

VISIBLE INJURIES

When Your Head is Hurt



1855 E. Dublin Granville Road, Suite 301
Columbus, OH 43229
800-934-9840 • www.odvn.org • www.odvncares.com



This booklet was produced by the Ohio Domestic Violence Network under grant 2016-VX-GX-K012, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this booklet are those of contributors and do not necessarily represent the official policies of the U.S Department of Justice.

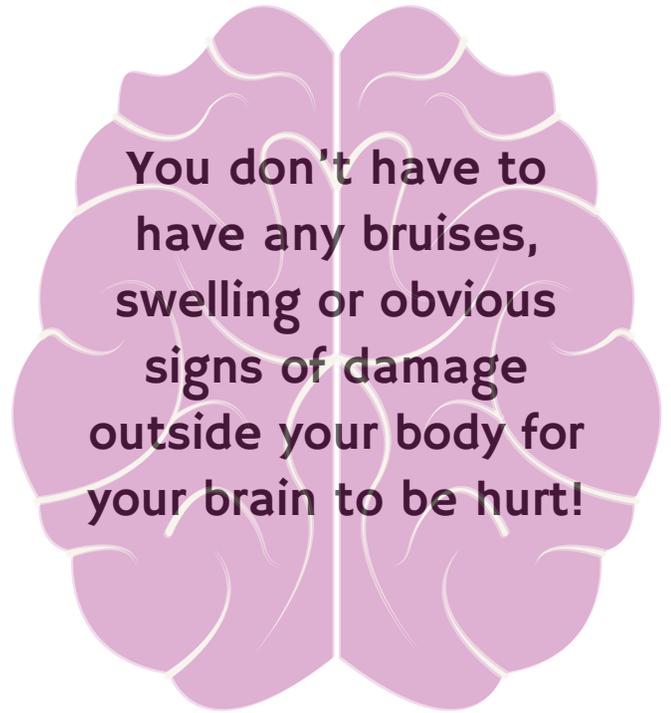
WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER A HEAD INJURY



What is a head injury?



A head injury is when there is a change to how your brain normally works due to a bump, blow, or jolt to your head. Or when your brain does not get the oxygen or blood it needs, like when someone chokes you or does something that messes with your breathing. Sometimes the change is temporary and sometimes it lasts longer.



Just like broken arms, brains need time to heal. It might feel like your brain isn't working right or that it's hard doing things you used to. This happens to all brains that have been hurt.



Sometimes the problems get better or go away. Even if they don't, you can do things that can help.

WHAT CAUSES A HEAD INJURY



How might I get a head injury?

An abuser most often targets a person's head, neck or face, more than anywhere else on the body.

YOU MIGHT GET A HEAD INJURY IF YOUR PARTNER:

- Hits you in the face or the head
- Puts their hands around your neck or tries to choke or strangle you
- Makes you fall and you hit your head
- Shakes you severely
- Has done something that made you pass out, lose consciousness, or have trouble breathing. Did your partner sit on your chest, suffocate you, or put their hand over your mouth so you can't breathe or put you in a choke hold?

You can also get a head injury from things that have nothing to do with domestic violence. Maybe you hurt your head when you were a kid. You could fall and trip, be in a car accident, or in another type of accident or situation where your head was hurt and your brain doesn't work normally.



An abuser most often targets a person's head, neck or face, more than anywhere else on the body.

RIGHT AFTER YOUR HEAD HAS BEEN HURT



After a head injury, what can I expect?

