Traumatic Brain Injury

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Have you or a family member experienced a concussion or Traumatic Brain Injury? Do you need information on accommodations or supports for school, work or home? One of DRWV’s federally funded programs focuses on advocacy and outreach for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI).

DRWV provides advocacy for people of any age with a TBI who are experiencing possible abuse, neglect, or rights restrictions in the following systems: school/education; work; access to assistive technology; access to programs & services in their home and community (Medicaid waivers, Personal Care services, etc.); Independent Living services; housing rights (service/emotional support animal access, reasonable accommodations/modifications, etc.); supported decision making; voting rights; etc.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines a TBI as a disruption in the normal function of the brain that can be caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or penetrating head injury. Everyone is at risk for a TBI, especially children and older adults.

TBIs can be the result of a motor vehicle accident, domestic violence, falls, sports injuries, child abuse, blasts from explosions, etc. The severity of a TBI may range from “mild” (i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness) to “severe” (i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or memory loss after the injury). Most TBIs that occur each year are mild, commonly called concussions. TBIs can cause

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difficulties with mobility; fatigue; behavior; social issues; substance abuse and mental health; learning; money management; job skills; etc.

Returning to School after a TBI/Concussion
Dr. Karen McAvoy developed a community-based model for Concussion Management called REAP, which stands for Remove/Reduce • Educate • Adjust/Accommodate • Pace. The TBI Program at the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities worked with Dr. Karen McAvoy to update the REAP document, or better known as the Return to Learn document, for WV schools. Additional information on REAP for WV can be found online at: [http://tbi.cedwvu.org/return-to-learn-and-play/](http://tbi.cedwvu.org/return-to-learn-and-play/).

Returning to Work after a TBI/Concussion
For adults who are returning to work after experiencing a TBI, there could be several considerations. According to the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), there are several questions to consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee’s job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Has the employee been consulted regarding possible accommodations?
6. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
7. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

More information on the Job Accommodation Network can be found online at: [https://askjan.org/](https://askjan.org/)

If you, or someone you know has a TBI and has questions or concerns, please call DRWV at 800-950-5250.