

## **The Team Up to Facilitate Functioning (TUFF) Series: Interactive Brochures for Treatment of Postconcussive Symptoms in Returning Veterans with History of Traumatic Brain Injury**

A series of interactive brochures titled the Team Up to Facilitate Functioning (TUFF) series has been developed for Veterans and clinicians to address functional problems related to postconcussive symptoms. While treatments for postconcussive symptoms are typically available through specialized programs staffed by brain injury rehabilitation specialists in the national Polytrauma System of Care, Veterans residing in rural areas may have difficulty accessing these programs. The goal of the current project was to develop a set of interactive brochures, appropriate for use by clinicians without specialized training in traumatic brain injury rehabilitation, detailing empirically supported interventions to help Veterans effectively manage the most common postconcussive symptoms.

Each TUFF module includes an evidence based interactive brochure with references for additional community resources, pre- and post-intervention symptom assessment, and a user manual. The six modules address the following needs: Academic Skills, Cognitive Skills, Managing Headaches, Healthy Sleeping, Stress Management, and Mood Management. Each interactive brochure contains several 'Team Up' sections designed specifically to encourage clinicians to personalize the administration of each brochure and practice new skills through collaboration with the Veteran. A pre- and post-symptom assessment is paired with each interactive brochure, allowing clinicians to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

In 2008, it was estimated that approximately 300,000 Operation Enduring Freedom / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) Veterans had suffered a combat related mild traumatic brain injury. Based on previous research, a small but significant minority of returning Veterans may experience cognitive, emotional, and somatic problems, called postconcussive syndrome. Given that 35% of OEF/OIF Veterans have sought care through Veterans Health Administration, it can reasonably be expected that most clinicians working within the VA healthcare system will provide care to a Veteran with a history of mild traumatic brain injury, including clinicians providing services in rural settings. The TUFF series was designed to enhance care for Veterans with a history of mild traumatic brain injury who have difficulty immediately accessing specialized rehabilitation services.

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