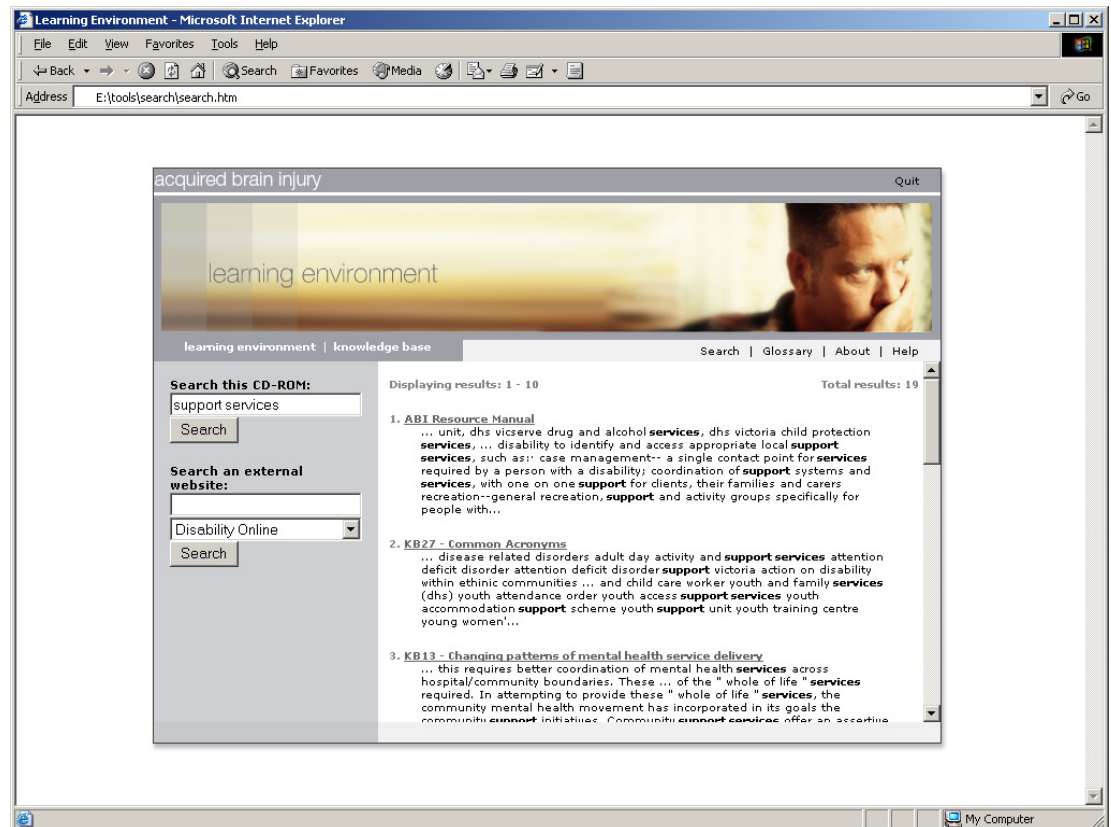

Figure 8—Sample internal search

Notice that this search has found 16 results, which you can now examine in detail until you find what you are looking for. When you have finished searching, click on the **X** box in the top right hand corner of the screen to return to the Knowledge base.

Searching the Internet

The Search facility also allows you to find information from the World Wide Web.

Enter your query in the textbox under the heading **Search an external website** and click on the **Search** button. In the example shown overleaf, we have searched for 'ABI support services' and received a comprehensive list from Google.

When you have finished searching, click on the **X** box in the top right hand corner of the screen to return to the Knowledge base.
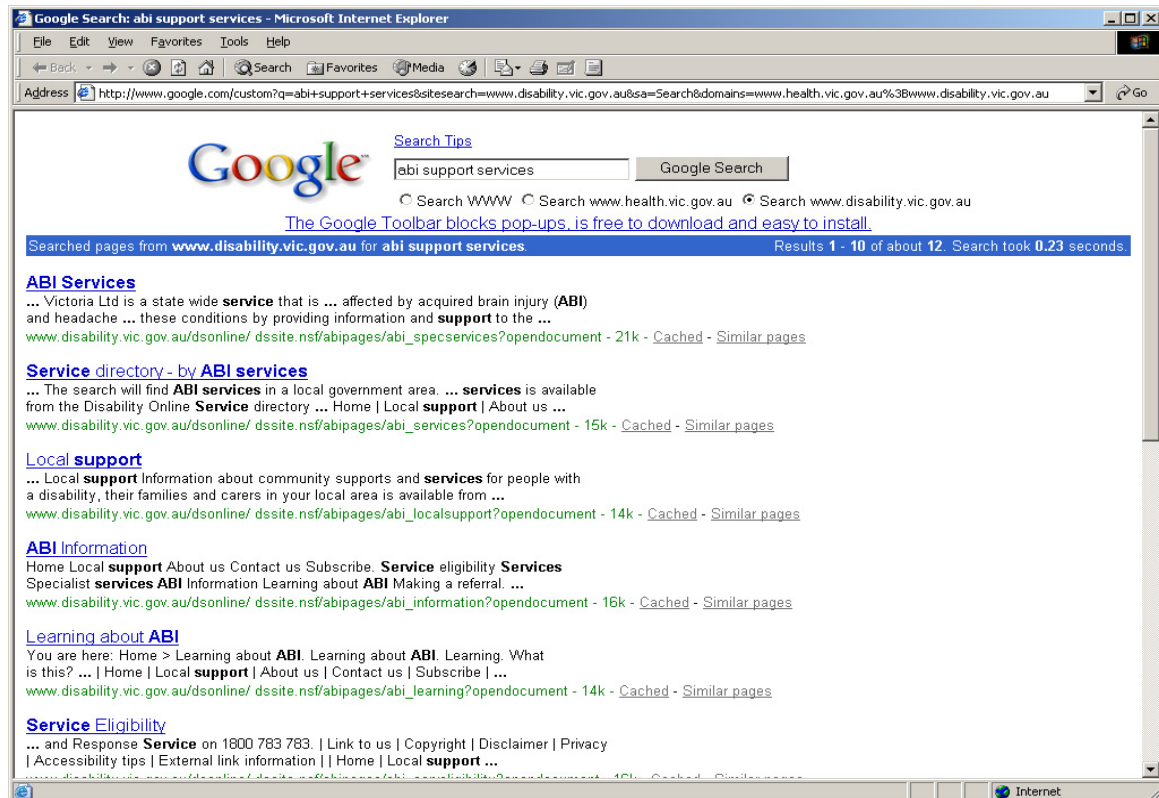
Figure 9—Sample of an external search

