

Impacts of COVID-19 on People with TBI

What is the purpose of this plain language document? To share what is known from academic research about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Who is this plain language document designed for?

- People who experienced TBI before or during the COVID-19 pandemic and
- Caregivers of people with traumatic brain injuries.

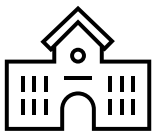
What does academic research tell us about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people with a traumatic brain injury? Academic research tells us that people with TBI experienced challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:



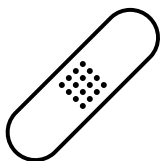
1. **Decreased income and challenges meeting basic needs.** One study found that more than 1 in 2 people with TBI lost wages due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority felt they could not pay for basic needs like food, shelter, and heat.ⁱ



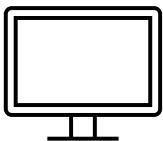
2. **Mental health challenges.** One study found that almost 40% of people with TBI felt their mood had changed due to social distancing and sheltering in place. This same study found that COVID-19 made mental health issues for people with TBI worse, finding that the majority of people in the study met the criteria for clinically significant depression and/or anxiety.ⁱⁱ



3. **Disruption in access to rehabilitation and community-based services.** The pandemic led to the temporary suspension of outpatient and day treatment facilities and restrictions on visitation and community activities.ⁱⁱⁱ This disruption in services has been challenging for people with TBI and may have made existing imbalances in accessing services for some subgroups of people with TBI, like women, even worse.^{iv}



4. **Increased risk of violence and abuse.** In one study, 70% of people with TBI who were surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic had recently experienced physical violence, and almost half of the people with TBI who were surveyed during the COVID-19 pandemic had experienced verbal abuse.^v



5. **Difficulties with remote/online services.** The shift during COVID-19 to greater use of online services presented challenges for some people with TBI, partly because such environments are usually not designed to be accessible to people with TBI.^{vi}

Every person's experience with the COVID-19 pandemic is unique. You may have experienced none of these situations, some of these situations, or all of them.

If you have experienced any of these situations, you are not alone. You can:

- **Check out the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska website for support groups.**
 - Website: <https://biane.org/about/support-groups.html>
- **Connect to the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska if you need assistance with locating additional help or resources related to TBI.**
 - Website: <https://biane.org/>
 - Telephone: 844-423-2463
 - Email: info@biane.org
- **Talk to your healthcare provider if you experience new or worsening symptoms at any point.**

ⁱ Ovalles, A., Bulas, A., & Dams-O'Connor, K. (2023). Impact of COVID-19 on individuals with TBI: Nationwide cross-sectional study *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 104(3), e33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2022.12.094>

ⁱⁱ Same as above.

ⁱⁱⁱ Malec, J. F., Salisbury, D. B., Anders, D., Dennis, L., Groff, A. R., Johnson, M., Murphy, M. P., & Smith, G. T. (2021). Response to the COVID-19 pandemic among posthospital brain injury rehabilitation providers. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 102(3), 549–555. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2020.10.137>

^{iv} Kolakowsky-Hayner, S.A., & Goldin, Y. (2020). Sex and gender issues for individuals with acquired brain injury during COVID-19: A commentary. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 101(12), 2253–2255. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2020.08.004>

^v Ovalles, A., Bulas, A., & Dams-O'Connor, K. (2023). Impact of COVID-19 on individuals with TBI: Nationwide cross-sectional study *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 104(3), e33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2022.12.094>

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This publication was supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$86,400.00 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

