

## Domestic Violence & Traumatic Brain Injury

This tip card provides information on one of the most unrecognized consequences of domestic violence: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

The signs and behaviors associated with TBI and domestic violence can look very similar – the impact of physical and emotional violence on the body and mind is complex.

This project is supported [in part] through state general funds (Contract #16-002A) administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

## Domestic Violence & Traumatic Brain Injury



**Help, Hope & Healing**

**Visit [www.biav.net](http://www.biav.net)**

**1.800.444.6443**

## Support Services

You don't have to lose consciousness or have a gaping head wound to have sustained a TBI, and "mild brain injury" isn't mild. Persons who have sustained a brain injury need the right team to recover well; the team should include professionals who specialize in brain injury.

To find out who can help you, contact the Brain Injury Association of Virginia for:

- resource coordination
- case consultation
- education
- outreach
- support
- advocacy

If you are the victim of domestic violence, call the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline: **1.800.838.8238**

## Facts About Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime. The rates of TBI in women who are seen in the emergency room or in a domestic violence shelter are between 30 and 74%; most occur from a direct blow to the head or from strangulation, which can result in loss of oxygen to the brain.<sup>1</sup>

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.

1. Ziemann G, Bridwell A, Cárdenas J. (2016) Traumatic Brain Injury in Domestic Violence Victims: A Retrospective Study at the Barrow Neurological Institute. Epub 2016 Jul 8. J Neurotrauma. 2017 Feb 15;34(4):876-880.

## Potential Causes for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- Punched in the face or head
- Hit in the head with an object
- Pushed against a wall or other surface
- Shaken violently
- Falling and hitting the head
- Strangled/choked
- Shot in the face or head

An individual who experiences multiple brain injuries may experience more problems and symptoms and/or take longer to recover. Also, once the brain is injured, it leaves the person at risk of a second, more serious injury.

Visit **[www.biav.net](http://www.biav.net)** for additional information.

## Signs & Symptoms of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

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

Signs of a TBI resulting from assault may show up immediately or may appear days or weeks after an attack.