Glossary

Getting your head around ABI also contains an online Glossary. This Glossary is also available at the back of the Resource Manual, if you want to print it out.
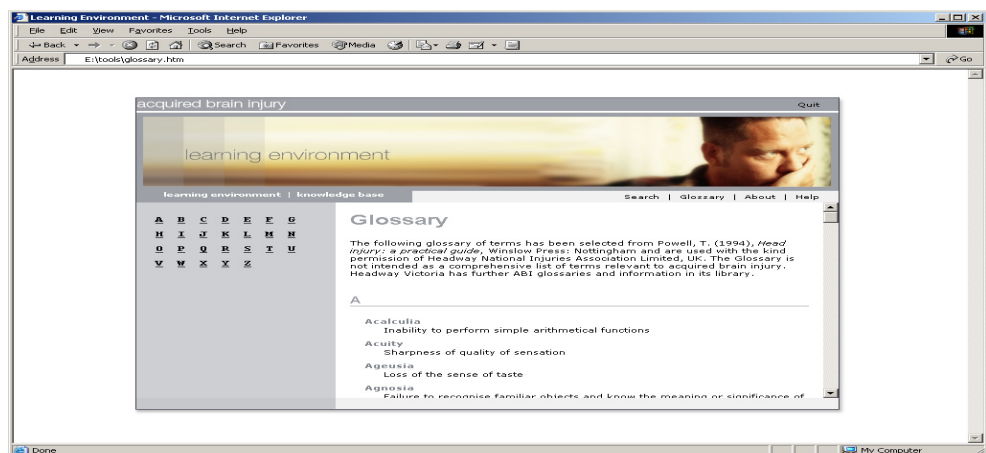

Figure 10— Glossary feature

You can access the Glossary by clicking on the first letter of the word you are seeking (see left side of screen) and/or using the scroll bar to move down the list until you find what you are looking for.

Making the most of your learning

The following learning tips are provided as a guide for those who may be returning to study after a long break or who may be taking part in a training program for the first time. Try using the checklist to assess yourself as an effective learner at various points of this information and learning resource.

Plan your program

- Clarify any program requirements and deadlines at the beginning.

- Work out how much time you will have daily (which days?) on average.

- Set date targets to finish topics and activities, not just for the assessment tasks.

Be in charge

- Set your own learning goals for the program—be clear about why you are doing it, why it's going to be worth the trip.

- Make it *your* learning program, not what someone is telling you to do (even if they are).

- Use and build on the experience and skills you already have.

- Expect and demand good service from your supervisor.

- Ask for any help early, when you need it, as often as you need it.

Develop a routine

- Timetable study into your week.

- Set up your study area.

- Balance your other commitments.

- Give yourself rewards for finishing things on time.

- Give yourself special rewards for finishing things well.

Be a smart learner

- Focus on the requirements (what will be assessed).

- Check with your supervisor for clues about what they want.

- Tackle every assessment early—decide what you'll do, and get cracking.

- Look through all the materials to get the big picture first.

- Check the introductions and summaries before you start a section to see what to look for.

- Break learning activities and assessment tasks down into steps.

- Skip through parts you already know about.

- Complete as many of the learning activities as you have time for.

- Review each section as you go—test yourself on main points, what you recall.

Discuss your learning

- Keep in regular touch with your supervisor.

- Don't shut off contact if you're getting behind (it will only make it worse).

- Keep in touch with other learners (email, phone).

- Talk about what you are learning with others (family, colleagues, friends).

Apply your learning

- Use examples from your work and life in activities, assignments and assessment tasks.

- Use what you learn while it's fresh, during the course.

- Look for specific, practical ways to use your learning beyond the course (a special project, a new approach).

- Write an action plan to make you do it—quickly.

Good luck!

The people involved in designing and creating this information and learning resource hope that you enjoy the experience and find the resources useful.