

Part 1: Invisible Injuries: The Complex Interaction of Behavioral Health, Domestic Violence, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Strangulation

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Great Lakes Mental Health Technology
Transfer Center

March 1, 2023



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At the time of this presentation, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D., served as Acting Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use at SAMHSA. The opinions expressed herein are the views of the speakers, and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), or SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this presentation is intended or should be inferred.

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Language Matters

The MHTTC Network uses a **arming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:**

STRENGTHS-BASED AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING OF DIVERSE CULTURES, GENDERS, PERSPECTIVES, AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN THEIR OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH OUR ACTIONS, POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

Adapted from: https://mhcc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Recovery-Oriented-Language-Guide_2019ed_v1_20190809-Web.pdf



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Connect
with
us!



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Presenter

Rachel Ramirez, LISW-S



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Invisible Injuries: The Complex Interaction of Behavioral Health, Domestic Violence, Traumatic Brain Injury and Strangulation

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Ohio Domestic Violence Network

March 1 & March 15, 2023



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What do you think?

If I could have
a superpower,
it would be...



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What made you want to come to this training?



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This is terrible violence to experience, and hard stuff to dig into.

#FACT



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Ohio
Domestic
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ODVN

Who am I?

- Director of Health And Disability Programs
- 18 years in DV work
- Trauma-informed capacity building
- Now a passionate advocate for survivors of domestic violence impacted by brain injury



RACHEL RAMIREZ



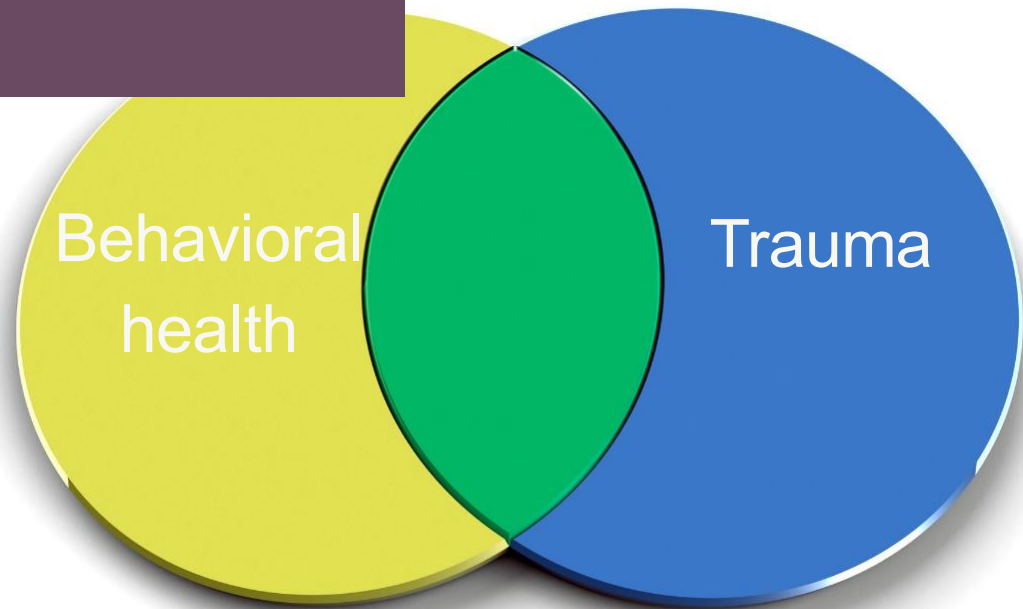
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INTERSECTIONS



