# Traumatic Brain Injury

Every year 1.4 million Americans suffer from a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). This is also referred to as a Closed Head Injury. 50% of TBIs occur from automobile accidents. Traumatic Brain Injury is caused by a blow or other traumatic injury to the head. The degree of damage depends on several factors: the nature of the event, the force of impact, and where the brain structure was damaged.

TBIs can cause mild dysfunction or severe, long-term impairment.

A wide range of physical and psychological effects occur in TBI.

## Common symptoms:

* Poor memory
* Slowed processing speed
* Deficits in decision-making skills
* Difficulty with attention/concentration
* Difficulty completing tasks
* Poor organization
* Inability to multitask

## Common Difficulties: Physical Symptoms:

* Mobility and balance
* Fine motor skills
* Headaches
* Convulsions/seizures

## Emotional Symptoms:

Emotional adjustments in TBI often lag behind physical recovery. Students with TBIs often struggle with:

* Depression,
* Anxiety
* Mood swings and irritability
* Lack of empathy for others
* Poor self esteem
* Lack of motivation

## Sensory Symptoms:

* Dizziness
* Persistent ear ringing
* Blind spots/double vision
* Bitter tastes
* Intense sense of smell
* Tingling, itching, pain in body

## Common Academic Difficulties: Reading Skills:

* Reading rate
* Comprehension and retention
* Identifying key points
* New/technical vocabulary

## Written Language Skills:

* Sentence structure
* Spelling
* Handwriting skills
* Writing and thinking in unison
* Summarizing, drawing conclusions, and differentiating between fact and opinion

## Oral Language Skills:

* Expressing ideas and finding the right words
* Sequencing events
* Processing time

## Mathematical Skills:

* Recall of basic arithmetic facts
* Operational symbols
* Sequencing
* Abstract concepts and reasoning

## Social Skills:

* Subtle messages, such as sarcasm or joking, may be misinterpreted.
* Group activity
* Receiving constructive criticism
* Perfectionist tendencies due to desire to compensate for loss of ability

## Organization and Study Skills:

* Time management
* Recall and retention.
* Oral and/or written instructions

## Classroom Suggestions:

* Provide a detailed course syllabus. Include information on grading, tests, quizzes, papers, and assignments. Specifically discuss class expectations and goals.
* If possible, begin daily lectures with a brief outline of the material to be covered and conclude with a brief summary of key points.
* Speak directly to the student using natural tones, gestures, and expressions. It may be necessary to repeat instructions.
* If possible, present new/technical vocabulary in a handout. Use terms in context for understanding.
* Attempt to link new material to previously learned material. It is also helpful to include the “Why” of new concepts.
* Provide ample time for questions and answers.
* Avoid confrontations with student. Try to redirect the student’s attention to positive goals or tasks. Positive reinforcement is helpful.

# For further information or assistance, please contact: Disability Services

**C-218 (734) 384-4167**

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