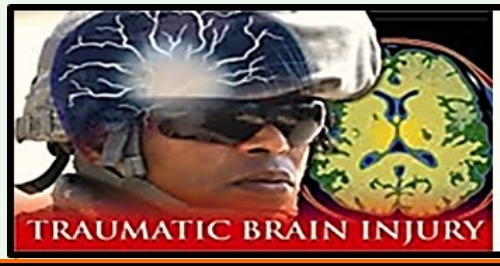
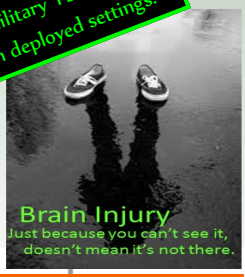
Protecting Our Own



Force Preservation II MEF, G-10, Newsletter March 2015 Volume 1, Issue 4

New Segment Coming Soon! Know a Marine/Sailor who has gone above and beyond the call of duty in Force Preservation? II MEF G-10 wants to hear about it! Send the story, and the best will be selected for next months issue. Email the story to jessica.huss@usmc.mil.

80% of military TBI's do not occur in deployed settings.



Inside the Crosshairs

Alcohol Use and TBI

Alcohol is a *neurotoxin* (it **kills** brain cells), **exacerbating** the negative effects of a **TBI**. There is **no** recommended safe amount of alcohol **after a brain injury**, especially during the early stages of recovery. Even moderate amounts of alcohol for people with *mild* TBI have been associated with **poorer** outcomes on **memory**, **attention**, **balance**, and **behavior**. **Heavy alcohol** use **pre-injury** is associated with **poorer health** outcomes and increased potential for **substance abuse post injury**. Just a little alcohol after a TBI can **impair judgment** and *increase* the risk of a **subsequent head injury**.

Depression. In the first year after injury, TBI survivors are **eight times more** likely to be **diagnosed** with **depression**. Since alcohol is a depressant, drinking alcohol after a TBI can **increase** the risk of developing depression. Alcohol can **reduce** the **effectiveness** of many **medications** but also dangerously amplify the effects of other medications such as painkillers. A TBI also increases the **risk of a seizure** and alcohol lowers the seizure threshold. Therefor **drinking alcohol** *with* a **TBI** further **increases** the *risk* of a **seizure**.

Editor J. L. Huss, II MEF Behavioral Health Prevention Specialist, G-10

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Brain injury is **unpredictable** in its consequences. Brain injury affects who we are, the way we **think, act,** and **feel**. It can change everything about us in a matter of seconds. The most important things to remember are:

- A person with a brain injury is a person first
- No two brain injuries are exactly the same
- Effects of a brain injury are **complex** and **vary greatly** from person to person
- Effects of a brain injury depend on factors such as **cause, location**, and **severity**

When a brain injury occurs, it can affect the functions of the neurons, nerve tracts, or sections of the brain. If the neurons and nerve tracts are affected, they may be unable or have difficulty carrying the messages that tell the brain what to do, possibly changing the way a person thinks, acts, feels, and moves the body. Brain injury can also change the complex internal functions of the body, such as regulating body temperature, blood pressure, bowel and bladder control. These changes can be **temporary** or **permanent**, **impaired** or **lose complete function**.

Brain Injury Association of America

Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center

Brain Injury Definitions:

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): An alteration in brain function, or other evidence of brain pathology, caused by an external force. Severity levels include **mild, moderate**, and **severe**. **Concussions** are considered a TBI.

Acquired Brain Injury: An injury to the brain, which is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. An acquired brain injury is an injury to the brain that has occurred after birth.

Brain injury is not an event or an outcome. It is the start of a **misdiagnosed, misunderstood, under-funded neurological disease**. Individuals who sustain brain injuries must have **timely access** to expert trauma care, **specialized rehabilitation, lifelong disease management** and **individualized services** and **supports** in order to live healthy, independent and satisfying lives.

Prepare: Education. How a Brain Injury occurs, symptoms of a Brain Injury, best treatment practices.
https://intranet1.iimef.usmc.mil/G10/prevent/PreservationReadinessDocuments/TBI%20Webinar%20Presentation.pdf
Prevent: Training in the use of proper safety equipment, self-awareness of early signs/symptoms,
Protect: Timely access to expert trauma care, accurate diagnosis, progressive return to activity.

Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury

Intrepid Spirit, the NICoE Satellite Center at Camp Lejeune

Self-Harm Prevention Awareness Month

Self-harm is a **coping mechanism** - a deliberate, **non-suicidal act** that inflicts pain on the body. Someone might harm themselves to deal with **overwhelming emotions** or **situations**, to **feel in control** or to **stop feelings of numbness** by invoking a **painful sensation**. Specific reasons behind an individual's self-harm may include:

- bullying/hazing
- pressure at work/school
- abuse
- relationship problems
- financial worries

Community Counseling Center
Camp Lejeune
910.451.2864

Self-harm can become a *natural response to the stresses of day-to-day life* and can become more frequent and severe. People self-harm in many different ways to include:

- cutting
- burning
- overdosing (without suicidal intent)
- bruising
- eating disorders
- Alcohol abuse

Community Counseling Center
Cherry Point
252.466.3264

Community Counseling Center
New River
910.449.6110

Many people who self-harm may have a **diagnosable mental illness** such as **depression** or **anxiety**, but not everyone who self-harms has a diagnosable condition. Self-harm affects people of all ages, male and female, all sexualities, religions, cultures and races.

Prepare: Educate Marines about effective coping skills, leadership, support system (friends, family, Marines, etc.)
Prevent: MAPIT Dashboard courses, Community Counseling Center Services, Chaplain, Engaged Leadership
Protect: Chaplain, Community Counseling Center Services, Marine Intercept Program