



## TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI) IN THE MILITARY

*Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a significant health issue which affects service members and veterans during times of both peace and war. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported more than 185,000 Veterans who use VA for their health care have been diagnosed with at least one TBI. The majority of those TBIs were classified as mild. TBI and its associated co-morbidities are also a significant cause of disability outside of military settings.*

### **What is Traumatic Brain Injury?**

Traumatic Brain Injury is any injury to the brain caused by an external blow or jolt to the head or penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in TBI.

### **General signs and symptoms.**

**Physical:** headaches, changes in sleep, dizziness, balance problems, fatigue, sexual dysfunction, seizures, sensory changes, and loss of strength.

**Cognitive (mental activities):** confusion/agitation, attention problems, memory problems, difficulty with decision making, difficulty with speech, and slowed thinking.

**Emotional:** depression, anxiety, irritability, impulsivity, mood swings, inappropriate behavior, and acting out of character.

### **Treatment.**

Be evaluated by a medical professional trained in the management and treatment of traumatic brain injury. Start with talking about your concerns with your primary care physician.

### **How you can help.**

Health tips:

- Stay organized by following routines.
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep.
- Avoid overdoing mental and physical activities.
- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid drinking alcohol or energy drinks.
- Do not isolate yourself.
- Avoid using texting devices, computer monitors and television screens.

*For your convenience in finding behavioral health resources, The Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) Veterans Services has compiled this list. These links will take you out of the DMH website. DMH does not endorse or take responsibility for the content of other organizations' websites.*

**Additional resources.**

**Brain Line Military**

Provides military-specific information and resources on traumatic brain injury to veterans, service members in all branches of service, and their families. Through videos, webcasts, articles, personal stories, research briefs, and current news, those whose lives have been affected by TBI can learn more about brain injury symptoms and treatment, rehabilitation, and family issues associated with TBI care and recovery.

**Are you an employer wanting to hire qualified Veterans and learn how to accommodate wounded warriors?**

**America's Heroes at Work**

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) project that addresses the employment challenges of returning Service Members and Veterans. Designed for employers and the workforce development system, this website is your link to information and tools to help returning Service Members and Veterans living with TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace.

**Back to School Guide to Academic Success after Traumatic Brain Injury Booklet**

This booklet provides guidance to service members and veterans who have ongoing symptoms from a TBI and are going to college, university or vocational school. It gives answers to common questions about accommodation plans, financial aid and assistive technology.