

Webinar 2

Brain Injury and the Criminal Justice System



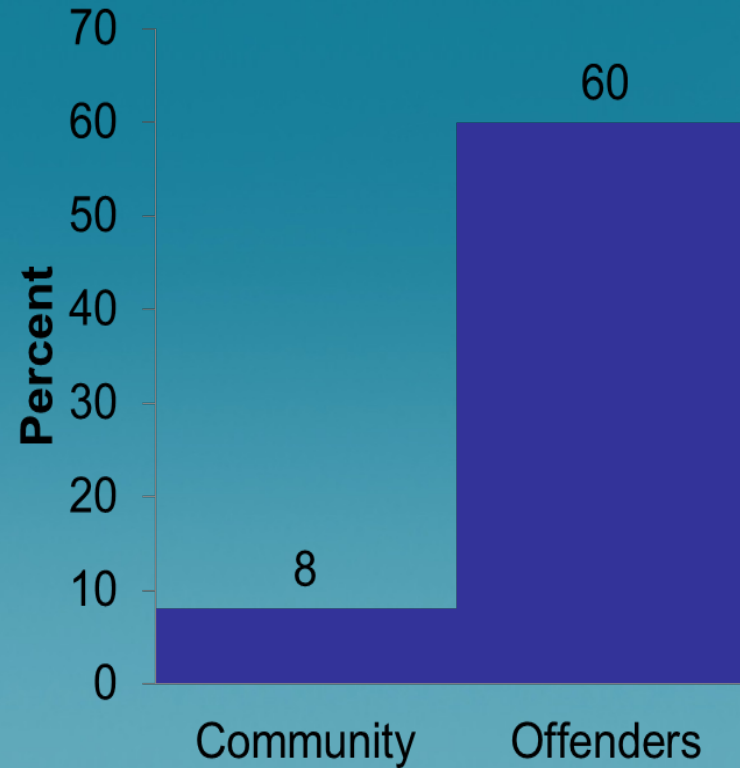
These webinars were developed because as many as 60-70% of people who are in prison have had a brain injury, and the brain injury may have a lot to do with how they ended up in prison. We need to understand brain injury so that we can better help them adjust in prison and stay out of prison once they are released.

What are the Main Points of this Webinar?

- TBI is a serious risk factor for committing a crime
- Brain Injury impairs judgment, impulse control and mood regulation that lead to criminal behavior
- Prisoners with brain injury have a harder time adjusting to prison
- Frontal lobe damage affects behavior that looks like some psychiatric illnesses