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Outline of Today

What we learned in Ohio

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp7uBCJ6Sko&t=85s>



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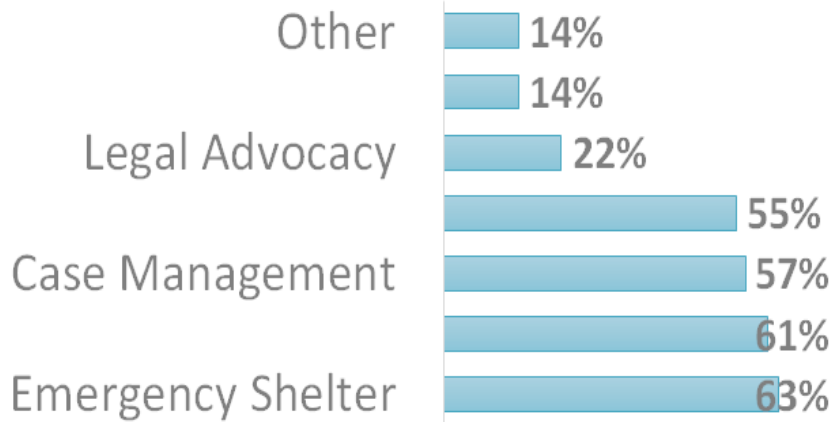
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Survivor Interviews

70% Medicaid
Variety of DV services



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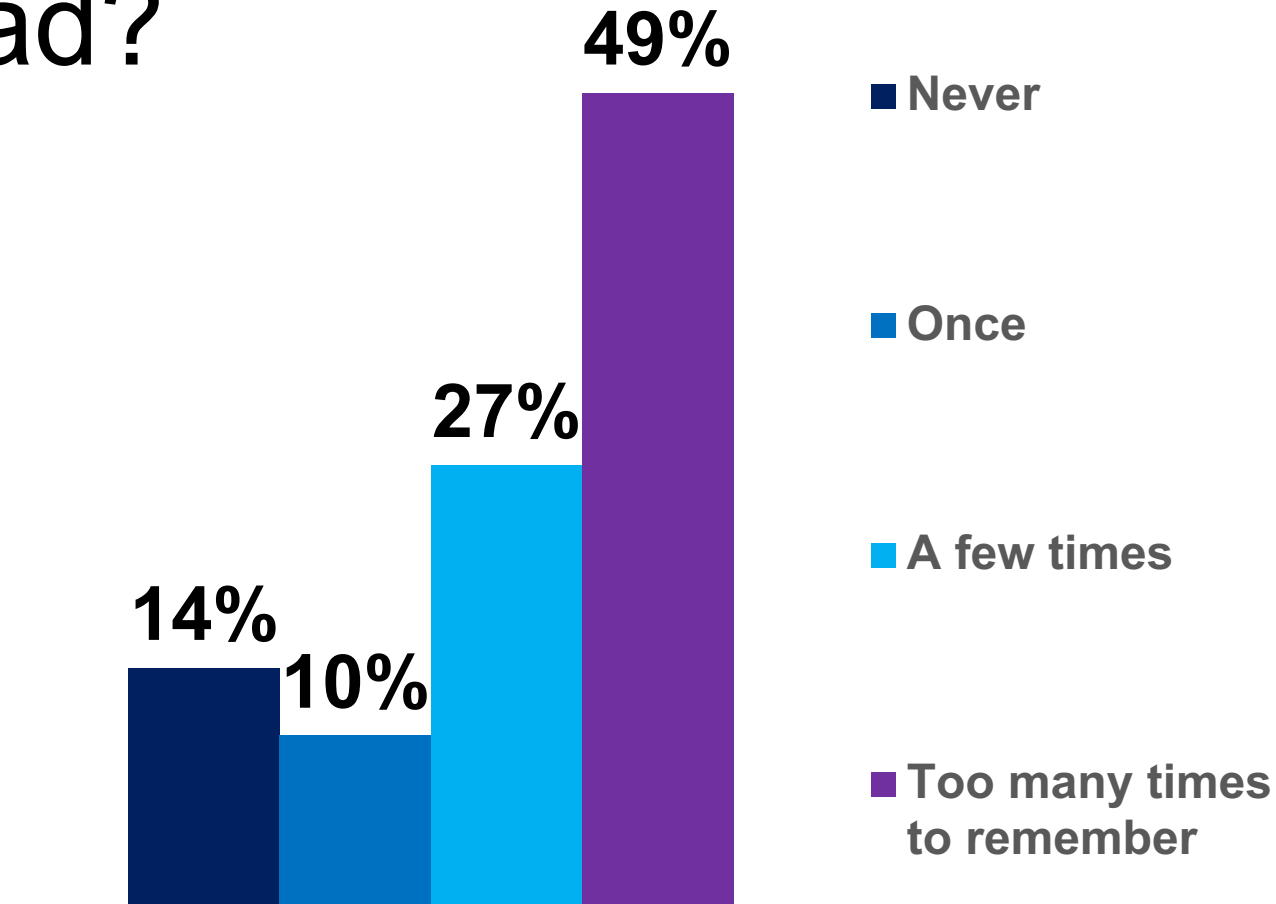
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Have you ever been hit or hurt in the head?

