

OVERVIEW

1A

There are currently 5.3 million Americans living with disability caused by brain injury. Over 2,000,000 brain injuries occur yearly in the United States. As many as 500,000 people will require hospitalization and 70,000 to 90,000 individuals will suffer life-long physical, cognitive, and psychological disabilities as a result of their injuries. Two-thirds of those who sustain a brain injury are under the age of 34.

Today educators are seeing an increased number of students with brain injury entering and re-entering their school systems. Few school personnel have received training in the education or therapeutic needs of these students. With the 1990 changes in special education regulations that include Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) as a separate category of eligibility, there is a need for a comprehensive understanding of the educational implications of brain injury.

There are two main types of traumatic brain injury: Penetrated Head Injury and Closed Head Injury.

Penetrated Head Injury is the result of accidents, falls, abuse, assaults and surgical procedures that cause a penetrated wound to the brain (Savage & Wolcott, 1988).

Closed Head Injury is caused by a blunt force and can result in diffuse impact and damage. When the force is very severe, damage is caused from internal compression, shearing actions or stretchings. A serious blow may create a 'contracoup' injury by the impact of the brain rebounding to the opposite side. For example, a blow to the back of the head can cause frontal damage as the brain hits the opposite point. The brain moves from front to back or side to side within the skull causing injury beyond the locale of impacted force.

DEFINITION

1B

In 1990, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) was amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). One of the changes made at this time was the designation of TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY as a distinct disability condition for special education eligibility.

Definition:

RHODE ISLAND REGULATIONS ONE II, 1.13

Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual and

motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Definition:

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an insult to the brain, not of a degenerative or congenital nature caused by an external physical force that may produce a diminished or altered state of consciousness, which results in an impairment of cognitive abilities or physical functioning. It can also result in the disturbance of behavioral or emotional functioning.

Acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain which is not hereditary, congenital or degenerative.