

# **Navigating Society with a Traumatic Brain Injury**

## **"Protect Intellect!"**

### **The Challenges of Fatigue, Emotions, and Misunderstandings**

Survivors of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) experience significant challenges with everyday tasks. From battling fatigue to managing emotional instability, these individuals frequently find themselves misunderstood by society and authorities. Security Guards are usually the first to encounter a TBI Survivor by a complaint from a patron or store worker. Security Guards are the first line of defense for a business establishment. It's common for the Police to see the Security Guard as their "Brother in Safety Enforcement". As such, the Police go directly to the task of the REMOVAL of the TBI survivor. For the TBI Survivor, the Police suddenly arrive.

Below are some of the common scenarios TBI survivors face, with perspectives from both the survivors and the authorities they encounter. It is often the innocent bystander on the street who calls the Police to offer AID to the TBI Survivor, who appears distressed.

TBI survivors often contend with profound and debilitating fatigue. In the first year after their injury, it is not uncommon for them to sleep up to 16 hours a day. Tasks as simple as running errands or shopping can become overwhelming, leaving survivors desperate

to rest. When no seating is available, they may resort to sitting or lying on the floor. Often this results in the disapproval of business owners or managers.



## **The Struggles of Fatigue**

### **The Perspective of TBI Survivors**



If a TBI Survivor is found sitting or lying down, they may be asked to stand, which may be physically impossible for them. If they cannot comply, they are sometimes asked to leave the establishment. Law Enforcement Officers often approach the situation as a matter of maintaining order, viewing the TBI Survivor's presence as a disturbance. Police may arrest the individual for trespassing, citing their duty to enforce business owners' rights and protect other patrons.

Fatigue-related issues are not limited to private businesses. In public spaces such as parks or sidewalks, survivors may attempt to rest on a bench, only to be roused by police officers enforcing anti-loitering or trespassing laws. Despite their medical needs, these

individuals are often treated as violators of social norms, resulting in further alienation and, in some cases, it results in legal trouble.

## **Police Perspective on Duty and Discretion**



Law Enforcement Officers are often called to address situations involving individuals with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) who are considered disruptive. In such cases, officers are tasked with maintaining order and removing individuals deemed to be causing disturbances. However, it remains unclear whether business owners or managers communicate directly with the affected individuals before involving the police. The primary responsibility of the police is to "keep the peace," which frequently translates to protecting the interests of the business. Officers may view their actions as necessary to prevent disruptions that could result in lost customers. Consequently, they often perceive their role as strictly procedural—"just doing their job." In America – "Commerce is KING." The TBI Survivor is redirected to PUBLIC Space as the sidewalk or park.

## **The Collision of TBI Survivor & Police**

For individuals with TBI, attempts to explain their circumstances may prove futile. Officers are likely to proceed with removing them from the premises regardless of context. Arrests are typically made under the assumption that the courts will later determine whether proper notification or procedures were followed before police intervention. Public Defenders are burdened with a case that is most likely thrown out of the Court due to the discovery of TBI Disability by the Judge.

This dynamic can have severe consequences for TBI survivors. Fatigue, behavioral differences, and challenges in meeting societal expectations can lead to situations where they find themselves arrested—*not for criminal intent, but for failing to conform to norms they struggle to navigate.*



### **Navigating Emotional Lability**

For individuals living with a traumatic brain injury (TBI), the challenges extend beyond physical recovery. Emotional lability—an exaggerated and often uncontrollable emotional response—is a common consequence of TBI, rooted in damage to the brain's limbic system, which governs emotions, memories, and arousal. Survivors often experience heightened emotions,

with reduced ability to regulate them as they once could. In many cases, their emotional control mirrors that of children. Their cognitive levels may be diminished, measured at the level of a juvenile regardless of their actual chronological age due to the Traumatic Brain Injury.

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Sometimes the TBI survivor is overwhelmed by the losses they sustained and the hardship they are suffering. They may start to cry. Due to the LIMBIC SYSTEM (emotion, memories, and arousal) emotions are very close to the surface in a TBI Survivor, they lack the same emotional control they had previously. Crying in public is TABOO. If someone witnesses a TBI Survivor "crying," it is presumed they "need help."

Thus, call 911. EMTs arrive and transport the individual to a hospital for a mental health evaluation. At mental health facilities, staff are trained in psychiatry to attempt to make sense of the TBI Survivor's behavior. America's Mental Health Hospitals do not have specialists in neuropsychology in their ER or Psych Ward. As a consequence, this leads to further "mental health" referrals when the issue is NORMAL GRIEF or FRIGHT. This lack of

understanding of coping skills is due to the LIMBIC SYSTEM. This can lead to psychiatric hospitalization for months. ALL for CRYING in PUBLIC; expressing a NORMAL EMOTION.