YES
86%



Nemeth JM, Mengo C, Kulow E, Brown A, Ramirez R. Provider Perceptions and Domestic Violence (DV) Survivor Experiences of Traumatic and Anoxic-Hypoxic Brain Injury: Implications for DV Advocacy Service Provision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*. 2019;28(6):744-763. doi: [10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562](https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562)



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How many times?

TOO MANY TO COUNT

49%

Nemeth JM, Mengo C, Kulow E, Brown A, Ramirez R. Provider Perceptions and Domestic Violence (DV) Survivor Experiences of Traumatic and Anoxic-Hypoxic Brain Injury: Implications for DV Advocacy Service Provision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*. 2019;28(6):744-763. doi: [10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562](https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562)



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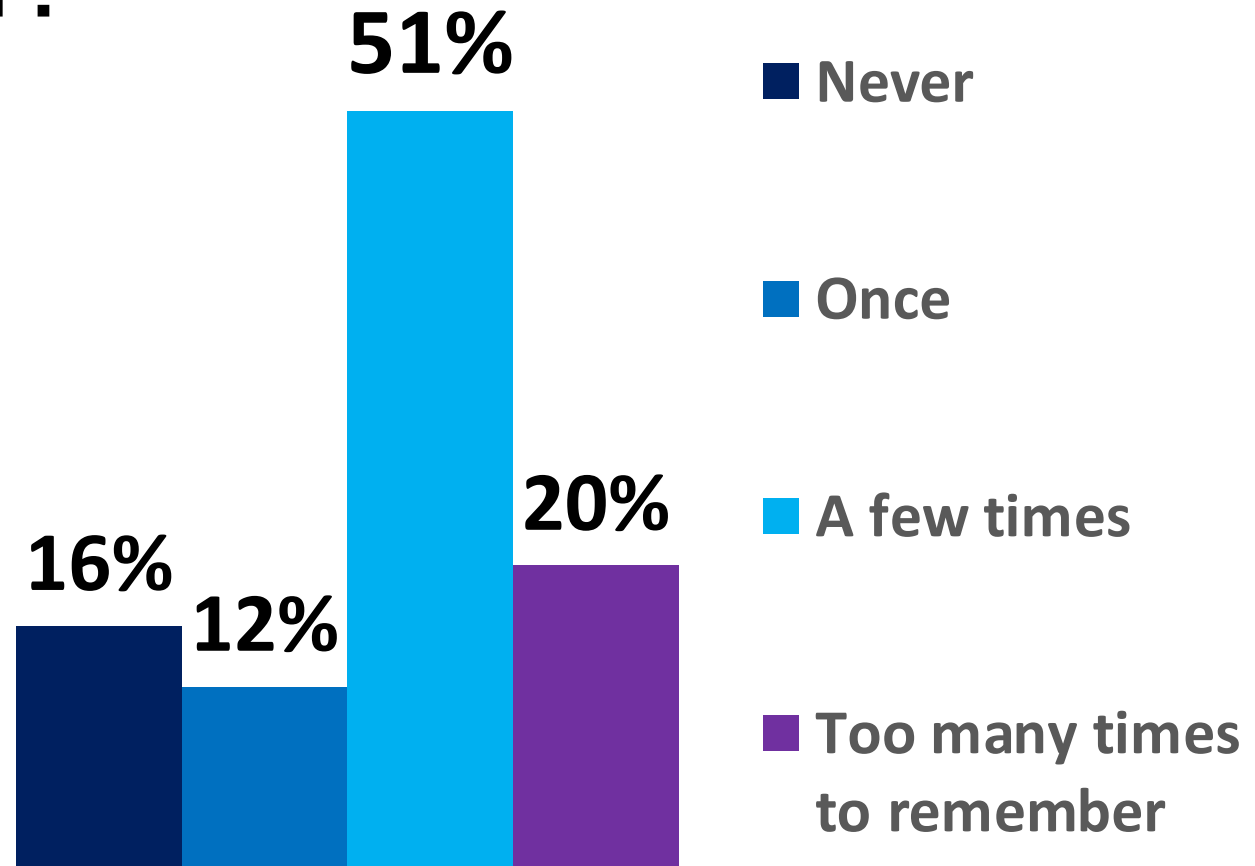
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Have you ever been choked or strangled?

