

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Supporting Survivors in Shelters

1 in 2 Women who live with an abusive partner may be subject to frequent unreported and untreated physical violence involving the head.¹ Such violence may lead to traumatic brain injury (TBI).

TBI IS ASSOCIATED WITH:

- Memory Problems
- Physical symptoms (nausea, dizziness, pain, ringing in ears, vision problems, headaches)
- Mood changes (anger, depression)
- Difficulty sleeping

Women are more likely to seek shelter than medical attention after a violent incident due to safety concerns²

Shelter teams understand that women who have experienced intimate partner violence related traumatic brain injury may have trouble:

- Assessing danger
- Making decisions related to safety
- Remembering and getting to appointments
- Learning new information
- Managing substance use
- Adapting to living in a shelter

Repeated TBIs may lead to longer recovery times and have more serious consequences

WOMEN WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES ARE BEST SUPPORTED BY:

- Allowing time for rest in a quiet dark place
- Keeping meetings brief and to a minimum
- Encouraging her to seek medical attention
- Providing travel assistance to attend appointments outside of the shelter
- Offering to accompany her to appointments
- Reviewing safety plans often and in detail
- Providing notebooks, calendars, agendas to support her efforts to be organized
- Being realistic about her abilities and limitations. Everything may take longer and she may be easily frustrated.
- Seeking support from local brain injury association

In Ontario call: 1-800-263-5404 · Obia.ca

¹ Campbell, J.C., Anderson, J.C., McFadgion, A., Gill, J., Zink, E., Patch, M., Callwood, G., Campbell, D. (2018). The effects of intimate partner violence and probable traumatic brain injury on central nervous system symptoms. *Journal of Women's Health, 27* (6)

² St. Ivany, A., Bullock, L., Schminkey, D., Wells, K., Sharps, P., Kools, S. (2018). Living in fear and prioritizing safety: Exploring women's lives after traumatic brain injury from intimate partner violence. *Qualitative Health Research, 28* (11) 1708-1718.