

# Traumatic Brain Injury – Transition, Assessment, and Intervention

November 4, 2017, TASP Convention

by Amy Shatila, LSSP / NCSP and Kelsey Theis, LSSP/NCSP

## 3 Phases of TBI “Recovery”

1. Acute – early improvement
2. Subacute – middle phase, returning to school
3. Chronic – may last months, years, or may be permanent

*“Brain damage that is severe enough to alter the level of consciousness even momentarily, or to result in even transient impairment of sensory, motor, or cognitive functions, is likely to leave some residual deficit.” —Muriel Deutsch Lezak*

## General Recommendations:

- Cognitive Rest
- Consultation and collaboration with parents, teachers and medical professionals
- Close, ongoing monitoring of student’s progress

For more information on TBI and state-specific resources, please visit:

[http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415642545/Other\\_Web\\_Resources\\_on\\_TBI.pdf](http://documents.routledge-interactive.s3.amazonaws.com/9780415642545/Other_Web_Resources_on_TBI.pdf)

## Signs & Symptoms

(reported and/or observed)

May include, but are not limited to the following:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Anxiety
- Attention and concentration deficits
- Slowed processing speed
- Difficulty with disinhibition
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Loss of energy
- Depression
- Memory impairments
- Vomiting
- Blurred vision
- Irritability
- Insomnia
- Hypersensitivity to light and noise
- Psychomotor slowing
- Tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- Sleep disturbances

## General Resources:

For facts about Concussion and Brain Injury, visit:

- CDC Fact Sheet: [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/FactSheet\\_concussTBI-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/FactSheet_concussTBI-a.pdf)
- Heads Up to Schools: free downloadable concussion awareness materials for schools: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>
- School-Wide Concussion Management information: <http://brain101.orcasinc.com/>
- Athletic Trainer/Coach Packet: [http://ocras-sportsconc2.s3.amazonaws.com/files/A\\_CoachPacket.pdf](http://ocras-sportsconc2.s3.amazonaws.com/files/A_CoachPacket.pdf)
- Parent Packet: [http://ocras-sportsconc2.s3.amazonaws.com/files/A\\_ParentPacket.pdf](http://ocras-sportsconc2.s3.amazonaws.com/files/A_ParentPacket.pdf)

# Specific TBI Accommodations and Modifications

## For Attention/Concentration Difficulties:

- Use color cuing or underlining
- Repeat instructions
- Build in rest periods
- Minimize visual and auditory distractions
- Chunk work into smaller sections
- Use FM system to reduce external noise
- Implement self-monitoring system for on-task behavior
- Use short, concise instructions
- Provide verbal, visual, and/or physical redirection
- Seat student in close proximity to teacher
- Use focus cues
- Ask student to summarize information
- Seat student near peer role model

## For Memory Difficulties:

- Create Home-School Communication notebook
- Create homework log
- Provide word banks for short answer tests
- Summarize information frequently
- Provide repetition and practice
- Display rules and assignments in writing
- Provide a written set of questions before reading the material
- Tape record lessons
- Use notes, lists, and schedules
- Allow for open note tests
- Help student create a memory notebook with maps, checklist, names, etc.

## For Planning & Organization Difficulties:

- Keep student's materials in the classroom
- Color coordinate books, folders, etc.
- Create a buddy system
- Check in with student in the morning and at the end of the day to prepare and review
- Create labeled Turn-In and To-Do folders
- Post a daily schedule for the student
- Create one notebook to organize schedules, maps, and homework with sections for each subject
- Send home written directions for homework
- Write cues (sequence steps) to help the student navigate through activities

## For Processing Speed & Initiation Difficulties:

- Help the student use "self-talk"
- Repeat instructions
- Shorten assignments
- Slow the pace of instruction
- Allow the student extra time to process information
- Teach the student to request clarification
- Brainstorm plans to complete tasks (first, then)
- Provide extra time to complete work
- Tape record lectures
- Set short-term and mini-goals
- Limit the number of steps in a task

