

E-REPORT

MGCA

A Division of the American Counseling Association



Volume 5, Issue 3 Summer Edition

MGCA Professional Development Institute
MGCA will hold its **Professional Development Institute** (PDI) in conjunction with the **American Counseling Association's Annual Conference and Exposition**.

San Francisco, 16 March 17

Find out more about the conference [here](#).

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Message from our New President Judy Mathewson

Greetings from Judith Mathewson, Ph.D., President of ACEG. Dr. Michael Keim, Lynna Meadows-Morton, and I attended ACA's Institute for Leadership Training in July and made many positive professional connections with other Divisions. Looking forward to providing good resource materials for you during the year and at the 2017 ACA Conference in San Francisco's Moscone Center, 15-19 March.



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. From 2000 through 2012, more than 266,000 service members sustained a TBI, which has become known as the signature wound of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Questions, comments, or to submit to the newsletter ? Email us at legreen@wtamu.edu

View the MGCA Journal here: <http://acegonline.org/wp-cont.../2013/02/JMGC-Vol-3-Is-2.pdf>

College Success After Traumatic Brain Injury

Posted by Deborah Bailin, DVBIC Public Affairs on August 22, 2016

As a service member or veteran, you have all the advantages of your military training and experience to help you succeed in college. You've learned the importance of discipline, dependability teamwork and how to show respect. You know how to set goals and raise the bar for everyone around you. These skills will serve you well. Read more here.

Nevertheless, entering or returning to school after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) may feel challenging. You may find yourself coping with persistent symptoms such as headaches, sleep disturbances, pain, vision and hearing problems, dizziness, and mood changes. You may also feel overwhelmed or have difficulty staying focused.

Strong support systems at colleges and universities can help you through these challenges. However, it's important to be your own advocate and educate yourself about what resources are available.

"Many resources exist that can help you during your college experience," said Scott Livingston, [Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center](#) (DVBIC) Education Division director. "Following a TBI, be open to using those services and tools, even if you think you will only need them for a short period of time."

Disability Support

Most schools have an office that provides assistance to students with disabilities and other learning challenges. It is often called disability support services (DSS) but may have a different name, such as learning resource center, academic support services or student access center.

Whatever name DSS goes by, your school is required by law to provide reasonable accommodations for physical or psychological conditions that affect your academic performance, even if you only need them for a few weeks or months until you've fully recovered from your TBI.

DSS counselors will assess your unique situation and work with you to create an accommodations plan to address your needs. Accommodations can include extra time to finish tests, different test formats, priority seating in class, authorization to have another student take notes for you, and approval to wear a visor or tinted glasses in class, among other options.

And you don't have to tell your professors about your TBI if you don't want to. Your DSS counselor will tell your professors that you have a disability and explain your accommodation needs but will not say what type of disability. If you want to, you can talk with your professors about your accommodations. The more people you have on your support team the better, and your professors can be great members of that team.

Assistive Technology

Among the many accommodations DSS counselors can help you identify is assistive technology. Assistive technology includes products that help people who have difficulty speaking, writing, remembering, seeing, hearing, learning and walking. Some apps on your smartphone — for example, apps that provide appointment reminders — are considered assistive technology and can help anyone.

Assistive technology is especially helpful for people who have difficulty with focus, concentration, memory or organization. Assistive technology can help students with mental tasks, and health care providers and DSS counselors often recommend it for those who have sustained a TBI.

Head of the Class

Many students who've had a TBI worry about whether they are ready to go back to school and how, or if, they will succeed. The bottom line: not only can you go to school, but you can do very well.

For tips, tools and more information about resources that can help you accomplish your academic goals, check out the DVBIC "[Guide to Academic Success After Traumatic Brain Injury.](#)"

What is TBI?

What is a traumatic brain injury (TBI)? It is commonly defined as a brain dysfunction caused by an outside force, usually a violent blow to the head. It is one of the hallmark injuries of deployed military Veterans.

TBI is a very common condition, with more than 200,000 US cases diagnosed per year and fortunately, is treatable by a medical professional; requiring a medical diagnosis.

Lab tests or imaging are often required and needed for treatment.



Traumatic brain injury often occurs as a result of a severe sports injury, combat exposure/injury due to IEDs, or a car/bike/motorcycle accident. Immediate or delayed symptoms may include confusion, blurry vision, and concentration difficulty. Infants may cry persistently or be irritable. Treatment may involve rest, medication, and surgery.

People may experience Cognitive, Behavioral, gastrointestinal problems, blurred vision and nausea or vomiting, amnesia, inability to speak or understand, mental confusion, difficulty concentrating, difficulty thinking and understanding, inability to create new memories, or inability to recognize common things.

Behavioral symptoms include: abnormal laughing and crying, aggression, impulsivity, irritability, lack of restraint, or persistent repetition of words or actions

Whole body characteristics also include: balance disorder, blackout, dizziness, fainting, or fatigue

Frequently, the individual may demonstrate mood changes: anger, anxiety, apathy, or loneliness.

Eyes: dilated pupil, raccoon eyes, or unequal pupils

Gastrointestinal: nausea or vomiting

Speech: slurred speech or impaired voice

Visual: blurred vision or sensitivity to light

Also common: persistent headache, a temporary moment of clarity, bleeding, bone fracture, bruising, depression, loss of smell, nerve injury, post-traumatic seizure, ringing in the ears, sensitivity to sound, or stiff muscles

Critical: consult a doctor for medical advice

Sources: [Mayo Clinic](#) and others.

