



HPC Consultation Services  
Waterloo Wellington

## Hospice Palliative Care

Tip of the Month – June 2016

### Brain Tumours

*Brain related disorders represent a unique challenge in that they affect the organ that is the essence of the 'self'.*

There are over **120** different types of brain tumours, making effective treatment very complicated.

55,000 Canadians are surviving with a brain tumour, with approximately 10,000 more newly diagnosed each year (CABTO). Brain tumours are the leading cause of solid cancer death in children under the age of 20, now surpassing acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

**For more information:**

<http://www.braintumour.ca/228/health-care-professionals>

#### Impact on Communication

- Comprehension difficulties: understanding language, understanding of non-verbal social cues
- Word-finding difficulties
- Problems with reading and writing

#### Strategies to Cope with Communication Problems

- Ensure you have the person's attention, speak slowly, use concrete language and short sentences
- Use visual cues when possible
- Check to see that the person has understood before speaking again
- Ensure the person has adequate time to express themselves without interruption
- Do not pretend to understand the person when you don't (they may become frustrated)

#### Impact on Attention

- Difficulty sustaining attention
- Distractibility
- Difficulties filtering out ambient noise/activity
- Poor divided attention
- Decrease information processing speed

#### Strategies to cope with Attention Problems

- Encourage the person to take frequent rests from activity
- Reduce excess noise
- Make one request of the person at a time
- Set aside more time than you did in the past to complete a task