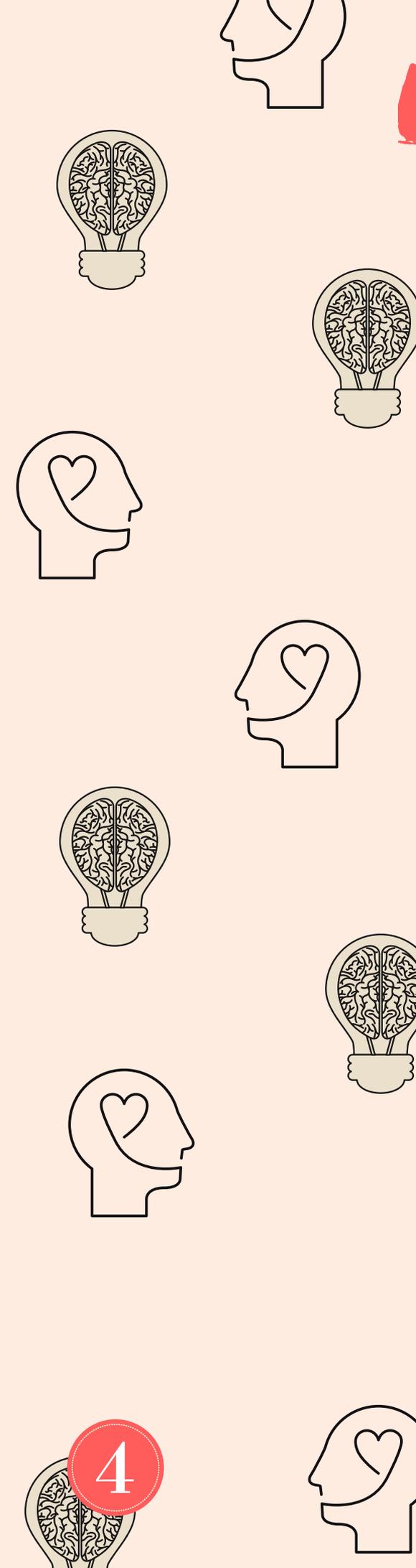
After a head injury it is common to:

- Ask yourself, “Where am I? What just happened?” or not be able to remember recent events.
- Black out (also called losing consciousness). You often don’t remember it happening. It might have happened if you come-to in a different place or a different position than you last remember being in.
- Feel like you are “losing it”, feel dazed and confused, or as if your head is in a fog.
- Have changes in your vision, see stars or have ringing in your ears.
- Feel dizzy or have problems with balance.
- Have headaches, pain in your face or neck, or bruising or swelling.

Do I need to go to the doctor?

These symptoms generally get better with time, but not always.

- It’s always a good idea to see a doctor and tell them you have been hurt in the head or strangled or choked, especially if ANYTHING worries you or someone else.
- Stay with someone safe for 24-72 hours to watch for the warning signs on the next page. If any of these happen, get medical care immediately.



WARNING SIGNS

- A headache that does not go away or gets worse
- One pupil (eye) is larger than the other
- You can't remember what happened
- Extreme drowsiness or difficulty waking up
- Slurred speech, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Shaking or twitching
- Unusual behavior, confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- You peed or pooped unintentionally
- Loss of consciousness, passed out or knocked out

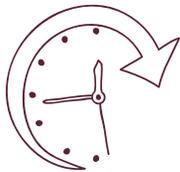
IF YOU HAVE BEEN CHOKED OR STRANGLING:

- It becomes more difficult or painful to breathe
- You have trouble swallowing
- Your voice changes
- You have problems speaking

STRANGULATION IS A HEAD INJURY & HURTS YOUR BRAIN.

Strangulation is dangerous and deadly.

- Even if you have no marks--most people don't.
- Even if you didn't pass out.
- Even if you don't feel like it's a big deal, it is.



YOU CAN BE UNCONSCIOUS IN SECONDS AND CAN DIE WITHIN MINUTES--OR IT CAN KILL YOU DAYS AFTER IT HAPPENED.



Even with no marks.

You can't see the most dangerous injuries because they happen under the skin. They can get worse over a few days and can cause permanent brain damage and even death.

It usually stays with you after its over

Many victims have been choked many times and thought they were going to die when it happened. It often causes normal emotional and physical trauma reactions, which sometimes go away but sometimes last for a long time.



IT HAPPENS A LOT TO VICTIMS & CAN BE TERRIFYING AND PAINFUL.

7 X

IF YOU HAVE BEEN STRANGLED, YOUR PARTNER IS 7 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO KILL YOU.

Most people who have been strangled and are murdered are killed by guns.

If you've been choked by your partner and they can get a gun, this is even more dangerous and could be lethal. Reach out to your domestic violence program and talk with an advocate about safety planning.

IMPORTANT SAFETY PLANNING

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

IN IMMEDIATE DANGER: *call 9-1-1*

CRISIS HOTLINE #:

SHELTER PHONE #:

MY DOCTOR #:

**where I feel safest
when I'm at home:**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**where I feel safest
outside my home:**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**some things I can do to
protect my head:**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**what I can do to
keep my kids safe:**

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Notes:



LOG OF SYMPTOMS

Filling this out will help you see if your injury is getting better or not. It will track some of your symptoms if you are involved in any legal issues. If symptoms aren't getting better within 2 or 3 weeks, go see a doctor and consider sharing this log with your doctor and telling them that you have been hurt in your head.

