

Questions To Screen For TBI

- In your lifetime have you ever been hospitalized or seen in the ER due to injuries to your neck and head?
- Have you experienced repeated traumas to the head? What was the most severe consequence of one of these injuries?
- Have you ever been in a MVA, bicycle accident, where you injured your head or neck?,
- Have you experienced a fall where you injured your neck or head. This could include while you were playing sports.
- Have you ever been shaken violently or been in a fight where you injured your head or neck?
- Have you ever been close to a blast or explosion?
- Were you ever shot in the head?

If Yes To Any Of The Above:

- Were you knocked out or did you lose consciousness? Were you in a coma? If so, for how long? Did you experience any lapse in your memory?
- Any lapse in memory right before or right after accident? If so, what was your last memory you can recall right before the injury? What was your first memory?
- What doctors are you presently seeing or have seen?
- Have you had more headaches since the injury?
- Do you become fatigued more easily?
- Do you become more overwhelmed easily?
- Are you experiencing more difficulty with your memory?
- Do you have difficulty initiating, planning and following through with tasks?
- Do you have word finding difficulties?
- Has your ability to concentrate changed?
- Do you experience any difficulty while driving?
- Are you more sensitive to noise and light?
- Do you experience ringing in your ears?
- Do you feel more depressed or anxious?
- Have you experienced a change in your libido?
- Are you having trouble sleeping?
- Has there been any change in your relationships?
- Do you experience less enjoyment in your activities?

Couples Questionnaire

- Has your role/responsibilities in the family changed?
- Have you noticed any changes in his/her personality since the injury?
- How is your life different since the injury?
- Has your ability to deal with problems changed?
- Are you more or less emotional?
- Can you participate in previously enjoyed social activities?
- Have you lost relationships with family and friends?
- Has your ability to cope with stress changed?
- Are you more fatigued?
- Do you feel depressed?
- Has your sexual intimacy changed?
- Do you have more difficulty communicating?
- Can you trust each other?
- Do you feel like you are married to a stranger? (to uninjured partner).
- Do you feel like a stranger to yourself? (to injured partner).
- I used to know what he/she felt. NowI don't know how he/ she feels. (to both partners).

Executive Function/Cognitive Deficits

- Impaired attention and concentration
- Impaired memory
- Slow processing speed
- Cognitive fatigue
- Impaired reasoning and problem solving skills
- Poor decision making
- Difficulty initiating, sequencing and following through with a task
- Impaired organization
- Difficulty tracking time
- Under stress mind goes blank
- Difficulty multi-tasking
- Difficulty self-monitoring
- Impaired judgement
- Impaired flexibility of thought
- Difficulty with new learning

Personality and Behavioral Changes

- Self-Esteem reduced
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Emotional lability
- Reduced self awareness
- Self-centered
- Motivation
- Inappropriate behavior
- Unable to manage anger

Physical Changes

- Sleep disturbance
- Vision
- Taste
- Smell
- Balance
- Speech
- Seizures
- Balance and coordination
- Fatigue
- Sexual functioning

What Causes Changes In Sexual Function?

- Brain damage to part of brain that controls sexual functioning
- Hormonal changes
- Fatigue
- Medications
- Pain
- Low self esteem
- Impaired cognitive skills
- Changes in emotions

The Injury To The Relationship

- Changes in roles
- Changes in responsibilities
- Changes in communication
- Learning to love a stranger
- Person with TBI feels like living with someone else's brain
- Withdrawal from relationship
- Both are impacted by the physical, cognitive, behavioral and psychological changes
- Changes in sexual intimacy
- Loss of friendships, social activities
- Partner feels like parent
- Both feel isolated and misunderstood from family and friends
- Everything in the family revolves around the injury
- Injured person may not be able to read emotions in partner and other people
- May not have the same empathy that they did before

Communication challenges of the injured person

- Impaired thought organization
- Impaired initiation of conversation
- Tangential
- Hyperverbality
- Impulsivity
- Flat affect
- Self centered
- Poor turn taking in conversation
- Difficulty staying on topic
- Difficulty with active listening
- Cognitive fatigue
- Brain overload

Treatment Issues and Interventions

- Educate
- Pacing
- Normalize recovery process
- Address changes in roles and responsibilities
- Help the couple grieve
- Help them adjust to “new normal”
- Shorter less frequent sessions
- Homework written
- Take notes in session
- Compensatory strategies
- Stay on one topic at a time
- Present ideas simply and ensure understanding
- Do not over stimulate client
- Mindfulness and relaxation techniques
- Minimize distractions
- Give client extra time to respond
- Open ended questions/statements may cause confusion
- Group therapy

Resources

- Brain Injury Association of America - www.biausa.org
- National Association of State Head Injury Administrators - www.nashia.org
- TBI Technical Assistance Center - www.tbitac.org
- Center for Disease and Prevention - www.cdc.gov/injury
- Brainline - <http://www.brainline.org/>
- Mayo Clinic - <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/traumatic-brain-injury/DS00552>
- New York Times Article “Study Bolsters Link Between Routine Hits and Brain Disease” - http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/03/sports/study-bolsters-link-between-routine-hits-to-head-and-long-term-brain-disease.html?emc=eta1&_r=1&
- Boss, Pauline (2000), **Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief**, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press,
- Kontos, Anthony P. and Collins, Michael W. (2018), **Concussion: A Clinical Profile Approach to Assessment and Treatment**, Washington D.C., American Psychological Association

- Each state has a Brain Injury Alliance which provides resources and support. To find the Alliance in your area, search for Brain Injury Alliance and enter your state.