



## CARE Head Injury Accommodations

Staff Completing Checklist: \_\_\_\_\_

Survivor Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DON'T FORGET: CONNECT FIRST!**

### Common Brain Injury Accommodations

- Have flexible staff schedules or open hours where people can drop in without an appointment
- Put signs up in your building that point towards exits, kitchen, bathroom, etc.
- Slow down information, plan for additional time
- Do a mind map of resources (identifying sources of support, agency involvement, agencies they would like to work with, medical providers, etc.) and have a hard copy for assistance
- Repeat things frequently and have them repeat back to you, in their own words, what you talked about
- Provide written information and document conversations as much as possible, for recall
- Provide calendars, notebooks and checklists to help with memory
- Check in with survivor often, particularly in the beginning of their stay
- Identify some "go to" people that can assist with anything that comes up
- Have staff wear nametags for memory or processing challenges
- Give Invisible Injuries Booklet to survivors and review with them

## CARE Begins with Connection

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Difficulty Making Connections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not open up</li> <li>• Is guarded or reserved</li> <li>• Doesn't engage with you or others</li> <li>• Hesitant to share</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Be patient, building relationships takes time and trust has to be earned. Don't take anything personally.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge that people's experiences with trauma, abuse and getting help can make it difficult to trust others, including advocates
	<input type="checkbox"/> Validate challenges and feelings and highlight the person's strengths
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask what helps you with _____ (feeling more comfortable here, your memory, paying attention, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask, "What has worked for you, and how?" Ask, "What hasn't worked for you, and how?"

## Physical Health Challenges

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Physical Health Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Physical pain or soreness</li> <li>• Balance problems</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Seizures</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Check in regularly to see if headaches, dizziness, pain or balance problems get better. Encourage survivors to fill out symptom log in Invisible Injuries booklet
	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask if there has been anything helpful that they have in the past to manage these symptoms
	<input type="checkbox"/> Help identify if there are any activities that bring on or worsen problems, and make plans to avoid them as much as possible
	<input type="checkbox"/> Set up room or space to minimize tripping (e.g. clear clutter from walkways, no cords on the ground, provide lighting for spaces at night, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage medical evaluation and if problems continue, facilitate the survivor getting to the doctor

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<p><b>Sensory Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light sensitivity</li> <li>• Noise sensitivity</li> <li>• Vision changes</li> <li>• Ringing in the ears</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide earplugs, headphones, sunglasses, or adjust lighting if necessary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If possible and survivor wants it, provide a room where the survivor can be alone. If not, pair with roommate with similar sensory needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If problems continue, facilitate the survivor getting to the doctor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Minimize sounds and visual stimulation in meeting spaces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet in places with natural light if LED lights bother their vision</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sleep Difficulties and Fatigue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling fatigued or exhausted</li> <li>• Hard time waking up</li> <li>• Hard time falling asleep</li> <li>• Sleeping more or less than normal</li> <li>• Too tired to participate in normal activities</li> <li>• Nightmares or flashbacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help identify conditions that facilitate sleep (music, darkness, quiet, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consider sleep aids: earplugs, eye masks, lighting, white noise machines, fans, nightlights, privacy curtains, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid over the counter sleep aids or equivalent</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule appointments for most convenient time for survivor</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage naps or additional rest and regular sleep routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide assistance with waking, if requested</li> </ul>

## Emotional Challenges

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Suicidal/Homicidal/ Self-Harm Ideations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feelings of hopelessness or having no reason to live</li><li>• Withdrawing and self-isolation</li><li>• Talking about obtaining weapons</li><li>• Threats of harming others or self</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask direct questions and talk openly about the ideations
	<input type="checkbox"/> Be non-judgmental, do not debate the morality or ethical nature or suicide or homicide
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify triggers to ideations
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify some “go to” people and safety plan
	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage removing weapons or reducing access
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide 24-hour resources

