

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in the Military for Clinicians

"...of the 1.64 million servicemembers who had been deployed for OEF/OIF as of October 2007, we estimate that approximately 300,000 individuals currently suffer from PTSD or major depression and that 320,000 individuals experienced a probable TBI during deployment."

Tanielian, Terri L. and Lisa Jaycox, eds. *Invisible Wounds of War, Psychological and Cognitive Injuries, their Consequences, and Services to Assist Recovery*. Vol. 1. Rand Corporation, 2008

▼ **Why should a mental health professional learn Traumatic Brain Injury?**

Some of the signs and symptoms related to TBI are similar to mental health issues: rage, sleep disturbance, depression, memory impairment, headaches, substance abuse and anxiety to name a few. During intake of a new patient, consider screening for mTBI using the 3 Question DVbic TBI Screening Tool: <http://dvbic.dcoe.mil/sites/default/files/uploads/3-Question-Screening-Tool.pdf>

▼ **Differentiation symptoms of TBI from psychiatric illness.**

There are several symptoms of TBI that may be mistaken as signs of a psychiatric disorder:

Survivors of TBI may display...	May be seen as signs of...
Anxiety and sadness as they adjust to changes related to their recent TBI	Mood disorder such as clinical depression or anxiety
Changes in expressive/receptive language (e.g., monotone voice or lack of prosody) Diminished cognitive, physical or behavioral (e.g., decreased tolerance for frustration) functioning when tired or overstimulated	Flat affect/Depression/Diminished intelligence Depression/Indication of person's optimal ability level
Fluctuations in mood Diminished tolerance for social interaction or changes in social ability or personality	Manic episode/Bipolar disorder Depression/Personality disorder
Sleep disturbance or changes in sexual functioning	Depression
Sensory dysfunction (e.g., ringing in ears, blind spots in visual field)	Psychotic/Mood disorder
Changes in speech or diminished physical ability (e.g., hemiparesis or decreased balance) Apathy or diminished motivation and initiation ability	Alcohol/Substance use disorder Depression
Changes in aspects of attention (e.g., divided attention) Verbal/behavioral impulsivity	Attention deficit disorder Suicidal or homicidal ideation/Mood disorder/Attention deficit disorder

▼ **Treatment.**

If you have someone who you suspect with a form of TBI consider referring to a Neuropsychologist.

▼ **Professional resources.**

For your convenience in finding behavioral health resources, Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) has compiled this list. These links will take you out of the DMH website. DMH neither endorse nor take responsibility for the content of other organizations' websites.

The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury offers free resources for health care professionals. Resources include mTBI pocket guide, ICD-9 TBI Coding Guidance pocket card, clinical recommendations for Cognitive Rehabilitation for mTBI, a co-occurring conditions tool kit and more.

<http://www.dcoe.health.mil/TraumaticBrainInjury.aspx>

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center is a part of the U.S. military health system. This site offers concussion/mTBI fact sheets, TBI basics, case management resources, online education and more.

<http://www.dvbic.org/audience/medical-providers>

The Center for Deployment Psychology is a resource for health providers who are interested in gaining competency in working with individuals (military or civilian) who have sustained a TBI. The site describes TBI, offers online course (both free for no CEs and a fee to earn CEs), publications and related links.

<http://deploymentpsych.org/topics-disorders/mild-traumatic-brain-injury-tbi>

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) Brain injury facts, resources, educational opportunities and more can be found on their web site.

<http://www.biamo.org/fckeditor/Home.aspx>

The Department of Defense (DoD) offers clinical practice guidelines (CPGs) that contain recommendations based on evidence from a systematic review and synthesis of published medical literature. If carefully followed and implemented under the right circumstances, CPGs can further benefit health professionals by:

- Offering clear recommendations for practitioners who are uncertain about how to proceed.
- Providing a more rational basis for referral.
- Promoting efficient use of resources.
- Providing authoritative recommendations that reassure practitioners about the appropriateness of their treatment decisions.
- Improving the consistency of care.

To view the VA/DoD CPG on Management of Concussion/mild Traumatic Brain Injury visit:

http://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/Rehab/mtbi/concussion_mtbi_full_1_0.pdf

BrainLineMilitary.org provides military-specific information and resources on traumatic brain injury to veterans, service members in all branches of service, and their families.

<http://www.brainlinemilitary.org/>

The Brain Injury Guide & Resources is a tool for those seeking to cope with and understand Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

<http://www.braininjuryeducation.org/>



For more information, contact the nearest community mental health center or the Missouri Department of Mental Health, Division of Behavioral Health
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