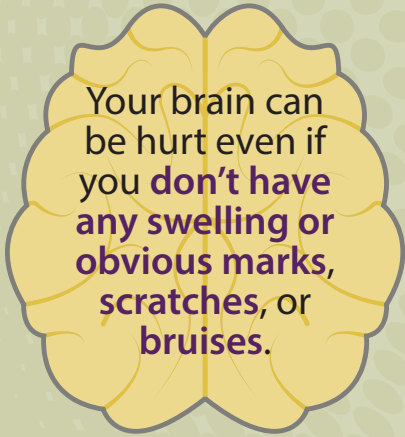


# INVISIBLE INJURIES<sup>®</sup> When Your Head is Hurt While Experiencing Domestic Violence



Your brain can be hurt even if you **don't have any swelling or obvious marks, scratches, or bruises.**

Your brain plays a role in everything your body does. So when it gets hurt, it can change everything.

## **Your brain could have been hurt if your partner ever...**

- ◆ Choked or strangled you, or did something that made it hard to breathe
- ◆ Hit, hurt, punched, or kicked you in the head, neck, or face
- ◆ Made you fall and you banged your head, or shook you really hard

If you ever hit your head—like in car wreck, accident, tripping, falling—that could have hurt your brain, too.

All of these things can cause a head injury, which happens when there is a change in how your brain normally works. Your brain can be affected for a few minutes, hours, or days... but sometimes it's weeks, months, years, or forever.

You could have problems **right away** or you might feel okay now, but **have problems later.**

## **You Are NOT ALONE**

**Strangulation causes a head injury and hurts your brain!  
Strangulation is dangerous and deadly...**

...even if you have no marks—most people don't.

...even if you don't pass out.

...even if you don't feel like it's a big deal—it is.



You can become unconscious in seconds, and die within minutes.

### **It's not over when it's over.**

People often thought they were going to die. It's a traumatic experience that affects our body, thoughts, and feelings.

### **It can impact your life for a long time.**

These injuries can make it more difficult for your brain to do many things it needs to for you to live your daily life, get and keep a job, and be healthy.

If you have been strangled, your partner is over 7 times more likely to kill you.

**7x**

## What might I notice that could be a sign my brain was hurt?

- ◆ I felt funny or something seemed different or off
- ◆ I don't remember what happened
- ◆ I felt dazed and confused, like my head was in a fog, or worried like I was losing it
- ◆ I couldn't see right or saw stars and spots
- ◆ I felt dizzy or clumsy or had problems with balance
- ◆ I had headaches, pain in my face and neck, bruising, or swelling
- ◆ I felt agitated or restless and couldn't calm down
- ◆ I had problems with sleeping—too much, too little, or bad sleep

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

## What should I do if I was recently hurt in the head?

- ◆ **Stay with someone safe for at least 3 days** to watch for signs that you need medical care.
- ◆ **See a doctor if you can**, especially if you or someone else is worried about something.

## Get Medical Care if You Have:

- ◆ A headache that does not go away or gets worse
- ◆ One pupil (black spot in the middle of the eye) is larger than the other
- ◆ Trouble remembering what happened
- ◆ Extreme drowsiness or difficulty waking up
- ◆ Slurred speech, numbness, or decreased coordination
- ◆ Repeated vomiting or nausea
- ◆ Been shaking or twitching
- ◆ Unusual behavior, confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- ◆ Peed or pooped yourself unintentionally
- ◆ Lost consciousness, passed out, or were knocked out

If it's **hard** or **painful** to **breathe**, **swallow**, or **talk**.

## Common Troubles after a Head Injury

These are **not** signs you are stupid or crazy

### Physical

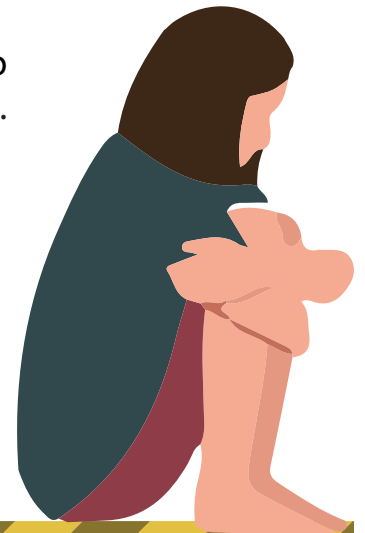
Headaches  
Sleeping Problems  
Sensitivity to light or noise  
Dizziness  
Balance Problems  
Fatigue  
Seizures

### Emotions

Worries and fears  
Panic attacks  
Flashbacks  
Sadness  
Depression  
Hopelessness  
Anger or rage  
Irritable

### Thinking

Remembering things  
Understanding things  
Paying attention or focus  
Following directions  
Getting things started  
Figuring out what to do next  
Organizing things  
Controlling your emotions or reactions



# What are some strategies for dealing with common problems after a head injury?



**Problem:** Nightmares and flashbacks, feeling jumpy, anxious or withdrawn, racing heart. These are signs you have survived something traumatic.

- ◆ Focusing on your breath and breathing deeply
- ◆ Distract yourself
- ◆ Talk to others for support
- ◆ Learn more about trauma



**Problem:** Memory.

- ◆ Write down events in a calendar
- ◆ Record things in an app on your phone
- ◆ Always put items (phone, keys, wallet) in the same place
- ◆ Set up alerts or reminders in your phone
- ◆ Request additional reminders for meetings or appointments



**Problem:** Light or noise bothers you, or you have problems seeing right.

- ◆ Use earplugs, headphones, adjust lighting, wear sunglasses
- ◆ Get eyes checked
- ◆ Increase text size on devices



**Problem:** Communicating and understanding—when talking, reading, or writing.

- ◆ Ask people to talk slowly or explain information
- ◆ Re-read/review information a few times
- ◆ Ask for help when you need it



**Problem:** Planning, organizing or problem solving, making decisions, or getting things started.

- ◆ Break things down (or ask for help in breaking things down) into smaller steps
- ◆ Write down different ideas to solve problems and discuss them with someone you trust
- ◆ Use a timer to help you get started and work for a set period of time
- ◆ Take a break when you get frustrated and come back later

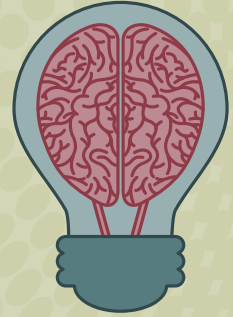


**Problem:** Concentrating and paying attention.

- ◆ Do one thing at a time
- ◆ Do things for a shorter period of time
- ◆ Have shorter meetings, activities and conversations
- ◆ Work where it's quiet and distraction-free

# Can brain injuries heal?

You are amazing, and so is your brain. Your brain can heal, and brain injuries can get better, especially when they get identified early. There are many different ways professionals treat brain injuries, but who will help you depends on how you were affected by your head injury. If your vision is off, you will see someone different than if you are having seizures, or if you are having thinking problems such as paying attention or focusing.



## What helps my brain get better after it was hurt?

Get good sleep	Don't do anything that makes you feel worse	Don't use computer or phone screens for a few days, the light and stimulation can hurt your brain
Take it easy and rest your brain and body	Plan ahead	Expect things to take extra time
Take breaks	Do important things in the morning, because your brain is fresher	Try to avoid your head being hurt again

# You Are **STRONG**



## To talk with someone about domestic violence:

Call the National Hotline at **1-800-799-7233** to find your nearest program.

Your local program:

To learn more about head injuries caused by domestic violence go to [www.odvn.org/brain-injury](http://www.odvn.org/brain-injury)

