

# What more can you do?

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

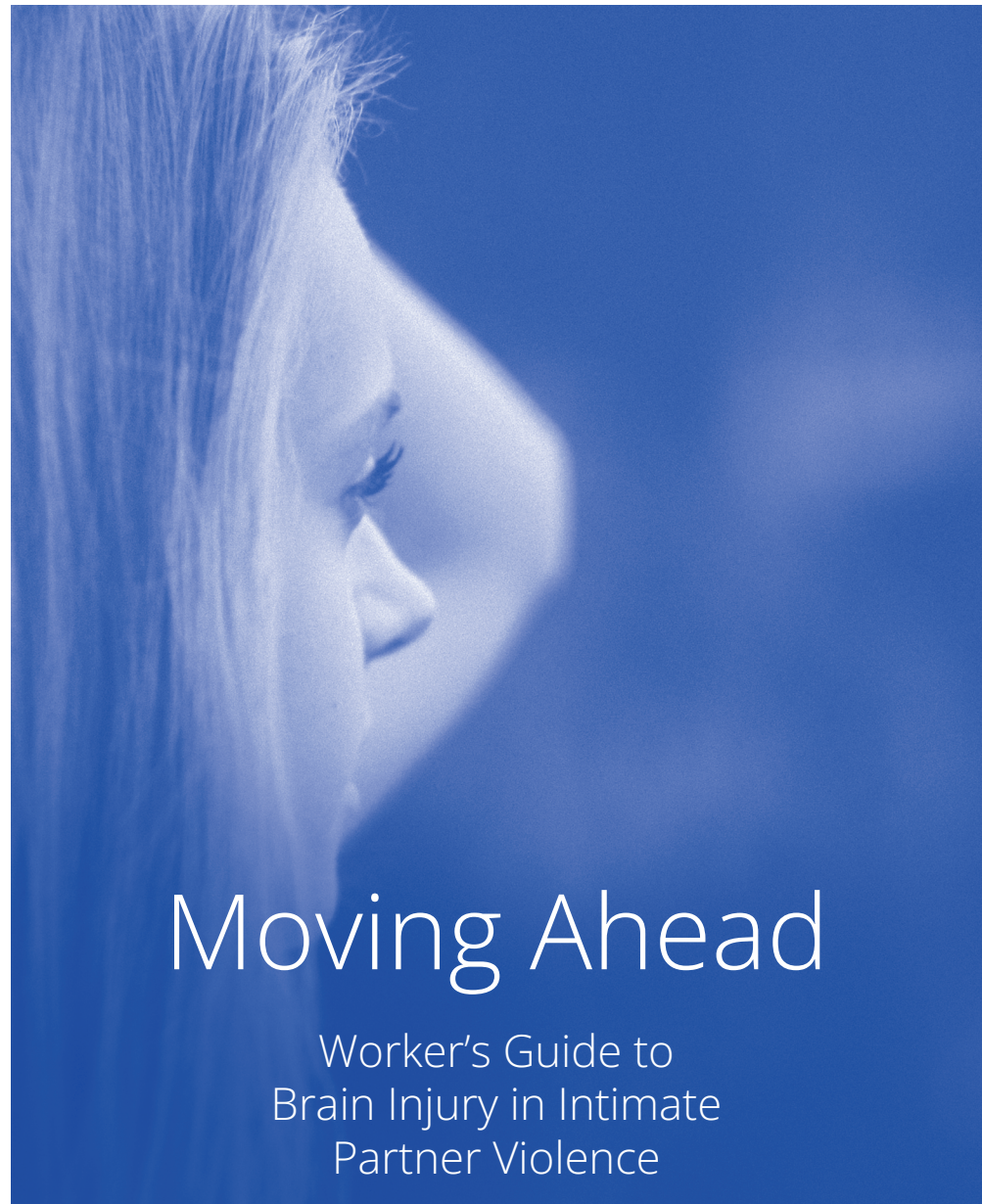
# HELPS

## 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?
- 5.** Have you experienced any significant **S**icknesses or physical symptoms?

- 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 judgement (being fired from job, arrests, fights)


\*The version of the HELPS tool above has been adapted for the context of intimate partner violence. The original 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.



