

UNDERSTANDING BRAIN INJURY IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

What is a brain injury?

A brain injury is a **disruption in the normal functioning** of the brain that can affect the ability to think & solve problems or control behavior, emotions, & reactions



Brain injuries can be caused by **lack of oxygen** to the brain as a result of strangulation and overdose; by **medical conditions**, such as strokes, infections, or brain tumors; or by a blow to the head

Research indicates 32% to 72% of justice-involved youth have a history of brain injury.

Prison Policy Initiative. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/AZ.html>

Signs & Symptoms

Fidgeting & squirming in seat; interrupting conversations; responding slowly to questions; talking excessively or off-topic; not following directions

Difficulty interpreting non-verbal cues; making inappropriate eye contact; violating personal space; poor self-awareness

Difficulty remembering more than one thing at a time; difficulty remembering details; difficulty following directions in sequential order; disorganization

Behaving impulsively or aggressively; reacting emotionally or becoming angry easily; defiance or disobedience

Resource

For more information about brain injury training, resources, and screening tools contact Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska at **844-423-2463**



Brain Injury Alliance
NEBRASKA

Accommodations

Awareness & Understanding: Provide concrete feedback; avoid the use of humor & sarcasm

Organization: Offer assistance with completing forms; utilize checklists; break complex instructions into steps




Attention: Use verbal cues (e.g., "look" and "listen") and be sure you have eye contact before speaking; reduce distractions & talk in a quiet environment if possible (e.g., single holding cell, patrol car, office or conference room, etc.)

Memory: Provide directions or communicate one point at a time; repeat information if needed; provide information in written form where possible




WHY SCREEN FOR TBI?

To improve **safety, mental health, and physical health implications.**

If an adolescent's TBI goes **unsupported...**

-  **decreased safety** of other juveniles and jail staff
-  **increased risk** for recidivism and incarceration in adulthood
-  **increased risk** for mental health and behavioral issues

If an adolescent's TBI is **identified & treatment is modified...**

-  **increased safety** of other juveniles and jail staff
-  **reduce conflict** and build positive relationships
-  **enhanced academic performance** and involvement

MINDSOURCE Brain Injury Network & University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology. Cognitive Strategies for Criminal Justice Professionals. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Rz92ae6n5vdp7yGsgn_8CaWesugx



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE HEAD INJURY ADMINISTRATORS

Crisis Prevention Institute. (2018). CPI's Top Ten De-Escalation Tips. Retrieved from <https://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/CPI-s-Top-10-De-Escalation-Tips-Revisited>