The America’s Heroes at Work Web site educates employers and workforce development professionals on ways to help employees with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) succeed on the job. It features:

- Easy-to-understand fact sheets and references guides
- Web-based training tools
- Training-the-trainer educational presentations
- Helpful links to information related to TBI, PTSD, and veterans/disability employment issues
- Real-life success stories of veteran employees with TBI/PTSD and the satisfied employers who hired them
- A toll-free help line for personalized assistance related to accommodations for veterans with disabilities (800-526-7234)

Downloadable fact sheets include:

- Frequently Asked Questions About TBI & Employment
- Frequently Asked Questions About PTSD & Employment
- Accommodating Employees with TBI
- Accommodating Employees with PTSD
- Hiring Veterans with TBI/PTSD: Tips and Oasis for Employers
- Hiring Managers
- Tips for Communicating with People with TBI/PTSD
- Employee and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Myth and Facts

What should employers do if they suspect an employee is struggling with the effects of TBI and/or PTSD?

Employers must realize that since they hire a veteran with a disability, they are not alone. A wealth of support services exist to help them respond to the unique needs of their employees with disabilities or combat-related injuries. To be aware of the types of workplace accommodations they should implement, employers can call the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a free consulting service that provides individualized workplace accommodation solutions and technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability related legislation. Just call 800-526-7234.

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Why should employers hire disabled veterans?

Veterans make excellent employees for a variety of reasons (including leadership, teamwork experience and their accelerated learning curve). In addition, there are often tax incentives available to help employers cover the cost of accommodations for employees with disabilities and to make their places of business accessible. Of course, hiring veterans with disabilities is simply the right thing to do. To learn more, read the America’s Heroes at Work fact sheets on incentives for hiring veterans and people with disabilities and visit www.hireVetsFirst.gov.

www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov
America’s Heroes at Work is a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) initiative that focuses on the employment challenges of veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The project equips employers and the workforce development system with the tools they need to help employees affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace – particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is PTSD?
A Traumatic Stress Injury (TSI) is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI; the severity of such an injury may range from mild concussion (i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness lasting a few minutes) to severe TBI (i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or even death after the injury). A TBI can result in short or long-term problems, although most people with TBI are able to function independently.

What should employers expect from a person with PTSD? Will they have violent outbursts?
PTSD doesn’t develop in everyone. Some returning service members with PTSD also suffer from anxiety disorders, major depressive episodes, panic attacks, and substance abuse or dependence on alcohol. Among veterans, the most common diagnosis is PTSD. However, the majority of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan who have PTSD are the same individuals who have served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is TBI?
Please visit the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) section for a comprehensive description of TBI and PTSD.

Who is eligible to use the America’s Heroes at Work tools?
America’s Heroes at Work is managed jointly by DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) in collaboration with other federal agencies engaged in TBI and PTSD programs, including the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, and Education; the Small Business Administration; and the Social Security Administration and others.

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What is PTSD?
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can develop in response to exposure to an extreme traumatic event. These traumatic events may include military combat, violent personal assault (e.g., rape, beating, robbery, terrorism), natural or man-made disasters, or horrific accidents. The event directly experienced or witnessed may involve experiencing death or threat of physical harm. The trauma response to the event is one of intense fear or helplessness.

What are some possible behavior changes associated with PTSD?
PTSD can manifest in a person’s ability to process information in the form of feedback loops. This creates chronic maladjustment and emotional dysregulation. Exposure to stressful events or situations that resemble those of the traumatic event can produce a return of the traumatic symptoms. Even if these events are not very similar to the traumatic event, the appearance of the stress response may cause a return of the traumatic symptoms.

There’s a lot of stigma associated with PTSD. How can employers separate myth from reality?
The America’s Heroes at Work initiative is a dynamic and comprehensive effort to provide assistance to employers who might be hesitant to hire a veteran with TBI and/or PTSD.

What kinds of accommodations can help veterans with PTSD?
America’s Heroes at Work is designed to help any employee with TBI and/or PTSD to fully participate in society. Employment, natural workplace supports, and simple physical accommodations can help veterans with TBI and PTSD. But employers needn’t be nervous. The U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis designed to help any employee with TBI and PTSD. But employers needn’t be nervous.