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) provides [worldwide numbers](#) (updated quarterly on its website) representing active-duty medical diagnoses of TBI that occurred anywhere U.S. forces are located, listed in total and identified by service and injury severity since 2000.

For more information about TBI, go to the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury: <http://www.dcoe.mil/TraumaticBrainInjury.aspx>

Tips for Civilian Providers: Treating Military Members with Traumatic Brain Injury

Below are tips, resources and information for civilian health care professionals treating military patients with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Learn About Military Culture

Civilian providers should research the experiences and exposures U.S. service members and veterans face to recognize the connection between certain health effects and military service. They should become familiar with [military culture](#), including military ranks and the difference between National Guard and reserve members.

Common fundamentals distinguish military culture from many others. Cultural norms include a high standard of discipline, a professional ethos of loyalty and self-sacrifice, distinct ceremonial and etiquette requirements, and an emphasis on group cohesion and esprit de corps that connects service members to one another.

These cultural basics can make helping returning service members with a TBI challenging — especially when compounded by everyday stressors from their civilian lives.

- Become familiar with military ranks and insignias [Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/military_culture_competencies_hcp.asp](#)
- Be aware of the services and programs offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) [United States Department of Veterans Affairs www.va.gov](#)
[National Center for PTSD www.ptsd.va.gov/](#)
- Review the resources that are available from the Defense Department, including TRICARE services [Tricare www.tricare.mil/](#)
- Develop partnerships with staff at nearby military installations [National Resource Directory https://www.nrd.gov/](#)

Understanding TBI

- TBI is caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the normal function of the brain.
- TBI can happen to anyone, whether it happens while playing sports, at work, or slipping on an icy sidewalk. Injuries can range from “mild” to “severe,” with a majority of cases being mild TBI, also known as concussion. The good news is that most cases are treatable and there are several ways to help prevent injury.
- Common symptoms of a brain injury include headaches, dizziness, attention and memory problems, fatigue, irritability, vision changes, balance problems, mood changes and sleep difficulty.
- Most patients who experience a concussion recover fully within weeks, but some may continue to have symptoms for a longer period of time. Patients with chronic symptoms of concussion should get evaluated for other medical problems to include psychological concerns.

The cause of prolonged symptoms following concussion continues to be explored. Possible causes include: psychological health conditions, physiological changes to the brain, ability to manage stress, pre-existing health conditions or co-occurring injuries or illnesses.

Treatment Tips and Resources

Help the military members you’re treating stay focused on their courses of treatment. They’re likely to feel overwhelmed with a variety of problems — from family and friends, to workplace, finances and physical health. These problems can distract from therapy and add stress that may interfere with resolving symptoms. Helping service members identify, prioritize and take action to address their concerns helps the patient and health professional reduce the likelihood of future problems.

Treating Service Members with Mild TBI

Inform the patient about possible symptoms and the path to recovery. While many patients with a concussion can improve within a few hours to a few weeks, some may take up to three months. Mental rest and physical rest are important aspects of recovery, as well as avoiding further injury. For more information on

How to Join MGCA

MGCA is dedicated to serving those who provide services to military, veterans, government employees, and their families throughout all disciplines of counseling.

The Association is currently made up of over 300 members from the following categories:

- Professional 53%
- Regular 2%
- Retired 5%
- Student 27%



Not only do we provide resources for your practice, there are also opportunities to serve on our leadership board!

We will also have a exhibitor table at ACA/CCA where you can learn more about us and how to become a member.

Click [here](#) for a printable registration form.

Military and Government Counseling Association (MGCA) PDI Registration

Serving Those Who Serve

PDI Registration

- For a nominal \$20. fee, you will be able to attend the MGCA Professional Development Institute (PDI) on Thursday, 16 March 2017, 0800-noon. You will earn 3.5 CEUs for attending all sessions! A list of presentations will follow in the next E-Newsletter!

– **FREE** information/mentoring at the MGCA booth in the Exhibit Hall! We want to help you develop your knowledge and skills as you work with the military population, first responders, and their families.

– **FREE** opportunity to become involved in the **2018 MGCA Professional Development Institute** at the ACA Conference in Atlanta, Georgia!

- **FREE** professional opportunity to be involved in the editing of the MGCA FACEBOOK page and E-Newsletter!

- **FREE:** The Board of MGCA cordially welcomes your attendance at the General Membership meeting to be held at the Intercontinental Hotel on **17 March 2017**.

- **FREE** networking with researchers and counseling professionals at the Awards presentation on **18 March from 6-6:30 p.m.**

- **FREE** admission to the **MGCA Social** on Saturday evening (6:30-8 p.m. following the Awards presentation) that same evening/same location:

Restaurant Lulu, located 2 blocks away from the Intercontinental Hotel in San Francisco:

816 Folsom Street (between 4th and 5th Streets) San Francisco, CA 94107



Join us in San Francisco!!

The purpose of MCGA is to encourage and deliver meaningful guidance, counseling, and educational programs to all members of the Armed Services, their family members, and civilian employees of State and Federal Governmental Agencies. Encourage development of professional monographs and convention/conference presentations by any of these agencies. Develop and promote the highest standards of professional conduct among counselors and educators working with Armed Services personnel and veterans. Establish, promote, and maintain improved communication with the nonmilitary community; and conduct and foster programs to enhance individual human development and increase recognition of humanistic values and goals within State and Federal Agencies.

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