Traumatic Brain Injury: What Teachers Should Know

OVERVIEW

What is TBI

A Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain. 1.7 million TBIs occur each year.

A TBI Can Result From

- Falls
- Car Wrecks
- Sports injuries
- Collisions with objects or other people
- Being shaken
- Any trauma to the head

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF TBI

Cognitive/Communication

- Feeling dazed or in a fog
- Disorientation
- Confusion
- Slowed information processing
- Difficulty learning new information
- Difficulty with memory
- Difficulty juggling multiple tasks
- Communicating in "socially unacceptable" ways
- Difficulty with concentration and attention

Emotional/Behavioral

- Irritability
- Quick to anger
- Decreased motivation
- Anxiety

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- Depression
- Social withdrawal
- Does not get the "gist" of social interactions
- May comment on or react to things that seem random to others

Physical

- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Changes in balance
- Headaches
- Changes in vision
- Changes in hearing
- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH TBI

- Many students with brain injury are not appropriately identified for accommodations
- Challenges that result from a TBI are also common in students with other disabilities.
- TBI is an eligibility category under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Some students with TBI may need a 504 Plan or special education services in order to succeed in school.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN IDENTIFYING A STUDENT WITH TBI

Did the student:

- Have a history of performing at a higher level?
- Have difficulties that began after an event likely to cause a TBI?
- Lose previously learned skills?
- Become unaware of loss of skills and abilities?

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- Exhibit personality changes?
- Lose social skills or abilities?

NOTES:

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