

Moving Ahead

Talking about brain Injury in intimate partner violence

The *HELPS Brain Injury Screening Tool can identify survivors who've experienced, or may be at risk for, a brain injury.

The HELPS Tool does not make a diagnosis. It does provide a way to talk about head injury in the context of IPV, and can help survivors identify the source of some of their challenges.

**H
E
L
P
S**

ASK:

- 1.** Have you ever **H**it your head, or been hit on the head or shaken roughly? Did your partner strangle or choke you?
- 2.** Were you ever seen in the **E**mergency room, hospital, or by a doctor because of a brain injury? Have you ever felt you needed medical attention but did not seek it?
- 3.** Did you ever **L**ose consciousness or experience a period of being dazed and confused because of an injury to your head?
- 4.** Do you experience any of these **P**roblems since you hurt your head or neck?
- 5.** Have you experienced any significant **S**icknesses or physical symptoms?



As many as 92% of survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) may also experience brain injury as part of the abuse.

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Difficulty reading, writing, calculating
- Challenges with problem solving
- Difficulty performing your job/school work
- Change in relationships with others
- Misjudgement (being fired from job, arrests, fights)

If a survivor answers "Yes" to H, E, L, or S, and is experiencing at least two of the chronic problems listed under "P," the survivor may have experienced a brain injury. Remember, a positive screen is not a diagnosis. Only a licensed medical professional (such as a physician or nurse practitioner) can provide that.

If you suspect a survivor may have experienced a brain injury, refer to a local brain injury support agency. If the incident was recent, and symptoms are severe, recommend a doctor's visit.

*The HELPS tool above is an adapted version of the original, which was developed by M. Picard, D. Scarisbrick, R. Paluck, 9/91, International Center for the Disabled, TBI-NET, U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Grant #H128A00022. The original version has been adapted for brain injury in the context of intimate partner violence.

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