## Supporting Students with TBI in the Public School System:
### Building Educator Capacities
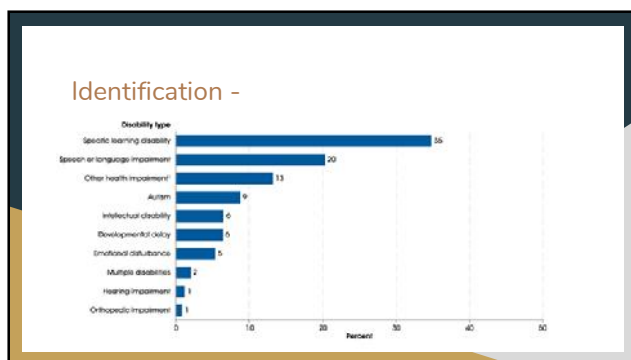
Brain Injury Association of Maryland Conference
March 16, 2018
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## Welcome!



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## Learner Outcomes

1. Participants will identify differences in student profiles of TBI and Specific Learning Disability

1. Participants will identify impacts of executive functioning on educational performance in Maryland

1. Participants will discuss ways to support the TBI learner across academic settings

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## Identification –



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*Brain injury is often referred to as a "silent epidemic" because many children have no visible impairment after a head injury.*

-Brain Injury Association of America

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## IDEA and Traumatic Brain Injury

TBI refers to an "acquired injury to the brain, caused by an external force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a student's educational performance. "

## IDEA TBI: Continued

"Traumatic brain injury" includes open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas such as:

(i) Cognition; (ii) Language; (iii) Memory; (iv) Attention; (v) Reasoning; (vi) Abstract thinking; (vii) Judgment; (viii) Problem solving; (ix) Sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; (x) Psychosocial behavior; (xi) Physical functions; (xii) Information processing; and (xiii) Speech. (c)

"Traumatic brain injury" does not include brain injuries that are: (i) Congenital or degenerative; or (ii) Induced by birth trauma.

## IDEA and Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

**"Specific learning disability"** is defined as follows:

**The term "specific learning disability" means** a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

## Similarities

Both may demonstrate:

- Difficulties with impulse control.
- Difficulties with generalizing and integrating skills.
- Inappropriate behavior due to poor social judgment.
- Difficulty with sustained attention.
- A need for memory aids due to difficulties with short term memory.

## Students with TBI

- May have problems that are more exaggerated and severe.
- May demonstrate more extreme discrepancies among abilities.
- May demonstrate more uneven and unpredictable progress.
- Have been conditioned to rely on old strategies for learning. Have ability to relearn old material therefore they may learn faster at times.
- Have potential to improve and regain function. Have deficits that are not developmental.

## Differences between TBI and SLD

*Onset:*

TBI: Sudden, acquired

SLD: Early or by birth. In school typically diagnosed by grade 3

*Causes:*

TBI: Head trauma, health related injury

SLD: Unclear - combination of brain development, environment, genetics

## Functional Changes

TBI:

- contrast between pre-and post in areas such as memory, executive functioning, emotional regulation, language, processing speed

SLD :

- no before –after contrast
- emerging gaps in performance over time

## In the classroom: Students with TBI

- Deficits described may not show up immediately
- Demands increase in the educational environment
- Increasing need **for strong executive functioning abilities**
- Suddenly, student is unable to maintain organization , demonstrate new learning, remember salient information, manage their frustrations and emotions
- Students may remember their pre-injury status, which will cause frustration when they are unable to complete tasks they had been able to do.

## What is Executive Function?

A series of cognitive processes that allow us to self-manage in order to complete tasks in a timely and efficient manner. EF combines the below elements to allow us to function in our daily lives

- Spoken/Written Comprehension & Production
- Orientation
- Attention
- Reasoning
- Problem Solving
- Memory
- New Learning
- Pragmatics (Social Language)

## Executive Functioning

Executive Functioning allows for:

- Task Understanding
  - Clarification, understanding of rules, comprehension
- Information Seeking
  - Using available resources (problem solving heavy)
- Retaining Information
  - Memory Heavy, Also recall of information

## Executive Functioning

- Error Detection
  - Metacognitive heavy, Can they recognize they are doing something wrong? Is it a priority?
- Error Correction
  - Reasoning and problem solving in order to fix errors
- Staying on Task
  - Attention
- Time Management
  - Efficiency, Impulsivity

## Maryland State Curriculum Standards: READING

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text
3. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

## Maryland State Curriculum Standards: SPEAKING AND LISTENING

1. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
2. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
3. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

## Maryland State Curriculum Standards: LANGUAGE

1. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
2. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

## Supports in the School Setting

- Highlighting or underlining "Action" words within a prompt, to ensure that the student understands what task they are supposed to do
- Using a resource list of where to locate information (Google Classroom, Graphic Organizers, Resources on the Classroom Walls, etc.
- Guided Notes, Highlighted Materials, Ability to refer back to notes during exams
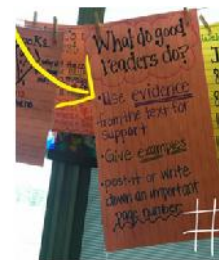
## Supports in the School Setting

- Provide "Common Errors" Guide for student reference, Peer Editing, Scale of Importance (How important do YOU think it is vs what I think )
- Use of a timer for a fixed period to address a task, then opportunity for break, focus on sustained attention (do not allow for music, phones etc in the room as a distraction)
- Allow for time to process information, pause when providing multiple directions, provide information in multiple modalities (via handout on student desk)

## Supports in the School Setting

- Encourage use of a planner or an agenda in order to maintain organization , use as a memory aid
- Recognize that the student may fatigue quickly, break up tasks and allow for extended time
- Make abstract concepts more concrete through use of graphic organizers
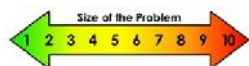
## Social-Emotional Learning

- **Thought Bubbling Tasks**
  - When a student is trying to take perspective, use a "thought bubble" to help make the process more concrete.
  - Interviewing others for their opinions to increase cognitive flexibility
- **Visual References/Organizers**
  - Align emotional responses to a visual scale: "How Big is My Problem?" "How Big is My Reaction?"
  - Recognize that there are different ways to react to a problem
  - Expected vs Unexpected Behaviors

## Social-Emotional Learning

### Social-Emotional Learning



### Collaboration

- Reach out for help when needed!
- If you are concerned about student performance, or suspect there maybe an injury or disability, refer to the school instructional team.
- The following individuals are good resources for more information on TBI within your school setting:
  - Speech-Language Pathologist
  - Occupational Therapist
  - School Psychologist



### Questions?