YES
83%



Nemeth JM, Mengo C, Kulow E, Brown A, Ramirez R. Provider Perceptions and Domestic Violence (DV) Survivor Experiences of Traumatic and Anoxic-Hypoxic Brain Injury: Implications for DV Advocacy Service Provision. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*. 2019;28(6):744-763. doi: [10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562](https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2019.1591562)



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DEFINITION

Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury

When person's brain is hurt through intentional **strangulation** and/or **blows to the head** by their partner. This can cause a **traumatic brain injury, concussion, or other type of brain injury.**

Edwards C. Partner Inflicted Brain Injury as a Consequence of Intimate Partner Violence. http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/30591/1/EdwardsCM_ETD_12_2016pdf.pdf



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Brain Injury Caused by Domestic Violence

Multiple traumatic events within an ongoing traumatic environment



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NEUROLOGICAL FRAMEWORK



PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK



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How does domestic violence show up in your work?



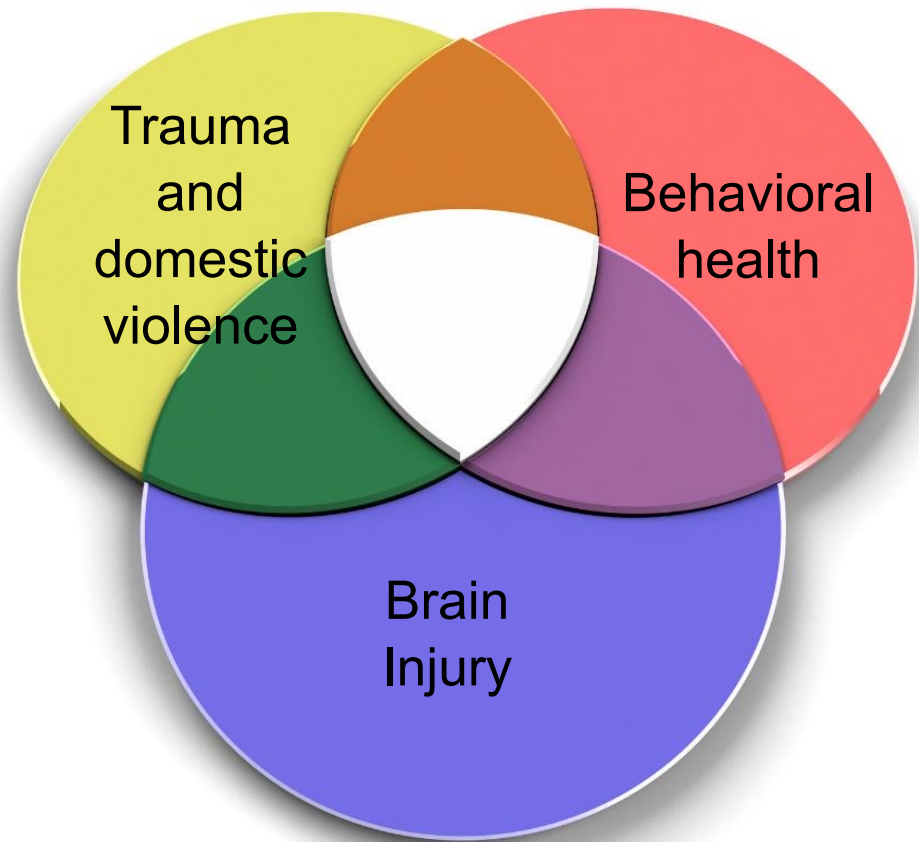
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Intersections



