

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and the Criminal Justice System

Traumatic brain injury is a bump, blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the way the brain normally works. It can cause cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioral challenges.

Awareness of TBI in the criminal justice system is important.

- A brain injury can affect a person's behavior, ability to process information and physical condition.
- Many people involved in the criminal justice system are living with traumatic brain injury-related challenges that can complicate their self-management and treatment.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC), 25-87 percent of people involved with the criminal justice system report having a history of head injury or TBI as compared to 8.5 percent who report having this history in the general population.
- Women involved with the criminal justice system convicted of a violent crime are more likely to have sustained a pre-crime TBI and/or some other form of physical abuse (CDC).
- People involved with the criminal justice system who have experienced head injuries may also experience mental health problems such as severe depression and anxiety, substance use disorders, difficulty controlling anger, or suicidal thoughts and/or attempts (CDC).
- A TBI can contribute to situations that lead to disciplinary action within a correctional setting as well as challenges to re-entering the community successfully.

Some of the most common symptoms of TBI include but are not limited to:

- Difficulty with balance or muscle control
- Slurred speech, impaired vision and/or hearing
- Difficulty with attention, memory, understanding, and/ or judgment
- Reduced problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Delayed thought processing and/or response time
- Impulsive behaviors
- Anxiousness, irritability or agitation
- Depression
- Seizures, fatigue or other medical conditions



In an effort to increase awareness, a person with a brain injury can carry a survivor wallet card to help avoid misunderstandings with law enforcement, first responders and others. The wallet card includes contact information, an emergency contact and possible symptoms of brain injury. The brain injury survivor wallet card can be found by clicking the link below or by visiting www.bianc.net

Click here for a printable version of the Brain Injury Survivor Wallet Card.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and the Criminal Justice System

TBI Screening Tools

The websites below provide screening tools that are not for diagnostic purposes.

The Ohio State University TBI Identification Method (OSU TBI-ID)

www.ohiovalley.org/informationeducation

HELPS Brain Injury Screening Tool

North Carolina TBI Training Module 3: HELPS

www.nctbitraining.org

For resources and referral for TBI services, contact:

Brain Injury Association of North Carolina (BIANC)

www.bianc.net

Brain Injury Resource Centers

Raleigh 800-377-1464

Charlotte 704-355-1502

Winston Salem 336-713-8582

Asheville 828-277-4868

Greenville 252-717-3347

Training on TBI in North Carolina

www.nctbitraining.org

For more information about TBI and the Criminal Justice System, visit:

Traumatic Brain Injury in Prisons and Jails: An Unrecognized Problem

TBI -A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals

Centers for Disease Control -CDC

www.cdc.gov

BrainLine.org

www.brainline.org

*You can find this TBI and CJ information sheet along with additional TBI information at the
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services website.*

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/disability-services/traumatic-brain-injury>



*Mental Health,
Developmental Disabilities,
and Substance Abuse Services*
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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www.ncdhhs.gov • www.ncdhhs.gov/dss

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Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Hypoxic Brain Injury in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)/Domestic Violence (DV)

Traumatic brain injury is a bump, blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the way the brain normally works. It can cause cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioral challenges.

Awareness of causes and risk factors related to TBI and IPV/DV is important.

- TBI can be an unrecognized result of intimate partner violence/domestic violence.
- IPV/DV is a common cause of brain injury, especially in women.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), assaults account for 10 percent of traumatic brain injuries annually (CDC, 2002-2006).
- The head and face are among the most common targets of intimate partner assaults, with those assaulted often suffering head, neck and facial injuries.
- TBI can be caused by a blow to the head (being hit on the head, the head hitting an object) or shaking of the brain (forceful whip-lash motion)
- Sometimes IPV/DV can lead to a hypoxic injury, or brain injury due to loss of oxygen to the brain. Airway obstruction for too long of a time caused by choking, strangulation, near drowning, or drug reaction/overdose causes hypoxic brain injury.
- Repeated brain injury is typical of ongoing intimate partner violence/domestic violence
- and leads to cognitive, physical and emotional challenges over time.
- Loss of consciousness or severe trauma does not have to occur for a brain injury to exist.

Some of the most common symptoms of TBI include but are not limited to:

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- Slurred speech, impaired vision and/or hearing
- Difficulty with attention, memory, understanding, and/or judgment
- Reduced problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Delayed thought processing and/or response time
- Impulsive behaviors
- Anxiousness, irritability or agitation
- Depression
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[Click here for a printable version of the Brain Injury Survivor Wallet Card.](#)

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Brain Injury Resource Centers

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Asheville 828-277-4868
Greenville 252-717-3347

Training on TBI in North Carolina
www.nctbitraining.org

BrainLine.org
www.brainline.org

Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence Resources:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-7233
800-787-3224
www.ndvh.org

North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence
888-232-9124
www.nccadv.org

You can find this TBI and IPV/DV information sheet along with additional TBI information at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services website.
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/disability-services/traumatic-brain-injury>



State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services
www.ncdhhs.gov • www.ncdhhs.gov/dss

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Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Substance Use Disorder

Traumatic brain injury is a bump, blow or jolt to the head that disrupts the way the brain normally works. It can cause cognitive, physical, emotional and behavioral challenges.

It is important to have a clear understanding of the causes and risk factors related to TBI and Substance Use Disorder.

- About half of all incidents that lead to TBI involve the use of alcohol.
- 48 percent of individuals with TBI have a history of substance use disorder prior to sustaining a TBI (Corrigan, 1995).
- Between 10 percent and 20 percent of individuals with TBI develop a substance use disorder for the first time after their injury (Corrigan et al. 1995).
- Alcohol and other substances:
 - Increase the risk of sustaining additional TBI's.
 - Interfere with the brain's recovery process after brain injury.
 - Have a more powerful effect after brain injury.
 - Increase the risk of seizures after brain injury.

TBI and substance use can resemble each other with common characteristics including:

- Difficulty remembering
- Fatigue and sleep problems
- Difficulty with balance and coordination
- Personality changes
- Mood swings



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Winston Salem 336-713-8582

Asheville 828-277-4868

Greenville 252-717-3347

For more information about co-occurring TBI and Substance Use Disorder, visit:

Training on TBI in North Carolina

www.nctbitraining.org

BrainLine.org

www.brainline.org

You can find this TBI and SUD information sheet along with additional TBI information at the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services website.

<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/disability-services/traumatic-brain-injury>



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I Have Had a Brain Injury

Name

Address

Telephone

Emergency Contact Phone

Symptoms of a brain injury may include:

- Difficulty with balance or muscle control while standing or walking
- Slurred speech, impaired vision and/or hearing
- Difficulty with attention, memory, understanding and judgment
- Delayed thought processing and/or response time
- Impulsive behaviors
- Anxiousness, irritability or agitation
- Seizures, fatigue or other medical conditions

Thank you for your consideration if you observe such symptoms. Please help by communicating with me in a calm, non-confrontational manner and calling the emergency number of the other side of this card.