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<p><b>Controlling Emotions or Reactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May say or do things without thinking</li> <li>• May not follow directions</li> <li>• May dominate conversations</li> <li>• May struggle to focus due to feelings of anxiety</li> <li>• May have minimized motivation due to depression</li> <li>• May experience flashbacks</li> <li>• May be anger-focused</li> <li>• May experience frequent irritability</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Stay calm and in control of your own feelings and reactions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Validate the importance of expressing emotions and assist with finding healthy ways to do that
	<input type="checkbox"/> Help survivor identify how and why their mood and emotions have changed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Talk about “stop, think, act” which encourages the person to slow down and think about consequences of a behavior before taking action
	<input type="checkbox"/> Give feedback and share with the person your honest opinion if something is dangerous or unsafe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Respond directly and promptly to inappropriate behavior
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide several safe solutions to a problem and encourage the survivor to make the best choice
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify strategies to regulate emotions and reduce acute anxiety, such as breathing techniques, going for a walk, fidget toys, etc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider the survivor’s frame of mind (angry, depressed, fearful) and encourage reframing and redirecting energy to positive thoughts and possible actions

**NOTES:**

## Thinking (Cognitive) Challenges

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Getting Things Started or Figuring Out What to Do Next</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Problems getting a task started or completing tasks</li><li>• Needs constant reminders to complete a task</li><li>• Misses deadlines, appointments</li><li>• Challenges remembering things that need done in the future</li><li>• Able to identify a goal but has challenges in achieving it</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Use calendars, folders, checklists, and planners to organize activities into small achievable steps
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prompt survivor to write down important information
	<input type="checkbox"/> Timers or alarms can be used to help a person get started and to be “productive” for a period of time
	<input type="checkbox"/> Be predictable
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide information in a factual manner
	<input type="checkbox"/> Help survivor identify places to keep important things
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider having laminated instructions for ease of use (thermostats, microwaves, communal appliances, etc.)
<b>Organizing Things</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May lose papers, phone numbers, or other important documents</li><li>• Space might be messy or cluttered</li><li>• Has a hard time finding things</li><li>• Misses deadlines or important dates</li><li>• Late to meetings or appointments</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Use planners on the last pages of Invisible Injuries to help structure daily plans and monthly important information
	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss with survivors tricks or tips they have used that helps with organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify strategies such as putting things in the same place to minimize frustration
	<input type="checkbox"/> Be patient and validate this as being a normal symptom of head injury
	<input type="checkbox"/> Label things in a room that are for each person (putting a name on a shelf, locker, dresser, bed, etc.)

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Understanding Things</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only understands a part of what is talked about</li> <li>• Struggles to keep up with a conversation</li> <li>• Has a hard time finding words</li> <li>• May appear to “zone out”</li> <li>• May appear passive, unmotivated, or “lazy”</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Help with forms or paperwork and provide additional time
	<input type="checkbox"/> Simplify information and allow extra time for people to process/think/remember. Make sure they don't feel rushed.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Limit use of open-ended questions. Use yes/no format, structured, or multiple choice where possible
	<input type="checkbox"/> If survivor wanders off topic, redirect to topic at hand
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cue survivor with beginning sounds of word if survivor has word-finding difficulties
<b>Paying Attention, Focusing, or Following Directions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short attention span</li> <li>• Easily distractible</li> <li>• Unengaged or appears bored or disinterested</li> <li>• Mental fatigue or tiredness</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a checklist of things to talk about or do during a meeting to help people stay on track, and can cross things off when done
	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage survivor to do hard or challenging activities earlier in the day when the brain is fresher
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make direct eye contact when meeting
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work on only one thing at a time
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make conversations, meetings, and tasks simple, brief, and to the point
	<input type="checkbox"/> Meet in a quiet environment and limit visual and verbal distractions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities for movement (go on a walk with the survivor)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Have resources available for hands on or tactile use (coloring pages or play dough)

Challenges	Suggested Accommodations
<b>Remembering Things</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Might be described by themselves or others as forgetful</li> <li>• Has challenges learning new information or recalling things previously discussed</li> <li>• Does not follow through with plans or activities</li> <li>• Inconsistency is common</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Present new information in small chunks
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review information/notes/status from last interaction before beginning a new one
	<input type="checkbox"/> Help person “remember to remember.” Come up with strategies, such as developing associations, following a set routine, and adapting the environment so that you rely less on your memory
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide additional tour of shelter after first 24 hours

**NOTES:**

**REMEMBER:**

Follow up with survivor every 1-2 weeks to find out what worked well, what didn't work and what else should you try.



ILLINOIS COALITION TO ADDRESS  
**INTIMATE PARTNER  
 VIOLENCE-INDUCED  
 BRAIN INJURY**

Talk to a domestic violence advocate or go to <https://tbi-dv-il.org>



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