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There's More

Cultural forces
and pressures

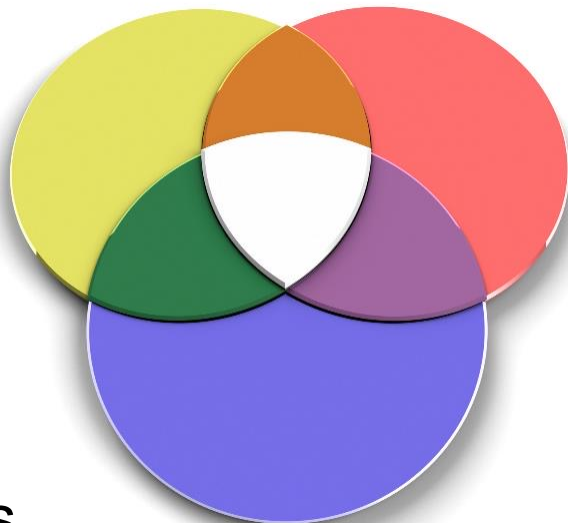
Historical and
cultural
trauma

Social
determinants
of health

Stigma

Unequal access
to resources

Systemic prejudice,
discrimination and
oppression



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Our life consists of things we...



Want or like to do....



Need to do....



And are expected to do.



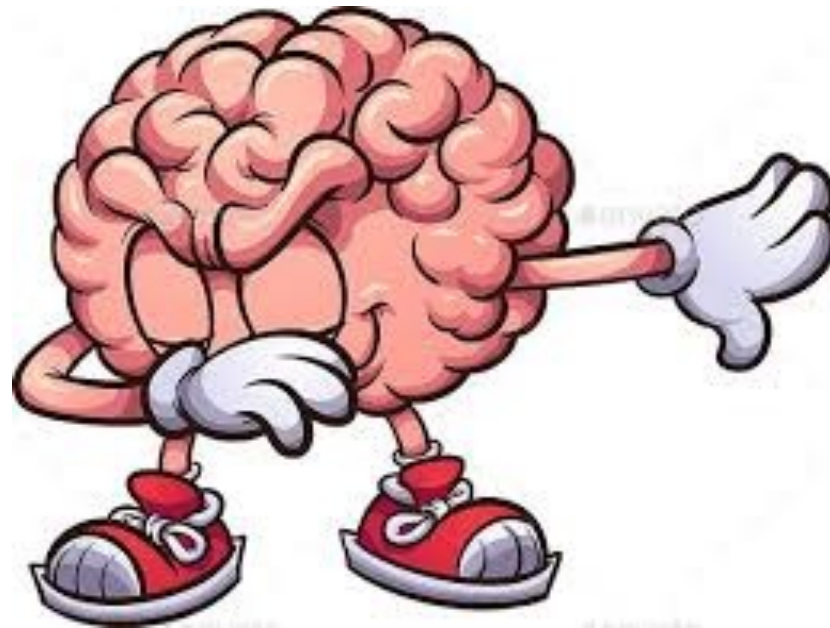
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And our amazing brain makes all this possible!