Date/time	Symptom	How often in 24 hrs?	Severity (1-10)	Notes



NOTE: If your head gets hurt again before your brain has healed, it can mean that problems might be more severe, last longer, or become permanent.

COMMON PROBLEMS AFTER A HEAD INJURY

what you can
do to help!



PROBLEM:

Nightmares or flashbacks; feeling jumpy, anxious or withdrawn; tense muscles or a racing heart.

These are responses to really scary things (called trauma responses) and most domestic violence survivors experience them. They are NORMAL reactions and usually resolve themselves over time as you begin to feel safe again.

ways to help:

- ✓ Focus on your breath. Breathe in and out slowly to help your body calm down.
- ✓ Distract yourself by doing something you enjoy, like listening to music, going for a walk or doing an art project.
- ✓ Talk to others for support, like a trusted friend or family member, a domestic violence advocate, or a therapist or other professional.
- ✓ Learn more about common reactions to trauma.



PROBLEM:

You have trouble remembering things.

ways to help:

- ✓ Use a memory/organizational book or an app on your phone to keep important information including to do lists, calendars and phone directories. Look for the monthly and daily planner later on in this booklet.
- ✓ Set a central location where you always put important things, such as keys, glasses, or your wallet.
- ✓ Come up with strategies like developing associations (always take medication with breakfast), following a routine, and changing your environment so that you rely less on your memory.

& what you
can do to
help!

COMMON PROBLEMS AFTER A HEAD INJURY



PROBLEM:

Noise, light, or sound bothers you or your vision is off.

ways to help:

- ✓ Use earplugs, headphones, sunglasses, or adjust lighting if necessary.
- ✓ If vision problems don't get better, consider going to an eye doctor to get an exam and see if you need new glasses.
- ✓ Make text bigger on your computer or your phone so you can see better.



PROBLEM:

You have a hard time understanding information.

Often information doesn't seem to make sense and it feels like everything is slow. Your brain has to work harder to understand the same information because it is injured.

ways to help:

- ✓ Ask people to talk more slowly.
- ✓ Re-read or review information multiple times.
- ✓ Have shorter meetings, activities or conversations with people.

COMMON PROBLEMS AFTER A HEAD INJURY

& what you
can do to
help!



PROBLEM:

Difficulty planning, organizing, or problem solving.
It's hard to start new things or finish things.

ways to help:

- ✓ When problem solving, write down several ideas for solving the problem, and talk them over with someone you trust.
- ✓ Work on breaking down large tasks into smaller steps.
- ✓ Use a timer or an alarm to help yourself get started and work on something for a set period of time.
- ✓ Take a break when you get frustrated and go do something else. Come back to it later.



PROBLEM:

It's hard to concentrate or pay attention.

ways to help:

- ✓ Do only one thing at a time.
- ✓ Take frequent breaks when trying to do something.
- ✓ Work where it is quiet and you don't have too many distractions.

tips for anyone with a head injury

GET GOOD SLEEP

Try to get good sleep and re-establish sleep patterns. Identify what helps you sleep (a dark room or sleeping with a fan).

MOVE YOUR BODY

Get exercise daily. Exercise improves your ability to think.

LESS SCREEN TIME

Avoid screens (television, tablets, phones) for a few days after the injury.

TAKE IT EASY

Try to not do things that are really demanding for a while. You are more vulnerable to pain, stress and fatigue after a head injury.

PLAN AHEAD

Plan ahead and schedule additional time to do things so you feel less frustrated.

TAKE BREAKS

Take frequent breaks and rest throughout the day.

MORNING BRAIN POWER

If you are going to do something stressful or hard, do it in the morning, when your brain is more rested.

START SLOW

Ease back into activities, jobs, or life obligations. Begin doing things for a short period of time. Gradually do things for a longer time so your brain and your body can adjust.

STAY SAFE

Problems last longer when your brain is hurt again and again without time for it to heal. Try to protect your head whenever possible.

My Daily Planner

DATE

DAY

TO DO:

-
-
-
-
-

DON'T FORGET:

-
-
-
-
-

IMPORTANT:

SELF-CARE GOALS

go to bed early, take walk, less screen-time, do art



KarisseJoy.com

My domestic violence program's:

Name:

phone #:



**TO FIND YOUR NEAREST PROGRAM
VISIT WWW.ODVN.ORG**