

Brain Injury Glossary

Adjustment Disorder – This is caused by stress-related events or situations in your life, such as losing someone you love, a catastrophe or a disaster, starting a new job, or, for a child, starting school. An adjustment disorder can alter your feelings, thoughts and behavior. You may feel distressed and sad, to the point where this interferes with everyday activities. You can even experience physical symptoms such as palpitations, trembling, or twitching.

Amnesia – Loss of memory (partial or total)

Anticonvulsants – Medications that prevent or relieve seizures.

Apathy – a lack of interest or concern

Aphasia – Loss of the ability to express oneself and/or to understand language.

Ataxia – Loss of the ability to coordinate muscle movements or having irregular muscle movement. This may make activities of daily living difficult.

Blast Injury – Blast injuries can occur in everyday life, but they are particularly common in combat situations. They can cause brain injuries.

Brain Injury – Injury to the brain that results in damage and affects the brain's ability to function properly. All brain injuries result from some type of accident or trauma to the brain. Brain injuries are classified as

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) refers to all forms of brain injuries. (This includes TBIs, but it also includes brain injuries caused by stroke or other causes of bleeds in the brain.)

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI); sometimes referred to as Concussion – see definition below).

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) (see definition below)

Brain Stem – The lower portion of the brain where the brain and spine are connected. The brain stem controls coordinates breathing, blood pressure, pulse as well as other vital functions of your body.

Cerebellum – The part of the brain that coordinates movement.

Cognition – Your ability to know, perceive, imagine, reason, judge.

Coma – A period of unconsciousness that lasts more than a brief period of time. The person can not be awakened and/or doesn't respond to you.

Concussion – see Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

Depression – It's more than just a feeling of being "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days. The feelings associated with Depression do not go away. They linger and interfere with your everyday life. Symptoms can include sadness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy, weight loss/gain, change in sleep patterns, loss of energy, feeling worthless, and/or thoughts of death or suicide.

Disorientation – Not knowing where you are, who you are, or the time.

Frontal Lobe – The right and left front areas of the brain, the Frontal Lobe is involved with controlling your emotions, motivation, social skills, and speech. It also helps you control your impulses. Additional functions are controlled by the Frontal Lobe (executive functions) and these include your ability to plan and carry out activities.

Cerebellum – The part of the brain that coordinates movement.

Cognition – Your ability to know, perceive, imagine, reason, judge.

Coma – A period of unconsciousness that lasts more than a brief period of time. The person can not be awakened and/or doesn't respond to you.

Disorientation – Not knowing where you are, who you are, or the time.

Frontal Lobe – The right and left front sections of the brain. These areas help control emotions, motivation, social skills, speech, and impulses. The frontal lobe also helps you to plan and carry out activities.

Frustration – Brain injuries may result in your having problems with frustrating events in daily life. Sometimes you won't be able to control your reaction and may need to yell, become aggressive, or throw something.

Hemorrhage – Bleeding that may occur after trauma to the body.

Memory – Many parts of the brain work together to help us create and retain memory. Memory is the process of perceiving, organizing, and storing information and retrieving it a later time. Memory can be immediate (repeating back a name or number after hearing it for the first time), recent (recalling an event that happened yesterday), and remote (memories from the past, your childhood).

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (syn: Concussion) – A brain injury resulting from a jarring blow to the head. A mild TBI is diagnosed if you pass out for a short period of time, feel dazed, lose your balance, or have a problem with your vision at the time of the injury. Testing or scans of the brain may appear normal. Some symptoms may persist. (See also Post-Concussion Syndrome)

Mood Swings – Some people refer to mood swings as being Labile (*pron: lay-bile*). This means you might be happy one moment and sad the next for no apparent reason.

Motor Control – Controlling the muscles of the body by the nervous system so you have fluid, coordinated movement.

Fine Motor Control – This is involved in tasks such as writing, playing the piano, typing, knitting.

Gross Motor Control – This is involved in tasks such as walking, swinging a bat or golf club.

Occipital Lobe – The back part of your brain, this area is involved in perceiving and understanding visual information (what you see).

Parietal Lobe – These are the upper and middle lobes on both sides of the brain. They help you feel and understand sensations (hot, cold, touch). The Right Parietal Lobe helps you understand what you smell or touch and lets you take action (something is hot, you pull your hand away). The Left Parietal Lobe has important language functions.

Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS) – Concussion is a form of mild Traumatic Brain Injury. Post-Concussion Syndrome is complicated, and it involves a number of symptoms (for example, headache, dizziness) that can last many weeks or months after the initial accident that caused the concussion.

Post-Trauma Amnesia (PTA) – The time between your injury and when you recover your full memory of events.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – This is an anxiety disorder that occurs after a traumatic event or ordeal, such as being in or witnessing a terrifying or horrific event, such as an accident, disaster (World Trade Center, for example), or military combat. PTSD and concussion/mild head injury can occur at the same time

Temporal Lobe – Located on the lower middle part on both sides of the brain, the Temporal Lobe is involved with interpreting what you hear and how you act upon it.

Traumatic Brain Injury – If you have a moderate or severe TBI, you may show the same symptoms as a person with a mild TBI, but you may also have a headache that gets worse or does not go away, repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures, an inability to awaken from sleep, dilation of one or both pupils of the eyes, slurred speech, weakness or numbness in the extremities, loss of coordination, and increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.