What promising practices can DOL recommend to employers who might be hesitant to hire a veteran with TBI and/or PTSD?
Employers need not fear hiring veterans with disabilities is the right thing to do. However, the stigma and fear of the unknown, some returning service members with PTSD also suffer from anxiety disorders, major depressive episodes, panic attacks, and substance abuse or dependence on alcohol. Among veterans, the most common diagnosis is PTSD. However, the majority of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan who have PTSD are the same individuals who have served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What should employers expect from National Guard and Reservists who return to their jobs with TBI and/or PTSD? 
As a TBI and PTSD are the signature injuries of the Global War on Terror, it is possible that many National Guard and Reservists will return to their civilian jobs with these conditions. However the effects of TBI and PTSD can vary from person to person depending upon the severity of injuries or trauma experience. To understand yourself through the free materials on www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov.

Are TBI and PTSD conditions that are exclusive to veterans?
TBI and PTSD are not exclusive to veterans; they are also present in civilians who experience post-traumatic stress. However, the conditions they are now – or exclusion to veterans. Some first responders, for example, are veterans of the global War on Terror who have post-traumatic stress disorder, and the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-5 criteria can be met by any person who has an experience with trauma. PTSD, on the other hand, is an anxiety disorder that can develop in response to exposure to an extreme traumatic event. These traumatic events may include military combat, violent personal assault (e.g., rape, beating, robbery, terrorism), natural or man-made disasters, or horrific accidents. The event directly experienced or witnessed may involve experiencing death or threat of physical harm. The trauma response to the event is one of intense fear or helplessness.

How does employment play such an important role in the recovery of transitioning service members with TBI and/or PTSD?
Employment provides many with disabilities, including those with TBI and PTSD, to fully participate in society. For example, employment provides income that can help to individual and family economic well-being and helps build a future that is worth living. It also provides greater social interaction and connections that can reduce isolation and build social support. Finally, employment provides a valued social role in society and helps create a sense of personal efficacy and social integration that contributes to personal well-being.
America’s Heroes at Work is a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) initiative that focuses on the employment challenges of veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The project equips employers and the workforce development system with the tools they need to help employees affected by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace - particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

What is TBI?
A Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the functioning of the brain. Not all blows or jolts to the head result in a TBI. The severity of such an injury may range from “mild/concussion” (i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness) to “severe,” (i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury). A TBI can result in a short or long term problems, although most people who were able to function independently.

What is PTSD?
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can develop in response to exposure to an extreme traumatic event. These traumatic events may include military combat; violent personal assault (e.g., rape, mugging, robbery), terrorist attacks, natural or man-made disasters, or horrific accidents. The event, directly experienced or witnessed in another person, involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or a threat to life. Mild to moderate post-traumatic stress symptoms are temporary responses to the event and are not usually a sign of serious trouble or helplessness.

What should employers expect from a person with PTSD? Will they have violent outbursts?
PTSD develops differently in different people. Some returning service members with PTSD suffer from nightmares, dream disturbance, hypervigilance, anxiety, irritability, sleep disturbances, outbursts of anger or sadness, among other challenges. Still, there are many ways to help your workplace stay safe and supportive of veterans affected by PTSD. Common Employer Questions About TBI & PTSD

What should employers expect from National Guard and Reservists who return to their jobs with TBI and/or PTSD?
As a TBI and PTSD are the signature injuries of the Global War on Terror, it is possible that every National Guard and Reservists who return to their civilian jobs with these conditions. However, the severity of TBI and PTSD varies from person to person depending on the severity of their injury or traumatic experience. To educate yourself, read through the free materials on www.AmericasHeroesAtWork.gov.

Are TBI and PTSD conditions that are exclusive to veterans?
TBI and PTSD are not a military phenomenon. They affect civilians and service members. Some first responders, for example, are among the millions of people who experience post-traumatic stress. And some returning service members with PTSD are civilians. There are ways that employers can help employees affected by PTSD.

What are some possible behaviors associated with PTSD?
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What should employers expect from a person with PTSD? Will they have violent outbursts?
PTSD provides a wide range of symptoms (i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness) to "severe" (i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury). A TBI can result in short or long-term problems, although most people with TBI are able to function independently.

