

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.

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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?


- 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)

*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

SOAR SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
OF ABUSE AND BRAIN INJURY
THROUGH RESEARCH

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SOAR

SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
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www.soarproject.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

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

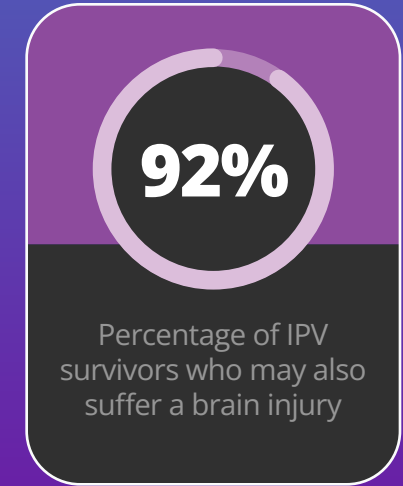
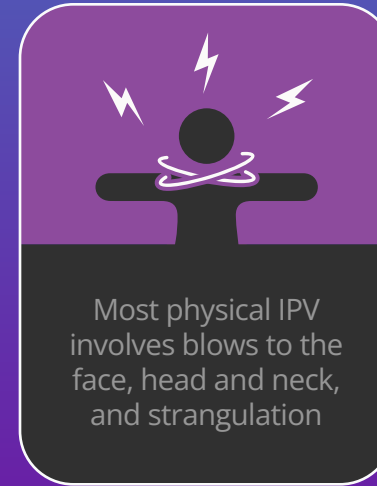
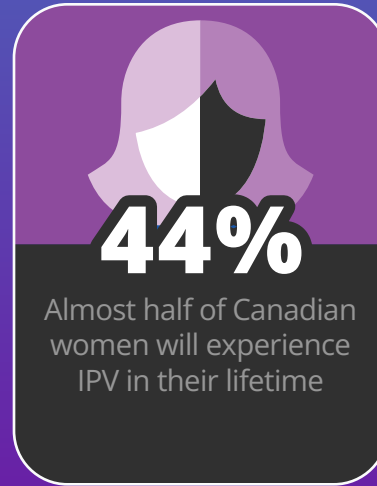
WHAT IS BRAIN INJURY?

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
- Communication challenges
- Reckless behaviour

SURVIVORS MAY:

- Have difficulty listening.
- 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 or team working environments.
- 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.