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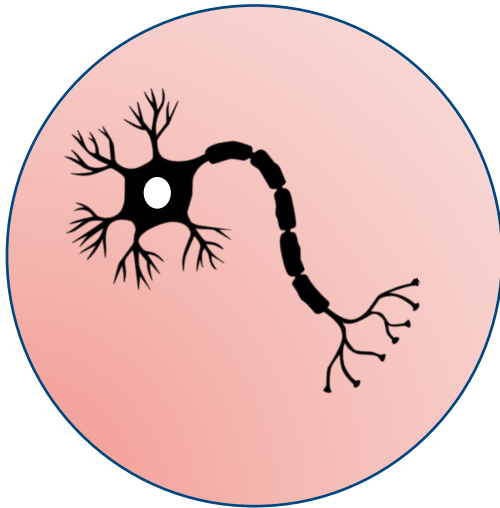
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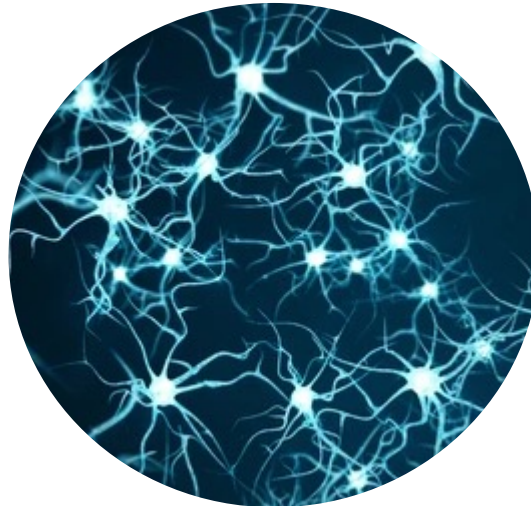
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Basic Brain Organization



Brain Cells =
Neurons



Neurons
connect...



And form efficient
pathways



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A healthy brain is like a city with zero traffic jams



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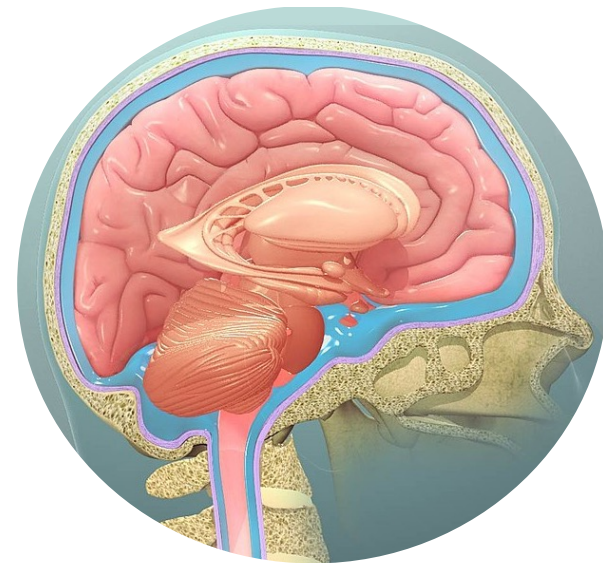
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The brain needs nutrients & protection



Blood vessels bring oxygen & nutrients



Protected by the skull, tissues, and fluid



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Brain functions

Frontal

Reasoning
Judgment
Learning and recalling info
Social understanding
Personality
Executive function*



