

**Case Study: Young Adult with a TBI**

*Related issues: Intergenerational, family care planning, person-centered decision-making,*

*and cognitive disabilities.*

Juan is 27-year-old Hispanic male who acquired a TBI as a result of a major car accident six months ago. Because of his condition, Juan could not move his arms or legs following the accident and was experiencing slurred speech, to the point that his wishes could not be understood. In the weeks following his accident, Juan could only communicate by tapping a pencil on his bedside table to answer yes/no questions. He was extremely frustrated by his inability to communicate more complex thoughts and feelings. Juan is receiving Home and Community Services through state funding and he continues to work with a rehabilitation team as he recovers from his accident. A physical therapist and occupational therapist are helping him slowly recover some movement, but he requires the assistance of a CNA on a daily basis and likely will require some level of assistance long-term. So far he has recovered limited use of his hands and his speech is slightly improved, although his therapists are optimistic that Juan may be able to walk and communicate more clearly again with long-term rehabilitation.

Juan’s father is not involved in his life and he has no siblings. However, Juan’s mother is a near constant presence at his bedside. She can appear overbearing as she will often attempt to make care decisions for Juan without asking for his permission or opinion. At the time of his accident, Juan had no documented alternative Power of Attorney or guardian in place. He appears frustrated by his mother’s in-depth involvement in his care and his care team experiences her constant involvement and presence as a barrier to his improvement. Although Juan was living alone prior to his accident, he is now living in his mother’s home according to her wishes. It took time and patience for Juan to make his feelings known while he was in the hospital, and his mother had been anxious to act quickly to have him discharged. A couple of months after moving home though, Juan started to express to his care team that he might prefer living in a rehabilitation or long-term care facility, feeling as though he would receive better care and feel less isolated or controlled.

Juan’s social worker has been very creative and proactive in connecting Juan with the in-home services that he needs, including assistive devices, rehabilitation services, medical equipment, and insurance coverage following the accident. However, dealing with his mother and his long-term care plans continue to be a point of tension for Juan.

From a person-centered perspective, how might you suggest Juan’s case be managed? How might you plan for his long-term care needs and family? How might you advocate for his wishes and ensure he is heard throughout the rehabilitation process?