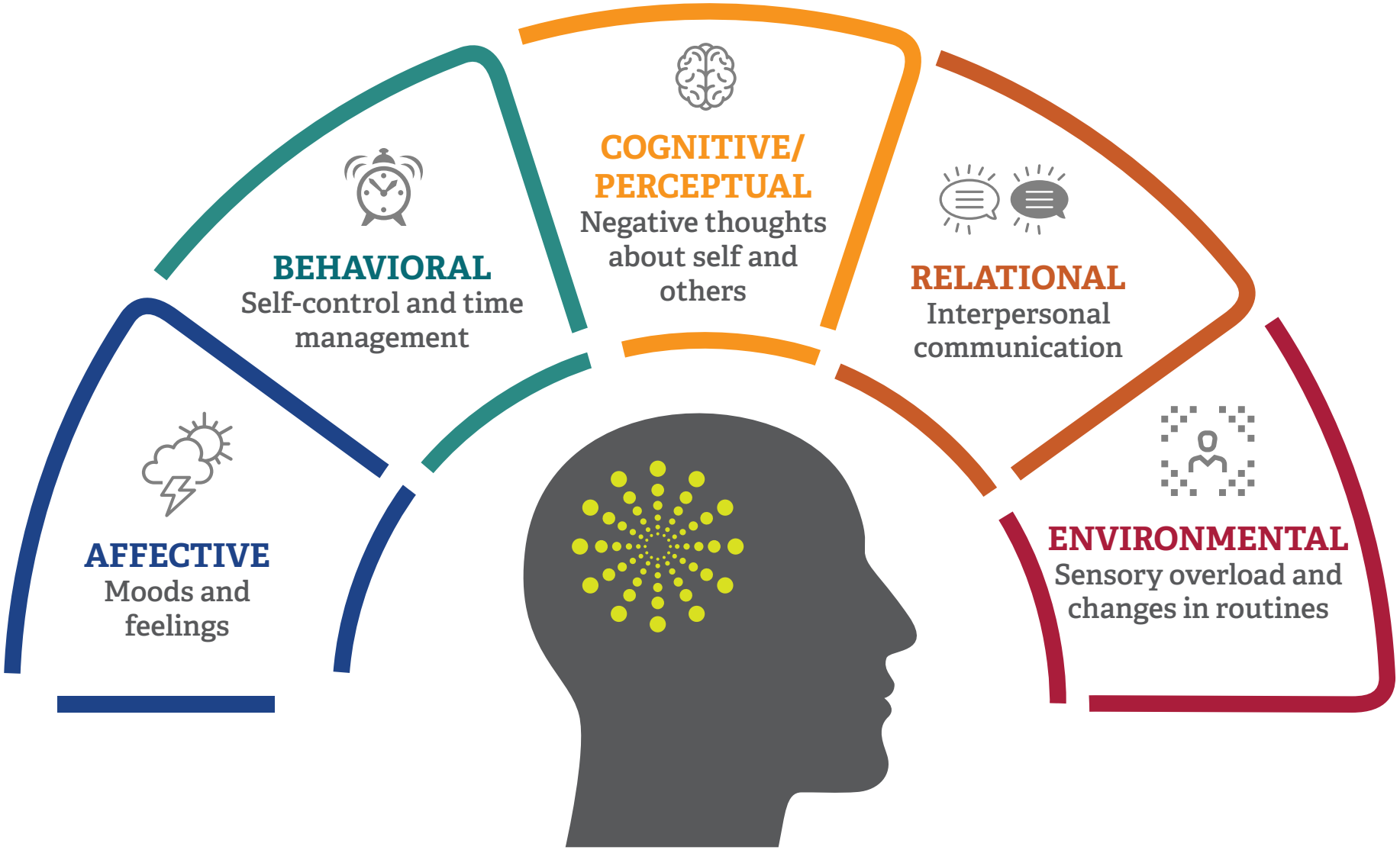
5 Dimensions of TBI-Related Irritability



This infographic is made possible by a partnership between Indiana University and WETA/BrainLine. For more information, please visit https://medicine.iu.edu/expertise/traumatic-brain-injury/ or BrainLine.org.

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5 Dimensions of TBI-Related Irritability

AFFECTIVE
Moods and feelings

What it looks like:
Moodiness, snapping, anger, agitation.

Common triggers:
Feeling overwhelmed, pressured, frustrated, challenged, afraid, or out of control.

"It's kind of like living on the edge of disaster all the time."

BEHAVIORAL
Self-control and time management

What it looks like:
Loss-of-control behaviors including throwing things, slamming doors, yelling.

Common triggers:
Procrastination, attempting too many things at once.

"When I get grumpy, I'm less inhibited, I get angry, and then at times I've been known to go ballistic."

COGNITIVE/ PERCEPTUAL
Negative thoughts about self and others

What it looks like:
Brooding about past events or abilities.

Common triggers:
Negative social comparisons, perceived injustices, dissatisfaction with self.

"I get so irritable with myself because of not doing what I know I should be able to do."

RELATIONAL
Interpersonal communication

What it looks like:
Difficulty with small talk and nonverbal communication.

Common triggers:
Family member not accepting injury or its implications, role reversals.

"We react the way we've always reacted but the person with brain injury cannot interpret what we're doing in the same way."

ENVIRONMENTAL
Sensory overload and changes in routines

What it looks like:
Agitation, anger, snapping.

Common triggers:
Diminished daylight, high levels of noise, crowds, unexpected changes to routine or schedule.

"A lot of it is you're overloaded because there is input coming from everywhere and you can't screen it all out."

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