

# After a Brain Injury

See a doctor if the injury was recent, or severe, or if any of the following red flags appear:

- Neck pain or tenderness.
- Double vision.
- Weakness or feelings of tingling or burning in the arms or legs.
- Seizure or convulsion.
- Loss of consciousness.
- Deteriorating conscious state.
- Vomiting.
- Becoming increasingly restless, agitated or combative.

## Self Care

Like any other injury, a brain injury needs time to heal. Here are some strategies that may help:

- Rest.
- Minimize sensitivity to light and noise by wearing sunglasses or a baseball hat, earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones.
- Seek out calm environments.
- Keep lights dim.
- Minimize screen time.
- Eat a balanced diet and stay hydrated.
- Use a calendar or lists to prioritize tasks and activities.
- If the injury was recent, follow the “return to activity” guideline:

<https://cattonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CATT-Return-to-Activity-V2-June-2019.pdf>

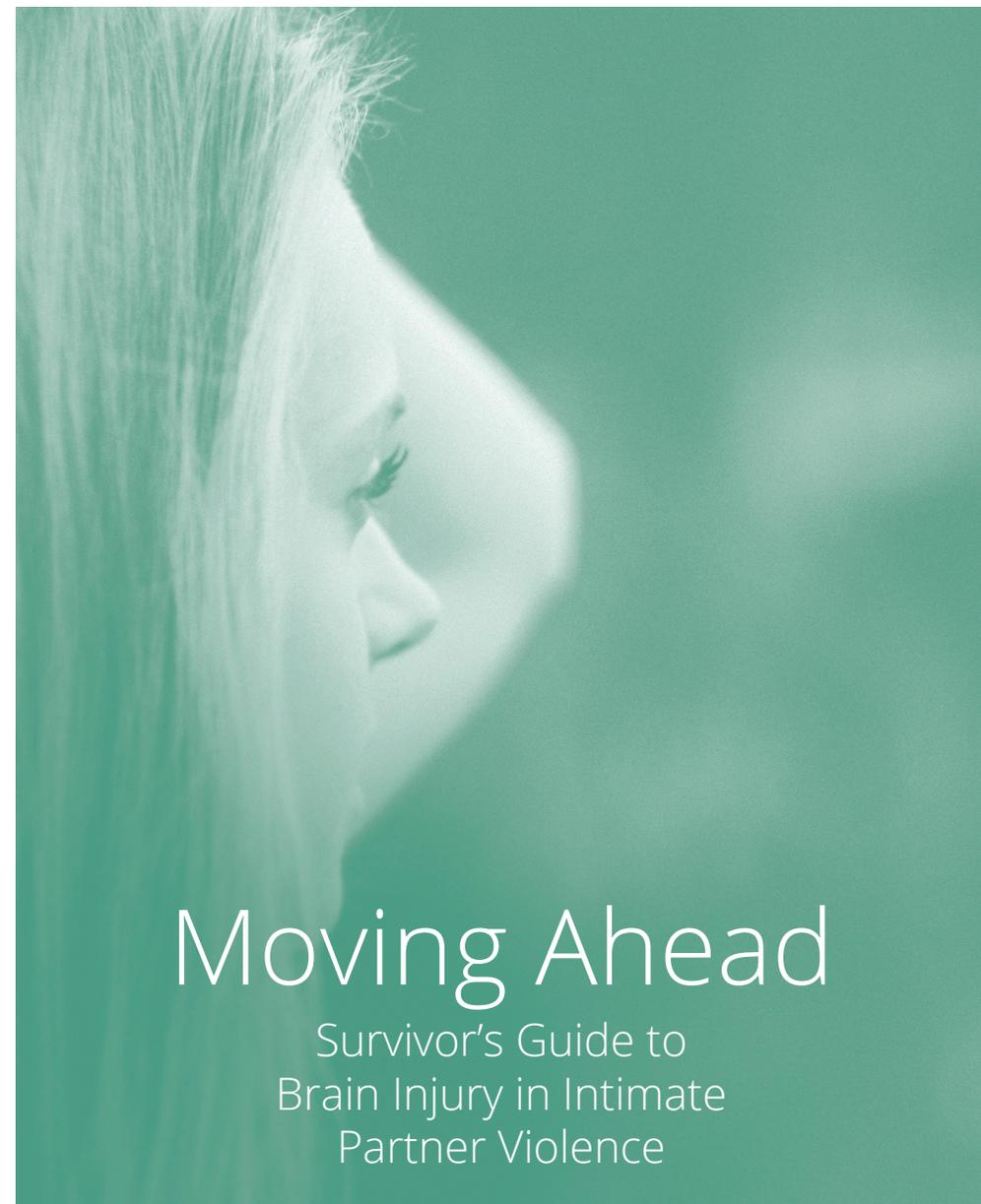
For more ideas and help, consult your local brain injury support agency.



