Hiring Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

Education Employees About TBI

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Throughout this webinar, attendees will be allowed to ask questions. Note that presenters will provide a response based on limited and unverified information. These responses should not be construed as direct advice regarding the issue raised, nor should they be construed as a formal opinion issued by CRCC or South Carolina State University.
GOAL FOR TODAY

To obtain a general understanding of traumatic brain injury, its signs, symptoms and affects in employment settings.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Have an understanding of traumatic brain injury (TBI)
• Be able to identify characteristics and symptoms
• Gain knowledge about other disabilities commonly associated with TBI
• Gain factual information related to hiring individuals with TBI
• Understand some predictors of employment for individuals with TBI
• Be able to identify resources available to employees with TBI
TRAIUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

• An injury to the brain from external forces, such as vehicular accidents, falls, violence, or sports or recreational injury, or penetration of the skull by a foreign object.

• Not degenerative

• Not a result of a disease

• Not congenital in origin
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY
Cont.

• Can result in various forms of impairment
  • Cognitive
  • Emotional/Behavioral changes
  • Physical manifestations
  • Social
  • Vocational
  • Other areas of person’s life
TBI STATS

- 1.4 million persons in the US with TBI (yearly)
  - 50,000 die
  - 235,000 are hospitalized
  - 1.1 million treated and released
- Highest Risk group
  - Infants -4
  - Adolescents 15-19
- Approximately 80,000-90,000 experience the onset of a long term disability due to a TBI
Yearly Economics statuses for TBI

• 37.8 Billion total
• 4.5 billion in direct expenditures for medical purposes
• 20.6 billion in work related losses & disability
• 12.7 billion in lost income from premature death

TYPES OF TBI

• Open Head Injury (Penetrating)
  • Injuries as a result of the skull being fractured
  • Impairments are related to specific areas of brain affected
• Closed Head Injury
  • Skull is not fractured
• Results from blow to the head or violent shaking of the head
LEVELS OF TBI

Mild

• Approximately 70% of TBI
• Experience more subtle but disruptive symptoms
  ▪ headaches, dizziness
  ▪ ringing in the ears, sleep disturbances
  ▪ depression, irritability
  ▪ reduced attention span
  ▪ memory impairment
• May have credibility questioned
LEVELS OF TBI

Moderate

• Loss of consciousness for few minutes or several hours
  ▪ Confusion, disorientation
  ▪ Physical Impairments
  ▪ Cognitive Impairments
  ▪ Psychosocial Impairments

• Symptoms may be permanent
LEVELS OF TBI

Severe

• Remain in a coma for extended periods of time
• Permanent and more severe deficits
CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Loss of response to sounds, light or touch
• Response to stimuli is affected
  ▪ Responding to loud noises
  ▪ Eyes have difficulty focusing
  ▪ Movement is not consistent
• Confusion and agitation

CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Impaired Communication
  ▪ Difficulty with speech (slurred)
  ▪ Difficulty using and understanding words
  ▪ Misarticulation
  ▪ Laborious speech
  ▪ Hesitancy
  ▪ Reduced vocabulary and grammar
CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Impaired motor skills (movement, coordination and balance)
  ▪ walking
  ▪ unsteady balance, walk with a gait, lurch from side to side
  ▪ Muscle coordination
  ▪ abnormal movements, abnormal muscle tone which decreases ability to move, too much muscle tone which heightens reflexes or exacerbates abnormal movement

• Impaired motor skills will affect areas such as dressing, eating, driving, typing etc.

CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

- Impaired Vision
  - Visual-Spatial deficits affects judgment of distance, size, position, rate of movement, form and the relation of parts to wholes.
  - May experience difficulty navigating movement through environment and judgment of space
  - May appear clumsy, knocking items off tables, dropping things when attempting to put them on tables because of perception, unable to read some signs

CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Hearing Impairments
  ▪ Difficulty interpreting sound
  ▪ Acquired hearing loss
  ▪ Ringing in the ear
CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Memory
  ▪ Affects individuals ability to recognize and recall
  ▪ Difficulty problem solving
  ▪ Difficulty organizing and planning

CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Touch, taste or smell
  ▪ May experience numbness in various body parts
  ▪ Inability to feel pain
  ▪ Inability to sense movement of body parts
  ▪ Decrease sense of smell which affects taste

• Eating/ swallowing
  ▪ Difficulty swallowing, chewing
  ▪ Increased chances of choking
  ▪ Saliva build up (causing drooling)
CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Endurance
  ▪ Physical fatigue
  ▪ Mental fatigue
  ▪ Altered sleep patterns
CHARACTERISTICS AND SYMPTOMS OF TBI

• Bladder and Bowel function
  ▪ Incontinence
  ▪ Embarrassment
TBI - ASSOCIATED DISABILITIES

• Epilepsy
  ▪ Post traumatic epilepsy
  ▪ Experience seizures which results in a loss of control over body functions
  ▪ Prevoked seizures- caused by extrinsic factors such as alcohol, drugs or withdrawals
  ▪ Unprovoked seizure- a symptom of an underlying neurological condition

TBI - ASSOCIATED DISABILITIES

• Major Depression
• Anxiety Disorder
• Substance Abuse
• Other associated conditions (usually for more severe TBI)
  ▪ Pneumonia
  ▪ Septicemia
  ▪ Digestive conditions

MYTHS RELATED TO HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH TBI

• Persons with TBI don’t want to work
• Persons with TBI are not able to return to work
• TBI is immediate and recognizable
• Hiring an individual with a TBI will be expensive
• Organizations have to hire individuals with TBI regardless of experience in order to prevent issues of discrimination

MYTHS RELATED TO HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH TBI

• Individuals with TBI won’t be able to work long
• Individuals with TBI don’t have an earning capacity
• Earning capacity is an individuals ability or power to earn money

PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Assessment
- Counseling/guidance
- Job Placement
- Job Search
- Diagnosis and treatment

PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Level of Severity
- Level of functioning/Improvement
- Receiving vocational rehabilitation services early on
- Knowing what services are available
- Knowing what to say to employers
PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT
Knowing what accommodations are necessary

- Shorten hours
- Modified equipment
- Modification of duties
- Job restructuring
- Rest breaks
- Reassignment to different person
- Modification of workplace
- Training materials
- Provision of readers
PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

Employer accommodation and discrimination can powerfully affect successful job acquisition and maintenance. Research shows that employers who exhibit tolerance of difficulties and disruption provided a supportive work environment and assisted in the outcome of successful employment.

PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

- Interest in Job
- On the job training
- Counseling and guidance
- Supportive work environment
PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT

• Age
• Personality
• Family Functioning
• Injury Characteristics

RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

- State/federal Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- American with Disabilities Act Technical Assistance Program
- Job Accommodations Networks 800-562-7234
- Brain Injury Association of America http://www.biausa.org/
- The Center on Outcome Measurement in Brain Injury http://www.tbims.org/combi/
Comments & Questions
Thank You
Contact Information

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Education Credits

CRCC Credit - (1.5)
Approved by Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)

- **By May 24, 2012, participants must score 80% or better on a online Post Test and submit an online CRCC Request Form via the MyTACE Portal.**

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