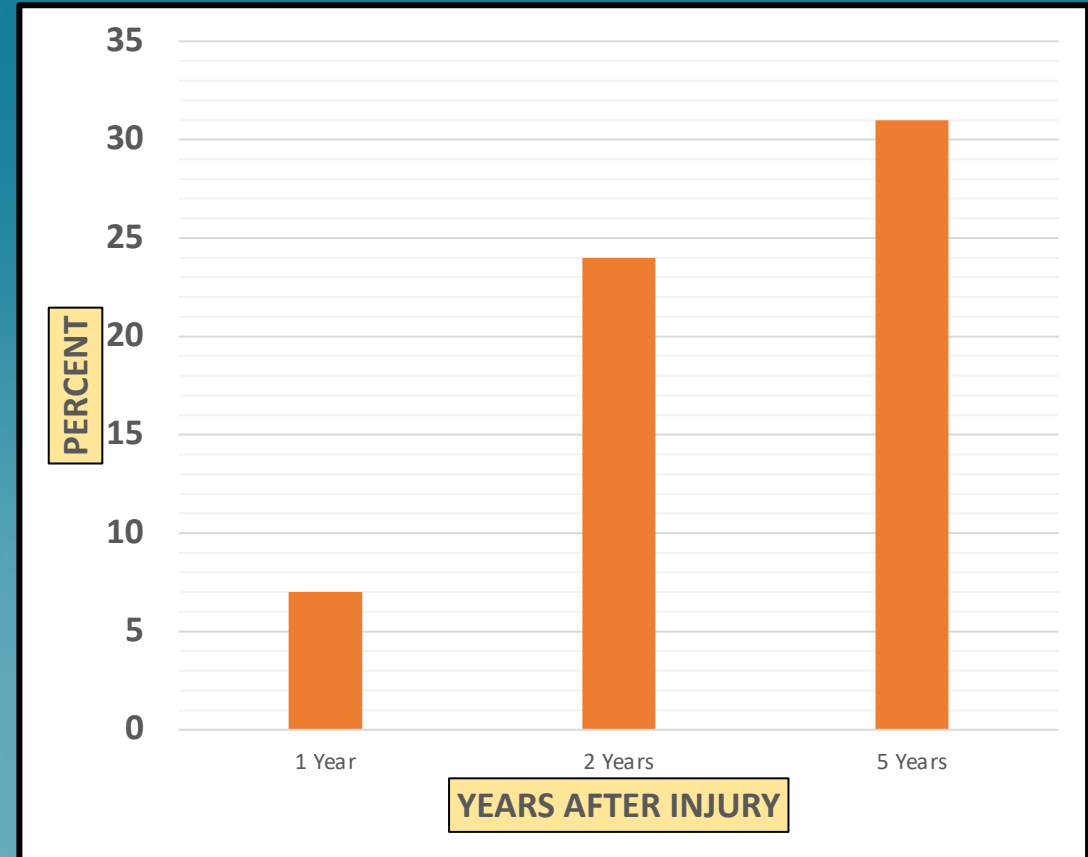
Prevalence of Brain Injury Among Offenders

- 8.5% of people in the community have had a brain injury.
- 60% of people who have committed an offense have had a brain injury.
- You are **7 times** more likely to commit an offense if you have had a brain injury.



The Risk of Committing an Offense Gets Worse over Time

- 7% of survivors of severe TBI have had legal involvement within 1 year after injury.
- 24% of subjects with TBI had committed crimes leading to arrests within a 2-year period.
- By 5 years after injury, 31% had legal involvement.



The Brain Injury Precedes the Criminal Offense:

83% reported sustaining a TBI before
their initial involvement with the
criminal-justice system

TBI is a Significant
Risk Factor for
Incarceration!

Brain Injury +

Add the following to Brain Injury, and now you get even more **RISK!**

- Drugs and alcohol
- Psychiatric problems
- Family criminality
- Problems in school

Criminal Behavior

- Is driven by multiple factors (biological, social, psychological)
- Brain Injury is a significant risk factor for incarceration even in people with no previous criminal history.
- Brain injury + other risk factors represents an even greater risk factor for criminal behavior.

