

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES
INFORMATION PAGE

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is an injury to the brain caused by external force to the skull. Although there are often physical manifestations of the injury, many times the effects are more subtle cognitive, emotional and/or social changes. Most moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries lead to long-standing problems with deficits in communication, language functioning, visual-motor skills, or attention and memory. The student with a brain injury who has no obvious physical problems will often appear to be able to resume a normal course of study; however, cognitive and/or behavioral changes may necessitate some accommodations to his educational programming.

SOME LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF BRAIN INJURY

COGNITIVE

- Memory loss (short and long term)
- Slowed thought processing
- Problems in arousal, attention, and concentration
- Difficulty with problem-solving
- Problems in initiating, planning, and completing action
- Problems with judgment
- Difficulty in recognizing one's cognitive deficits/limits
- Spatial disorientation
- Slowness and/or difficulty with speech

PSYCHOSOCIAL

- Anxiety and depression
- Mood swings
- Denial
- Inappropriate behaviors
- Egocentricity
- Agitation
- Feelings of isolation
- Reduced endurance
- Rigidity
- Lack of motivation

PHYSICAL

- Paralysis or weakness affecting some or most of the body
- Seizures
- Spasticity
- Visual impairment
- Loss of taste/smell
- Fatigue

Each brain-injured individual presents a very different picture. No one person will possess all of the above characteristics. The symptoms presented and their severity will depend on a variety of factors, including portion of the brain damaged, extent of the injury, and duration of time since the injury. Full recovery is rare, and prognosis for partial recovery can vary greatly, depending on the factors previously mentioned.

Sources: Brain Injury Association of Florida, Inc. Informational Brochure
Tampa General Rehabilitation Center (1996) Teaching Persons with Brain Injury: What to Expect, HDI Publishers

For more information, contact your Campus Office of Disability Services.