



MINNESOTA

# Brain Injury Alliance

*Engaging Communities. Improving Lives.*

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## HELPS

### A BRIEF SCREENING DEVICE FOR TBI

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- H** = Did you ever **Hit** your head? Were you ever **Hit** on the head?
- E** = Were you ever seen in the **Emergency room**, by a doctor or hospital? For what reason?
- L** = Did you ever **Lose consciousness**? For how long? For what reason?
- P** = Did you have any **Problems** after you were hit on the head?
- headaches
  - dizziness
  - anxiety
  - depression
  - difficulty concentrating
  - difficulty remembering
  - difficulty reading, writing, calculating
  - difficulty performing your job/school work
  - poor judgment (being fired from a job, arrests, fights)
  - poor problem solving
  - change in relationships with others
- S** = Any other **Significant** sickness?
- look for hospitalizations for brain tumor, meningitis, stroke, heart attack, diabetes
  - also screen for domestic violence and child abuse



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## Directions

**H-E-L-P-S** is a brief screening device for Brain Injury. This tool is designed to be used by professionals whose primary field of practice is other than brain injury. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 1.7 million traumatic brain injuries occur in the United States each year.

Read the questions in order. Score 1 point for every question answered 'YES.' A score of two or more, particularly if the injury affects function (**P**), should be considered as a sign of possible injury and needs to be further explored with a more extensive interview and medical work-up.

- H** Injuries can be caused by motor vehicle accidents, falls, sports, assaults, violent shaking or whiplash. Brain injury may also occur due to oxygen deprivation to the brain from drug reactions, near drowning, etc.
- E** Many people are seen for treatment. In addition, however, there are those who are taken home by family or friends following a brief period of observation, cannot afford treatment, or who do not think they require medical attention.
- L** While significant in helping to determine the extent of the injury, many people with minor brain injury may not lose consciousness, yet still have difficulties as a result of their injury.
- P** Other problems include: visual, auditory, sensory impairments; paralysis, weakness of any extremity, balance problems, fatigue; apathy, silliness, impulsively, mood swings, irritability, decreased self-awareness; decreased ability to learn new information or retrieve old information, shift from one topic to another, abstract thinking, set goals or plan tasks, monitor own behavior.
- S** Screen for domestic violence if you have not already done so, in addition to looking for a history of other illnesses.

If you feel that a person needs to have further evaluation and testing done to determine the effects of brain injury or if you need information about brain injury and programs that serve people with brain injury, please contact the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance at 1-800-669-6442 or 612-378-2742.