Temporal

Language, hearing and comprehension
Memory (long term)
Learning
Emotion
Amygdala



Parietal

Integrate info from senses (cognition) Coordinates movement

Occipital

Sight



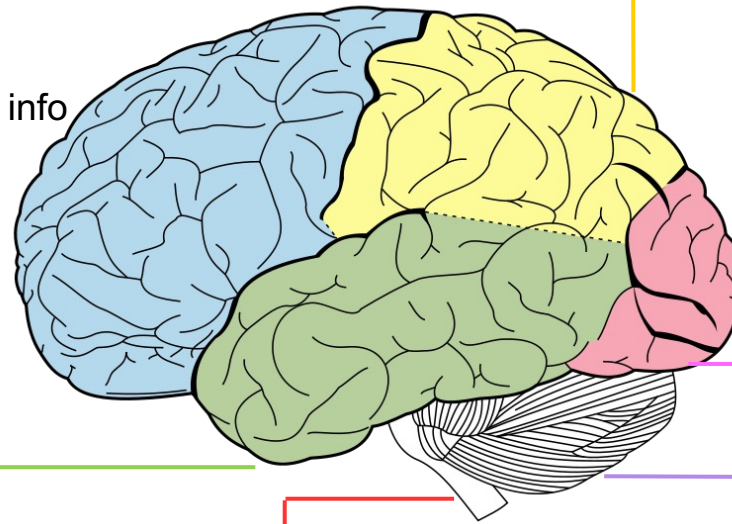
Cerebellum

Coordination
Balance



Brain Stem

Heart rate
Swallowing
Breathing



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Executive Functioning

- Mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self control
- Essential for everyday tasks

Problem solving

Time management

Starting tasks

Organizing

Planning

Managing emotions

Self-awareness

Prioritizing



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What is most important to access your services and why?



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Frontal lobe

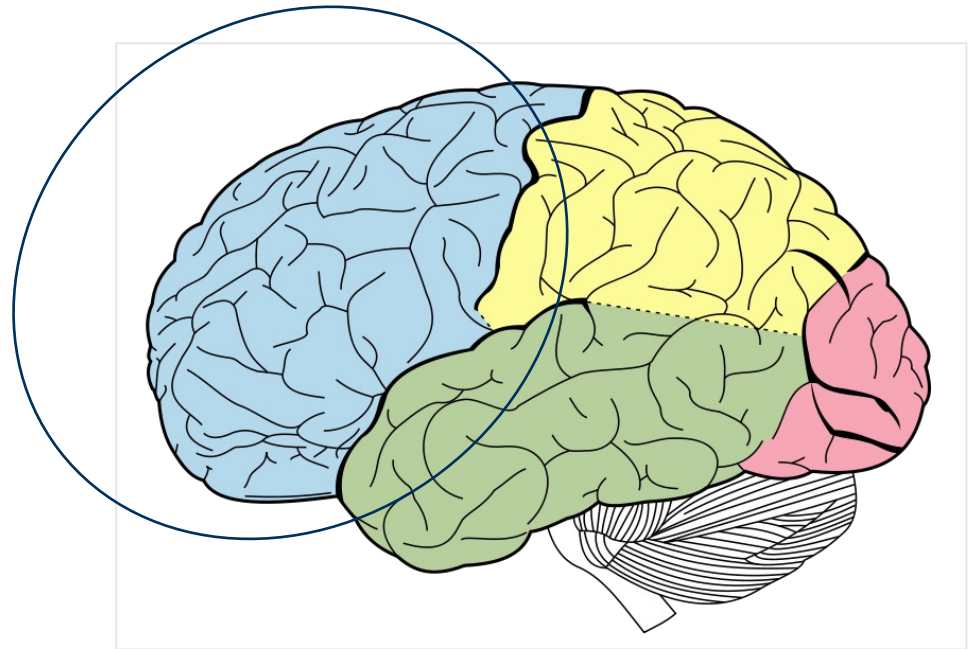
What makes us uniquely human

Transfers information into memory

Helps us “put on the brakes” on impulses

Helps us do/not do something now because its better for us in the long run

Brain functions



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Building Blocks of Brain Development ©



The Hierarchy of Neurocognitive Functioning © - created by Peter Thompson, Ph.D. 2013, adapted from the works of Miller 2007 Reitan and Wolfson 2004; Hale and Fiorello 2004
 The Building Blocks of Brain Development © – further adapted by the CO Brain Injury Steering Committee, 2016



