

Title: Accommodating service members and volunteers with Traumatic Brain Injury

Stream: Cross stream

Topic Area: Program management

Keywords: program management, human needs, inclusion, disability, disabilities, volunteer management

Abstract: With appropriate accommodations and support, a qualified service member with a Traumatic Brain Injury can successfully participate in national and volunteer service programs. Elesheva Soloff with the National Service Inclusion Project submitted this effective practice in April 2009, which offers information about this disability and suitable accommodations.

Icon: Studied

Full text: Yes

Related Sites:

1. What is the issue or problem that you are dealing with?

There are many qualified individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) who have participated in national service programs — and many more who can serve. It is important that these individuals know that they may request reasonable accommodations.

2. What is/are the effective practice(s) that you found useful?

Examples of reasonable accommodations that could assist a service member with a Traumatic Brain Injury include the following:

- Provide written or electronic instructions for tasks to be completed
- Change lighting to high intensity white light; increase access to natural light
- Allow individual to use a headset to help maintain concentration
- Remind service member or volunteer of important deadlines via e-mail, text messaging, or pop-up calendar
- Provide an electronic organizer, watch, or pager with timer function
- Allow individual to record meetings for easy review
- Establish an ongoing dialogue to discuss performance and effectiveness of accommodations

3. Provide some details about the people, setting, resources, and community where the practice(s) is/are used.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines Traumatic Brain Injury as: “[a neurological condition] caused by a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of a traumatic brain injury may range from ‘mild,’ i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness to ‘severe,’ i.e. an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.”

Every year approximately 1.4 million people in the United States sustain a Traumatic Brain Injury. About 75 percent of these are concussions or other forms of “mild” TBI. Other people who ~~suffer~~ experience a TBI may have more severe injuries that may result in a wide range of functional changes affecting aspects of daily living including behavior, emotions, language, learning, sensation, and/or thinking.

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Accommodating Service Members and Volunteers with Traumatic Brain Injury, from the National Service Inclusion Project Fact Sheet

Definition of TBI adapted from Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/TBI.htm>

Examples of accommodations adapted from the Job Accommodation Network

<http://www.jhan.wvu.edu/media/BrainInjury.html>

Resources:

Be aware that not all individuals with a TBI will need reasonable accommodations to perform their service. For more information on TBI see the following resources:

Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)

<http://www.biausa.org/index.html>

Facts About Traumatic Brain Injury

http://www.biausa.org/elements/aboutbi/factsheets/factsaboutbi_2008.pdf

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) on Accommodation and Compliance Series: Brain Injury

<http://www.jhan.wvu.edu/media/BrainInjury.html>