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America’s Heroes at Work is managed jointly by DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) in collaboration with other federal agencies engaged in TBI and PTSD programs, including the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services and Education; the Small Business Administration; the Social Security Administration and others.

About America’s Heroes at Work

America’s Heroes at Work is a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) initiative that focuses on the employment challenges of veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The project equips employers and the workforce development system with the tools they need to help affected employees by TBI and/or PTSD succeed in the workplace—particularly service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

What should employers expect from National Guard and Reservists who return to their jobs with TBI and/or PTSD?
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Are there TBI and PTSD conditions that are exclusive to veterans?
TBI and PTSD are both in the physical disability category. TBI and PTSD are both in the physical disability category. TBI and PTSD are both in the physical disability category. TBI and PTSD are both in the physical disability category.

What should employers do before hiring a veteran with a disability?
Vets and Guard members are an invaluable resource to our nation’s economy. The American Heroes at Work Web site features a fact sheet, "Dispel Myths About PTSD," which helps debunk some of the stigma associated with PTSD. What should employers expect from National Guard and Reservists who return to their jobs with TBI and/or PTSD?
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Who Is Eligible for PTSD?
PTSD may affect anyone, including veterans and their family members. Combat veterans who served during the Vietnam War and later may be eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation for PTSD resulting from service in Vietnam. Combat veterans who served before the Vietnam War may be eligible for service connection for PTSD if their exposure to trauma in service can be linked to a current disability. PTSD may also be linked to traumatic events that occurred after service, such as conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

What Is PTSD?
Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that can develop in response to an extreme traumatic event. These traumatic events may include military combat, violent personal assault (e.g., rape, mugging, robbery), natural or man-made disasters, or horrific accidents. The event directly experienced or witnessed in another person may trigger the threat of physical harm to self or loved one. What is TBI?
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Why does employment play such an important role in the recovery of transitioning service members with TBI and/or PTSD?
Employment enables many people with disabilities, including those with TBI and PTSD, to fully participate in society. For example, employment provides income that key to individual and family economic well-being and skills and habits for future well-being. It also provides greater social interaction and constructive connections that can reduce isolation and build social capital. Finally, employment provides a social role in society and helps create a sense of personal efficacy and social integration that contributes to life satisfaction.

What employers can do to recruit and retain veterans with disabilities include:
- Managing new hires' and veterans’ expectations
- Providing technical assistance to support these brave men and women in their civilian life
- Educating employers on workplace accommodations
- Providing income that is key to individual and family economic well-being
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- Easy-to-understand fact sheets and references guides
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Downloadable fact sheets include:

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- Promising Practices for Supporting Returning Service Members with TBI/PTSD: Job Coaching, Workplace Mentoring, Natural Supports, and Customized Employment
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What should employers do if they suspect an employee is struggling with the effects of TBI and/or PTSD?

Employers must realize that, once they hire a veteran with a disability, they are not alone. A wealth of support services exist to help them respond to the unique needs of their employees with disabilities or combat-related injuries. In addition, a companion Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a good place to seek counsel and assistance for workers struggling with TBI, PTSD, and other disabilities. To learn the types of workplace accommodations they should implement, employers can call the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a free consulting service that provides individualized workplace accommodation solutions and technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related legislation. Just call 800-526-7234. Other support services abound. The America’s Heroes at Work Web site features links to a wide variety of organizations and supports, as well as educational resources on accommodations and promising employment practices.

Why should employers hire disabled veterans?

Veterans make excellent employees for a variety of reasons (including leadership, teamwork experience, and accelerated learning curve). In addition, there are often tax incentives available to help employers cover the cost of accommodations for employees with disabilities and to make their places of business accessible. Of course, hiring veterans with disabilities is simply the right thing to do. To learn more, read the America’s Heroes at Work fact sheets on incentives for hiring veterans and people with disabilities and visit www.hireVetsFirst.gov.

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SUPPORTING THE EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS OF Returning Service Members with TBI & PTSD

America’s Heroes at Work
U.S. Department of Labor
Office of Disability Employment Policy
Veterans’ Employment & Training Service
www.americasheroesatwork.gov

Personalized Assistance for Employers
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