



HELPS BRAIN INJURY SCREENING TOOL

- **H:** Have you ever **Hit your Head** or been Hit on the Head? **Yes** **No**
 - Note: Prompt client to think about all incidents that may have occurred at any age, even those that did not seem serious: vehicle accidents, falls, assault, abuse, sports, etc. Screen for domestic violence and child abuse, and also for service related injuries. A TBI can also occur from violent shaking of the head, such as being shaken as a baby or child
- **E:** Were you ever seen in the **Emergency room**, hospital, or by a doctor because of an injury to your head? **Yes** **No**
 - Note: Many people are seen for treatment. However, there are those who cannot afford treatment, or who do not think they require medical attention
- **L:** Did you ever **Lose consciousness** or experience a period of being dazed and confused because of an injury to your head? **Yes** **No**
 - Note: People with TBI may not lose consciousness but experience an “alteration of consciousness.” This may include feeling dazed, confused, or disoriented at the time of the injury, or being unable to remember the events surrounding the injury.
- **P:** Do you experience any of these **Problems in your daily life** since you hit your head? **Yes** **No**
 - Note: Ask your client if s/he experiences any of the following problems, and ask when the problem presented. You are looking for a combination of two or more problems that were not present prior to the injury.
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	headache		Difficulty reading, writing, calculating
	dizziness		Poor problem solving
	anxiety		Difficulty performing your job/school work
	depression		Change in relationship with others
	Difficulty concentrating		Poor judgement (being fired from job, arrests or fights)
	Difficulty remembering		

- **S: Any significant **Sicknesses?**** **Yes** **No**
 - Note: Traumatic brain injury implies a physical blow to the head, but acquired brain injury may also be caused by medical conditions, such as: brain tumor, meningitis, West Nile virus, stroke, seizures. Also screen for instances of oxygen deprivation such as following a heart attack, carbon monoxide poisoning, near drowning, or near suffocation.

Scoring the HELPS Screening Tool

A HELPS screening is considered positive for a possible TBI when the following 3 items are identified:

1. An event that could have caused a brain injury (yes to H, E **or** S), **and**
2. A period of loss of consciousness or altered consciousness after the injury or another indication that the injury was severe (yes to L or E), **and**
3. The presence of two or more chronic problems listed under P that were not present before the injury.

Note:

- A positive screening is not sufficient to diagnose TBI as the reason for current symptoms and difficulties - other possible causes may need to be ruled out
- Some individuals could present exceptions to the screening results, such as people who do have TBI-related problems but answered “no” to some question
- Consider positive responses within the context of the person's self-report and documentation of altered behavioral and/or cognitive functioning.

The original HELPS TBI screening tool was developed by M. Picard, D. Scarisbrick, R. Paluck, 9/91, International Center for the Disabled, TBI-NET, U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Grant #H128A00022. The Helps Tool was updated by project personnel to reflect recent recommendations by the CDC on the diagnosis of TBI. See http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/tbi_toolkit/physicians/mtbi/diagnosis.htm.

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