

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF THE HELPS BRAIN INJURY SCREENING TOOL

Purpose

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a common problem. Persons with TBI may have difficulty with or impairments in: memory, judgment, concentration, head pain, organization, task initiation and completion, among other things. Consequently, they *may* be unable to hold a job, live independently, accomplish tasks of daily living. Many persons with TBI might be undiagnosed. In order to evaluate service eligibility and make the appropriate referrals, the source of disability must be identified. The TBI screening tool is a first step towards identifying and properly diagnosing TBI.

Definition of Traumatic Brain Injury

An insult to the skull, brain, or its covering, resulting from external trauma which produces an altered state of consciousness or anatomic motor, sensory, cognitive, or behavioral deficits.
(Florida Statutes, § 381.745)

Who Should be Screened

- A consumer with a known trauma that could have caused a brain injury; OR
- A consumer having difficulties functioning, or exhibiting unexplained behaviors



Screening Questions:

Hit your Head or been Hit on the Head?

Note: Prompt client to think about all incidents that may have occurred at any age, even those that did not seem serious: vehicle accidents, falls, assault, abuse, sports, etc. Screen for domestic violence and child abuse. A TBI can also occur from violent shaking of the head, such as whiplash or being shaken as a child.

E Were you ever seen in the Emergency room, hospital, or by a doctor because of an injury to your head?

Note: Many people are seen for treatment. However, there are those who cannot afford treatment, or who do not think they require medical attention.

L Did you ever Lose consciousness or experience a period of being dazed and confused?

Note: While significant in helping to determine the extent of the injury, many people with minor brain injury may not lose consciousness, yet still have difficulties as a result of their injury.

P Do you experience any of these Problems in your daily life? Headaches, dizziness, anxiety, depression, difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering, difficulty reading/writing/calculating, poor problem solving, difficulty performing your job/school work, change in relationships with others, poor judgment (being fired from job, arrests, fights).

Note: Other problems may include: visual, auditory, sensory impairments, paralysis, weakness of any extremity, balance problems, fatigue, apathy, silliness, impulsivity, mood swings, irritability, decreased self-awareness, decreased ability to learn new information or retrieve old information, shift from one topic to another, set goals or plan tasks, monitor own behavior and difficulty with abstract thinking.

S Any significant Sicknesses?

Note: Traumatic brain injury implies a physical blow to the head, but acquired brain injury may also be caused by medical conditions, such as: brain tumor, meningitis, stroke, heart attack, seizures, high fever, etc. Also screen for instances of oxygen deprivation such as near drowning or near suffocation.

Scoring the HELPS Screening Tool

For this TBI screening to be considered positive, the following **3** items must be identified:

- 1.) an event that could have caused a brain injury (yes to H, E **or** S) **and**
- 2.) a period of loss of consciousness or of being dazed and confused (yes to L) **and**
- 3.) the presence of **2** or more problems listed under P.

Note: Positive answers to these questions are not sufficient to suggest the presence of a brain injury. It is recommended that positive responses be placed within the context of the person's self-report and documentation of altered behavioral and/or cognitive functioning. This information in along with your judgment can be used as a basis for further inquiry, e.g. referral to a physician, further evaluation, clinical observation, etc.