

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR, PERSONALITY OR MOOD

Concussion/Mild Traumatic Brain Injury

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center



U.S. Marine Corps photo by
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JUST NOT FEELING LIKE YOURSELF? EASILY IRRITATED OR ON EDGE? FEELING OVERWHELMED, ANXIOUS, SAD OR DEPRESSED?

A concussion may result in changes to your behavior, personality or the way you feel (mood). These changes also could be a result of your other symptoms including pain, poor sleep and fatigue.

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Keep an eye on your mood. If you are having negative thoughts and emotions, identify the triggers and avoid them if possible. Use a journal or the Mood Tracker app (on the back of this page) to help you.
- Take a deep breath. Breathing exercises have been found to decrease the body's reaction to stress. Try the Breathe2Relax app (on the back of this page) to learn deep breathing techniques that can help you manage your response to stress.
- Take care of yourself. Eat regular healthy meals, and make sure you get at least seven to eight hours of sleep. You may become irritable if you are tired or hungry.
- Think positive! Remember that over time your injuries and symptoms will continue to improve.
- Take a break. If you are in a situation that upsets you, walk away and take a few minutes to calm down. Try to approach the situation with a clearer mind.
- Use positive stress management. Make time to do something you enjoy, especially when you feel angry, frustrated or upset. Listen to some of your favorite music, visit with a friend, exercise or work on a hobby.
- Think before you act. Try to teach yourself to stop and think before you say or do something that might be inappropriate.
- Don't rush. Give yourself plenty of time to complete tasks. Try doing one thing at a time to prevent frustration and feeling overwhelmed.
- Ask for help. A friend or trusted co-worker could help you prioritize tasks and manage your workload.
- Take your time. Try to pace yourself as you work toward your goals for recovery.

Did you know?

Mood and behavior changes may appear after a mild TBI. You or your loved one may not understand why this is happening or know what to do. Trying these tips may improve these feelings.



HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY HELP?

Mood Tracker – This free app lets you monitor and track your mood. The scales help you identify triggers that affect your mood.



Available on the
App Store



ANDROID APP ON
Google play

Breathe2Relax – This free app helps you manage stress with deep breathing exercises.



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WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MORE HELP?

Contact your health care provider or someone you trust if you are having the following symptoms longer than two weeks, or if they affect your daily functioning:

- feelings of hopelessness/helplessness
- feelings of being alone and misunderstood
- negative thoughts of yourself
- no interest in family, friends or social activities once enjoyed
- increased irritability or frequent angry outbursts
- extreme changes in sleep habits, appetite or energy level

If you have thoughts or feelings of hurting yourself or others, seek emergency care.

Call the **Military/Veterans Crisis Line**: 800-273-TALK (8255), send a text to 838255 or chat online at veteranscrisisline.net.

Another helpful resource is Military OneSource at: 800-342-9647 or MilitaryOneSource.mil.