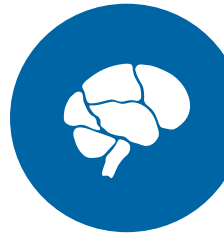


# Do you think you have a brain injury?



**Have you ever hit your head hard enough to be knocked out or felt strange after (saw stars, fuzzy thinking, heard bells ringing, vomiting, and headache)?**

→ **AND** ←

**Struggle with any of the following since that injury:**

- Controlling your emotions/mood swings
- Feeling overloaded by your surroundings
- Paying attention
- Difficulty with short term memory
- Understanding others
- Light or noise sensitivity

**Are you currently in jail or prison?**

You may know you have had a brain injury in the past because you were treated by a doctor or in a hospital. Or maybe you were injured but never saw a doctor. In both cases, it can be difficult to manage the symptoms caused by that injury, especially in a jail or prison setting.



If you haven't already, bring it to the attention of medical and mental health services within the jail/prison you are in. Ask if they can offer any testing or support.



Explore resources that may exist in your setting such as support groups or case managers. They may be able to provide a brain injury focus to your treatment plan.



If you aren't already, be mindful how you are in control of your overall health. Options might be limited in your setting but explore what is available.

### Activities to engage in if available:

- Mindfulness
- Yoga
- Support Groups
- Journaling
- Exercise

### Activities to avoid:

- Using substances – such as drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor and alcohol
- Things that make you feel triggered
- Any activity where you are taking blows to the head

## Now What?

# Techniques for dealing with symptoms:

## Managing Impulse Control: Stop-Think-Choose

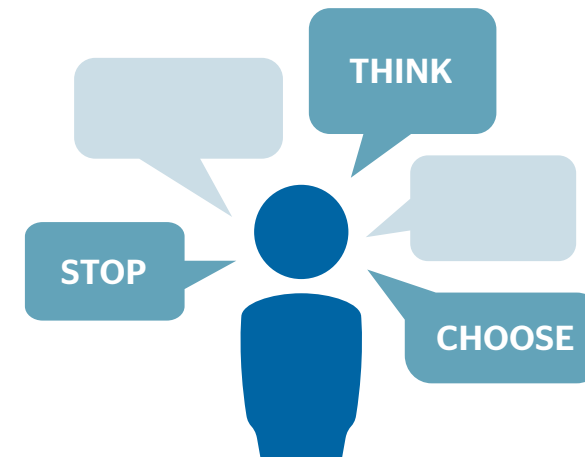
**STOP:** Calm down and breathe deeply. Consider everyone's feelings.

**THINK:** What is the problem? What are the options? What are the consequences of your actions?

**CHOOSE:** Make your choice.

**TIP**

Talk to someone you trust for support. If there isn't anyone available, make the decision that you feel will have the most positive outcome.



## Overload & Fatigue

**GROUNDING:** Take ten slow breaths. Focus your attention fully on each breath, on the way in and on the way out. Say number of the breath to yourself as you exhale.

**TIP**

Ask for breaks when needed, let staff know you need a moment to calm down.

## Paying Attention

- Try to work on one task at a time.
- If possible, reduce distractions.

**TIP**

You will be better able to pay attention if you are not tired, hungry, thirsty, sick or overly stressed.

## Memory and Learning

- Recite and Repeat
- Write it down
- Create Associations

**TIP**

Let staff know you sometimes have difficulty remembering things or need things repeated.



## Light and noise sensitivity

Unfortunately, you may not have any control over the noise level or lights in your setting. Bringing this issue to the attention of medical staff might be helpful to determine if there are any options available, such as earplugs or sunglasses.

**TIP**

Explain any vision or hearing issues you might have to a professional you trust and ask for advice.

## Understanding Others

- Take more time to read and re-read information
- Break information into small chunks

**TIP**

After learning new information summarize it in your own words.



# Resources

## Returning to Community:

If you are returning to the community or to a community corrections facility in the next 3 months contact:

**Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado**  
303-355-9969  
1325 S. Colorado Blvd. Ste. B300  
Denver, CO 80222

## Longer Incarceration Times:

**Prison Literature Project**  
c/o Bound Together Books  
1369 Haight St.  
San Francisco, CA 94117

**Prison Mindfulness Institute**  
PO Box 206  
South Deerfield, MA 01373



**Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado**  
1325 South Colorado Blvd.  
Denver, CO 80222  
1-800-955-2443 • 303-355-9969  
BIAColorado.org



# Incarceration & Brain Injury

**This tip card helps survivors experiencing incarceration to understand brain injury and...**

- Strategies that can be used in an incarcerated setting
- Connect with resources while incarcerated and when re-entering community