TBI survivors have reported being stopped by security personnel in public spaces for crying, accused of disturbing others, and asked to leave. In extreme cases, they have even been banned from certain establishments, further isolating them.

## **The Perspective of Police and Security Officers**



From the standpoint of law enforcement, responding to such situations involves maintaining order, peace, and safety of the public. When officers or security are called, their primary role is to address the bystander's concern. In private establishments, this can result in the individual being asked to leave the establishment. In public spaces, officers rely on protocol for a consult with an EMT to assess the person's emotional and mental state. This assessment can lead to a Temporary Detention Order (TDO), authorizing a 72-hour hold for evaluation at a mental health facility.

For law enforcement officers, the focus is on ensuring that mental health professionals assess the situation, rather than engaging directly with the TBI survivor about their condition. Unfortunately, this procedural approach often overlooks the nuanced needs of

TBI survivors, exacerbating their challenges instead of offering appropriate support.

### **The Collision of TBI Survivor & Police**

Although TDOs are not part of an individual's criminal record, admission to a mental health hospital is documented and reported to state authorities. This remains on your record for Government Background checks for Government Positions, Security Clearances, and for GUN SAFETY LAWS by Gun distributors. This mental health record can impact TBI Survivor's employment possibilities or promotions, working with children (teaching, after-school care, public recreation) or the elderly "In-Home Care" aid workers. For those with International Careers, it is reported on FBI reports and impacts Working VISA overseas, potentially ending your profession.



### **Confusion and Social Response**

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors often struggle with difficulty processing stimuli – loud noises, music, announcements. Without an internal "filter," they may take longer to complete tasks. They may suddenly stop a conversation, or run away from an area that is disturbing to their brain. The TBI itself results in "information

processing deficits”: It takes the brain longer to get the information to the other neurons that can comprehend the action needed.

Frequently, TBI Survivors have a lack of “organization skills”, affecting decision-making: how to prioritize, figure out the next step, or how to compare products. TBI Survivors are slow to respond to instructions from authority figures, such as police or security officers. TBI Survivors have been removed from stores accused of casing for shoplifting.

## **The Perspective of TBI Survivors**



Instances have arisen where TBI survivors, while attempting to complete everyday activities like shopping or navigating public spaces, have been accused of false charges with NO WRONG DOING. They are trying to figure out why they are being addressed. What are the key issues in the situation? Why is this all happening to them? However, this delay is often misinterpreted as defiance or resistance. The TBI Survivor is not trying to ignore or resist what they are being told. They are trying to figure out, how to comply. Yet, still go on with their task.

Next thing the TBI Survivor knows, they are going to jail. Now, the TBI Survivor has a criminal proceeding on their record. Even if judges show leniency, criminal records hinder employment prospects and security clearance opportunities, complicating their recovery and reintegration into the workforce, and being a contributing member of society. Advocates emphasize the need

for greater awareness and support from law enforcement to prevent unnecessary legal entanglements and help survivors rebuild their lives.

## **The Perspective of the Police**



When responding to disturbances at public buildings or private businesses, police often rely on reports from security officers, whom they view as trusted partners in maintaining safety. For individuals with traumatic brain injuries (TBI), this dynamic can lead to significant misunderstandings.

TBI survivors may struggle to navigate their surroundings or complete tasks, such as figuring out their next destination or means of transport. Their slower responses or apparent lack of compliance are often misinterpreted by security staff and reported to the police as disruptive behavior. Police will remove you from the premises, and talk to you about your problem. When survivors explain they have a TBI and require more time, officers may conclude that the individual requires professional mental health care. This frequently results in emergency medical technicians (EMTs) being called to transport the person to a mental health crisis center. A statement from security officers, combined with reports from “innocent bystanders”, is often sufficient to place a TDO (Temporary Detention Order – 72 hr. Hold).

## **The Collision of a TBI Survivor & Police**

Instead of offering assistance, some officers escalate these situations. This leads to petty arrests when the TBI survivor protests the arrest, they are charged with “obstructing a police officer”. This escalation can worsen if survivors exhibit frustration or anger, resulting in additional charges such as “assault charges” for pushing an Officer’s hand off their body; or “resisting arrest” when the TBI Survivor asks the charge for which they are being accused. Often TBI Survivors are caught “thinking” (processing) and not verbally complying to Police commands. Then charged with “obstructing justice”.