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When the brain is healthy



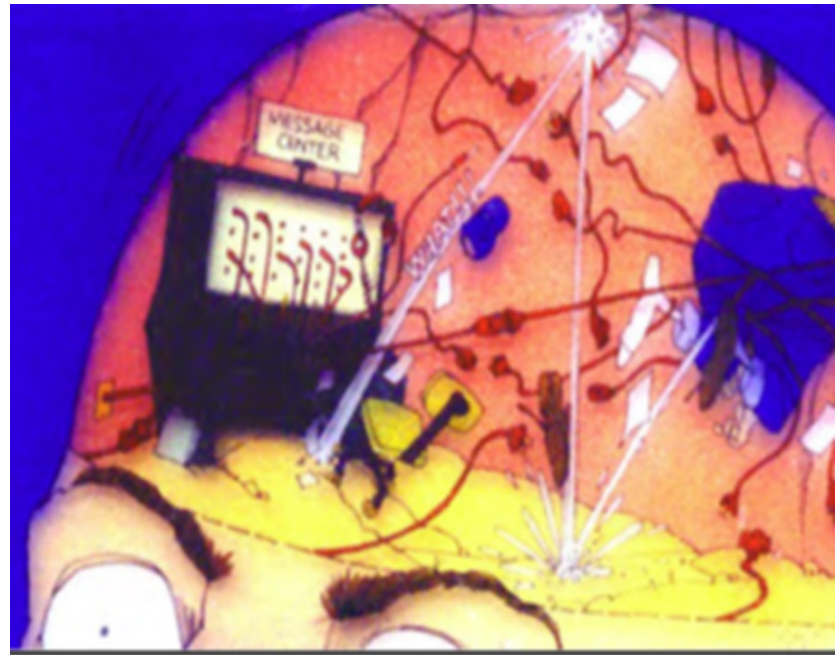
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When the brain gets hurt



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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How often do you work with survivors who have been hurt in the head, neck or face?



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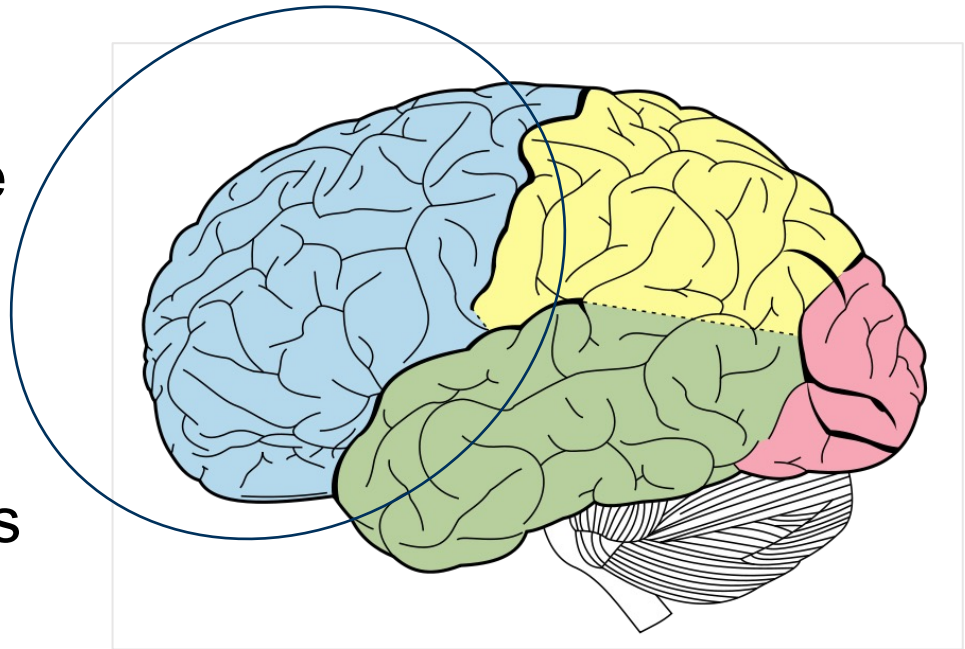
Frontal lobe

Most likely part of our brain to be impacted in brain injury

Bony ridges behind forehead cause frontal lobe damage

Brain injuries caused by lack of oxygen disproportionately impact this area of the brain and its connections to other areas

Brain functions



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Executive Functioning

- Mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self control
- Essential for everyday tasks

Problem solving

Time management

Starting tasks

Organizing

Planning

Managing emotions

Controlling impulses and
delaying gratification

Self-awareness

Prioritizing

**All this
becomes
More
difficult**



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Rachel Ramirez, LISW-S
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