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# Moving Ahead

Survivor's Guide to  
Brain Injury in Intimate  
Partner Violence



SUPPORTING SURVIVORS  
OF ABUSE AND BRAIN INJURY  
THROUGH RESEARCH

[www.soarproject.ca](http://www.soarproject.ca)

# Did you know?

Most women survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) may also suffer a brain injury.

If your partner has been violent to you, your brain may be injured.

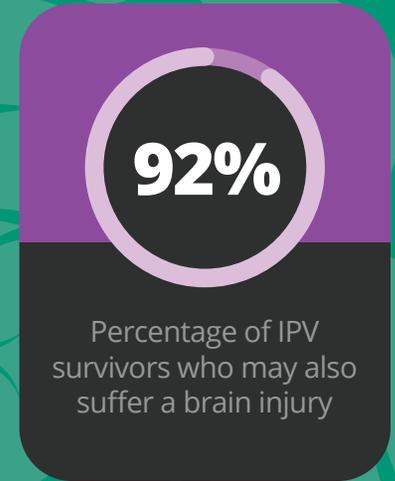
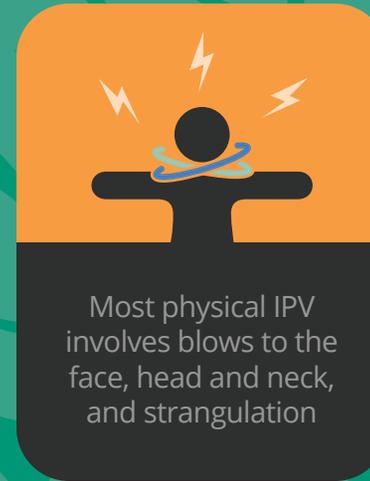
## WHAT IS BRAIN INJURY?

Brain injury happens when there's a change in how your brain works because of a hard blow or jolt that causes your head or brain to move rapidly back and forth. Brain injury can also happen from loss of oxygen to the brain, which can happen when someone strangles or chokes you.

## WHAT CAUSES IT?

Brain injury can happen when you are

- Punched, or hit in the head, face or neck with an object.
- Violently shaken.
- Pushed down stairs.
- Thrown out of a moving vehicle.
- Strangled/choked or suffocated. If you had trouble breathing or blacked out from something your partner did, you may have a brain injury. Strangulation can cause long term damage, and even death.



## Signs and Symptoms

Brain injury is an invisible wound that often goes unnoticed, is mislabeled, or misunderstood. It can cause physical, mental, and emotional difficulties, as well as changes in behaviour.

### YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:

- Headaches.
- Fatigue.
- Dizziness or balance problems.
- Sleep issues.
- Worries and fears.
- Depression.
- Sadness.
- Anger.
- Sensitivity to noise and light.

### YOU MIGHT:

- Have trouble listening.
- Be easily distracted.
- Have difficulty learning things.
- Have trouble following instructions.
- Forget appointments or chores.
- Be tired, irritated, or anger easily.
- Have issues adapting to change.
- Experience inappropriate emotional responses.
- Sleep too much or too little.