

This tip card provides information on one of the most unrecognized consequences of domestic violence—traumatic brain injury (TBI). Family members, friends, or professionals who come in contact with someone who has been assaulted in a domestic violence situation should be aware of the causes and long-term consequences of TBI.

Domestic Violence & Traumatic Brain Injury

- Domestic violence assaults can cause TBI as a result of blows to the head/face or strangulation.
- There may not be physical signs that a TBI has occurred; many mild injuries do not require a hospital stay, yet the effects of the injury can change someone's life forever.
- TBI can result in physical, cognitive and emotional impairments.
- Studies have estimated blows to the head or face occur in 50% to 90% of assaults.^{1,2}
- A concussion, with or without a loss of consciousness, is a symptom of a brain injury.

Signs and Symptoms of TBI

Physical, cognitive and emotional problems resulting from assault can occur immediately after an injury; however it may also take some time for any of these symptoms to appear:

- Persistent headache
- Confusion
- Neck pain
- Slowness in thinking, acting, speaking or reading
- Short term memory loss
- Trouble paying attention, concentrating, making decisions, solving problems
- Fatigue
- Loss of balance
- Blurred vision
- Ringing in the ears

To get help, let a doctor or other health professional know if any of these symptoms follow an injury.

¹ Jackson, H., Philp, E., Nutter, R., and Diller, L. (2002) Traumatic Brain Injury: A Hidden Consequence for Battered Women, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 33(1), p. 39-45.

² Greenfield, L., and Rand, M., Violence by Intimates, NCJ-167237, *US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics*, March, 1998.

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Screening Questions

If someone has been involved in a domestic violence situation, the following questions may help determine if additional assistance is needed:

- Was your head hit?
- Was your head slammed into an object?
- Were you choked, suffocated, shaken or strangled?
- Did you lose consciousness?
- Did you feel dazed and/or confused?
- Are you having trouble concentrating, organizing or remembering things?
- Are you experiencing emotional changes such as irritability, sadness or lack of motivation?
- Are you experiencing headaches, vision and/or hearing problems or loss of balance?

For Assistance and Information

National Domestic Violence Hotline:
1-800-799-7233
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

For resources and referral to the appropriate services for diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury, contact:

Brain Injury Association of Virginia
1506 Willow Lawn Dr. Suite 112
Richmond, VA 23230
Telephone: 804-355-5748
Toll-free Helpline 800-334-8443
Fax: 804-355-6381
E-mail: info@biav.net
Website: www.biav.net



*Creating a better future through brain injury education,
awareness, advocacy and support*

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