## For Self-Regulation Difficulties:

- Designate a space to calm down
- Post classroom expectations
- Teach self-monitoring techniques
- Teach relaxation techniques
- Teach the student how to use "self-talk"
- Provide frequent breaks as needed before the student loses control
- Provide examples of desired behavior and then cue and rehearse those behaviors
- Teach Stop – Think – Act
- Acknowledge and praise appropriate behavior

## For Emotion/Mood Difficulties:

- Arrange regular sessions with a guidance counselor or other support staff
- Create a contract and set a goal for the student
- Reward acceptable behavior
- Use time outs as needed
- Offer choices for acceptable behavior to give the student a sense of control
- Prearrange a signal with the student to indicate when they need emotional support
- React to student calmly and with a quiet voice
- Teach acceptable outlets for emotional control (e.g., journals, walks, rip paper)

## For Motor/Physical Difficulties:

- Provide an index card to assist student in scanning and maintaining place on page
- Shorten writing assignments
- Allow use of computer or word processor
- Assign a scribe as needed
- Provide a slant board
- Allow student to write on vertical surfaces
- Allow for physical movement before a lesson
- Provide pencil grips

# Specific TBI Accommodations and Modifications (cont)

## For Motor/Physical Difficulties (cont):

- To help student increase strength, provide use of classroom objects they can squeeze (e.g. hole punch, spray bottle)
- Provide a chair with arms
- Allow student to use therapy putty
- Use thicker lined paper with raised lines
- Allow for frequent movement breaks
- Facilitate weight-bearing games (e.g., wheelbarrow, tug of war, wall push-ups)
- Ensure there are railings on stairs

## For Communication Difficulties:

- If the student has trouble with word retrieval, allow for wait time, then give a cue (e.g., beginning word)
- Provide assistive communication device
- Use pictures to communicate
- Have the student repeat information to teacher in his/her own words
- Provide story maps and graphic organizers

## To Make School Facilities Accessible:

- Provide a key lock instead of a combination lock for the student
- Move the student's classroom to adjust for distance and/or stairs
- Keep the aisles in the classroom clear
- Provide modified sports equipment and curriculum for Physical Education

## Transportation Considerations:

- Door to door bus pick up
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Harness on bus
- Assistance getting off and on the bus

## Medical Considerations:

- Allow the student to stand and stretch as needed
- Allow student to carry water bottle and snack if needed
- Keep headache medications in nurse's office at school
- Allow student to rest in the nurse's office as needed
- Arrange for assistance with toileting
- Prepare classmates for student's return
- Train staff about seizures

## Tips for Classroom Instruction:

- Use a multi-sensory approach
- Modify the amount of information presented at one time
- Review material from the previous lesson before introducing new material
- Maintain close proximity to the student during the lesson
- Check in with the student frequently
- Preview or pre-teach material
- Prepare guided notes for the student
- Create an outline of key points
- Slow the pace of instruction if needed
- Reinforce on-task and/or desired behaviors
- Provide frequent breaks
- Use verbal and/or nonverbal cues to redirect the student

## Consider the Student's Schedule:

- The school day may need to be shortened
- The student may need to attend only for mornings or afternoons or alternate days during recovery
- Arrange classes so that the most taxing subjects are scheduled for times when the student has the most energy
- Keep the schedule and routine consistent
- Designate a time and place for the student to rest
- Release the student from class a few minutes early to avoid crowded halls

## Assignment and Assessment Accommodations:

- Give one assignment at a time
- Highlight key concepts
- Simplify or repeat instructions
- Model or demonstrate a task and the finished product
- Provide written instructions for home
- Set mini-due dates
- Chunk work into smaller parts
- Shorten assignments
- Allow extra time for student to complete work
- Provide optional alternate assignments (e.g., videotaped presentation, oral tests)
- Provide study guides
- Administer tests in a small group setting
- Allow open note quizzes and tests
- Read test items to student