Brain Injury and Prison Adjustment

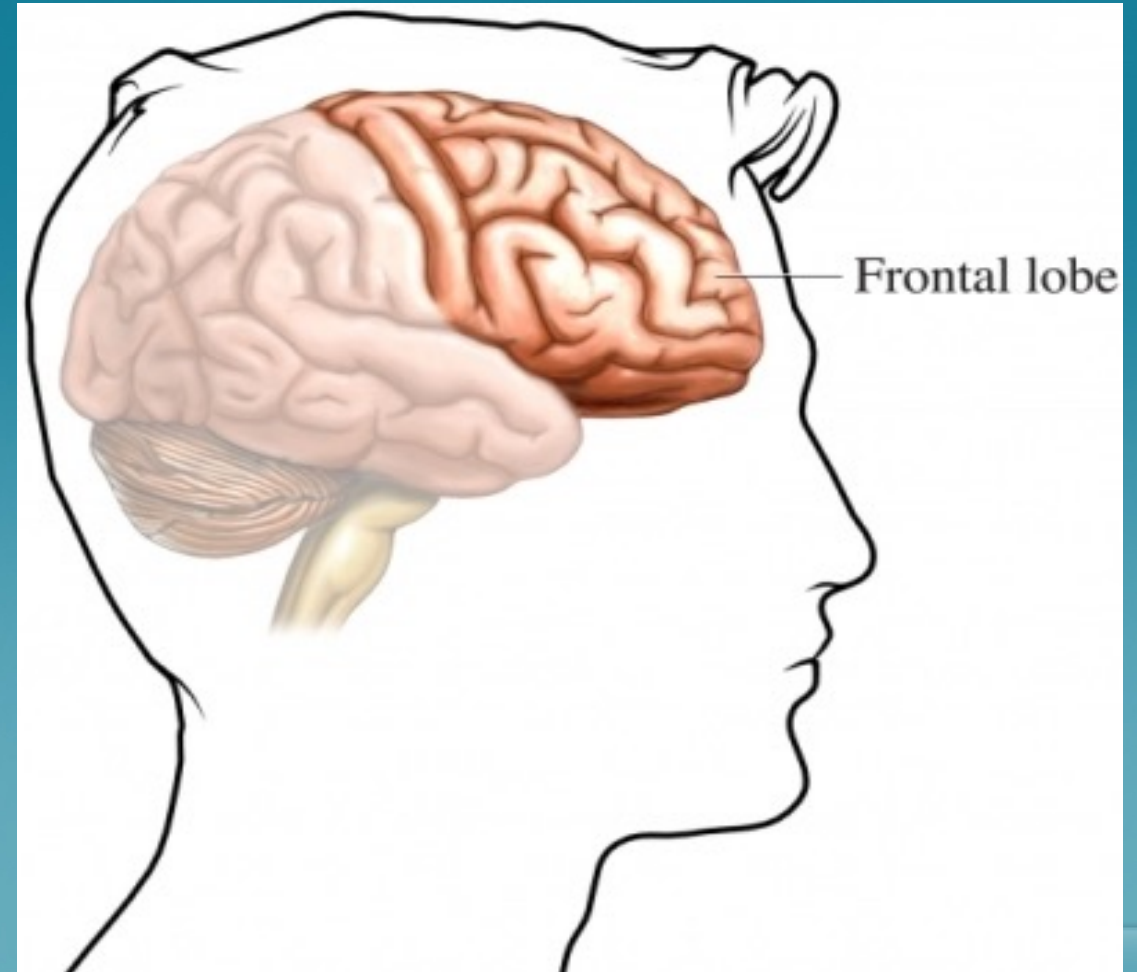
- Inmates with Brain Injury have:
 - higher rates of infraction while in custody
 - Higher levels of reoffending
 - Commit more violent crimes



So why are people with
brain injury more at risk
for criminal behavior?

Frontal Lobe Function

- Frontal lobes are the largest in the human brain.
- Frontal lobes don't fully develop until the early 20's.
- The functions of the frontal lobes are the most complex but the most important to succeed in life.



Frontal Lobe Functions

The overall job of the frontal lobes is to make our behavior adaptive according to:

- 1) What the situation is,
- 2) What we have learned from the past, and
- 3) What our goals are.

Specific Functions include:

- Organization and problem-solving
- Initiative and motivation
- Judgment
- Impulse control
- Social behavior

Effects of Frontal Lobe Damage

The person's behavior does not:

- Fit the situation
- Isn't what they know they should do or want to do
- Isn't consistent with their goals

Specific problems can be:

- Makes poor decisions
- Can't get started on tasks
- Doesn't stay focused or on track
- Impulsively says and does things
- Moods are more intense and change more quickly

Misdiagnosis in Brain Injury

Because frontal lobe injury affects behavior (not physical functions you can see, like moving an arm) many offenders with brain damage are diagnosed with psychiatric diagnoses, especially bipolar disorder, but also depression, anxiety and psychosis NOS (not otherwise specified)

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In The Next Three Webinars, We Will Address:

- How does brain injury affect prison adjustment, and
- How to manage it.



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