## Moving Ahead

Worker's Guide to  
Brain Injury in Intimate  
Partner Violence



FUNDED BY:  Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada Women and Gender Equality Canada



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SUPPORTING SURVIVORS  
OF ABUSE AND BRAIN INJURY  
THROUGH RESEARCH

[www.soarproject.ca](http://www.soarproject.ca)

## Did you know?

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

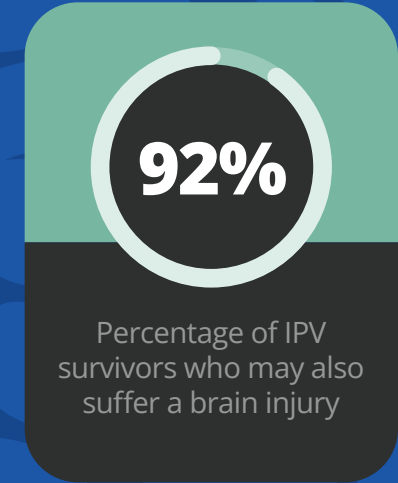
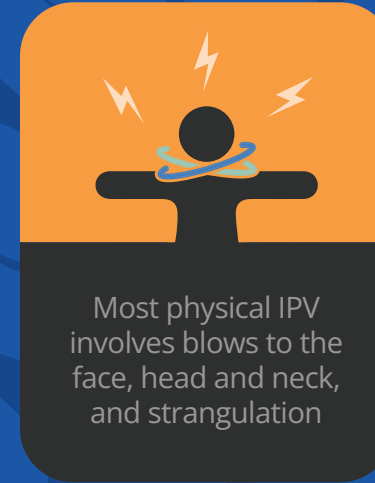
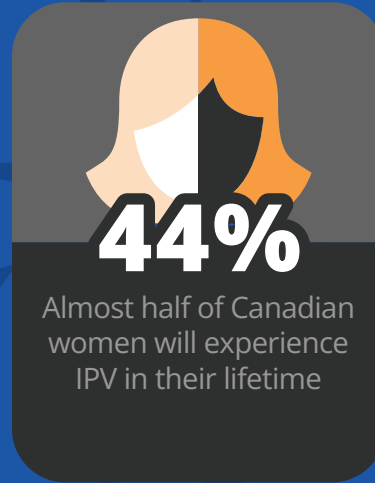
### WHAT IS BRAIN INJURY?

Brain injury is defined as an insult to the brain that causes a change in how the brain functions. It includes injury from loss of oxygen to the brain, and concussion from a hard blow to the head, neck, or body that causes the head or brain to move rapidly back and forth.

### BRAIN INJURY CAN HAPPEN FROM BEING:

- Punched, or hit in the head with an object.
- Violently shaken.
- Pushed down stairs.
- Thrown out of a moving vehicle.
- Strangled – Nearly ½ of survivors have been strangled.

It is one of the most lethal forms of IPV, and the top indicator of future fatality.



## How does brain injury show up?

Brain injury among survivors of IPV often goes unnoticed, is mislabelled, or misunderstood. Knowing the signs and symptoms can help you provide better support.

### BRAIN INJURY CAN CAUSE:

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Worries and fears
- Depression
- Sadness
- Anger
- Sensitivity to noise and light

### SURVIVORS MAY:

- Not listen.
- Be easily distracted.
- Have difficulty learning things.
- Have trouble following instructions, and remembering appointments or chores.
- Be tired, irritated, and quick to anger.
- Become easily overwhelmed.
- Have issues adapting to life in a communal setting such as a shelter.
- Sleep too much or too little.

## How can you help?

If you suspect a survivor may have experienced a brain injury, refer them to your local brain injury support agency. If the incident was recent, and symptoms are severe, recommend they see a physician.

### OTHER WAYS TO HELP INCLUDE:

- Speaking slowly and clearly.
- Taking more breaks.
- Asking them to repeat important information back.
- Dimming the lights.
- Conducting interactions in a quiet location.
- Working with them to fill out forms.
- Minimizing computer use.
- Encouraging rest.
- Helping them prioritize appointments and tasks.
- Providing earplugs to dull noise.
- Offering sunglasses or a hat to help shield light.