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How Strangulation Affects the Brain

CAIP - Year One
Report Summary

#IAmTheFaceOfBrainInjury

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Fax: 905-641-0323, Email: obia@obia.on.ca
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Over the years, OBIA has grown and changed due to the hard work and dedication of many involved. OBIA has been fortunate to have dedicated leadership and staff that have been steadfastly committed to the founders’ vision of supporting survivors and their family members.

By Ruth Wilcock
Executive Director, OBIA

RUTH’S DESK
Making a Difference for 30 Years

The Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) has, yet again, reached another milestone in supporting individuals and families living with brain injury, as this year marks OBIA’s 30th anniversary.

Thirty years ago, the landscape of brain injury in Ontario was fairly bleak. Many of those who sustained severe brain injuries were still receiving rehabilitation in the United States, which was hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of miles away from their loved ones. Support for families was almost nonexistent and navigating the rough terrain following a brain injury was close to impossible.

It was during this time that several families whose children had sustained devastating brain injuries sat around a kitchen table determined to make a difference. The founders of OBIA, Raymond Rempel and Beverley Mantell, personally experienced the great gap that was in our healthcare and community and social services system and set out to bring this to the attention of the powers that be. It was this very informal “round table” discussion that propelled OBIA into existence (incorporated initially as the Ontario Head Injury Association).

The founders of OBIA had two main goals. One was to create a sense of awareness in the public and within the government of the need to provide services for those who sustained brain injury. The second goal (equally important) was to provide support to survivors of brain injury and their families.

Over the years, OBIA has grown and changed due to the hard work and dedication of many involved. OBIA has been fortunate to have dedicated leadership and staff that have been steadfastly committed to the founders’ vision of supporting survivors and their family members.

As I reflect back, I am so proud of the work that OBIA has accomplished. OBIA has become a leader in educating professionals who are working in home and community-based rehabilitation. I am pleased to share with you that more than 12,000 people have attended our training programs. The Provincial ABI Conference (in collaboration with our
affiliated community associations) is the largest ABI conference in Canada with more than 600 people in attendance.

OBIA has and continues to be committed to increasing the awareness of ABI to the provincial government, the media, and to the general public. OBIA has led and been involved with public hearings that made a direct impact on funding, policy changes and enhancing the lives of those living with brain injury. OBIA's awareness campaigns such as Molson Indy Take Care, Remember Me, Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness, D.O.N.T. (Drive Only Never Text), I am the Face of Brain Injury, and Concussions Hit Home Campaign (Domestic Violence and Brain Injury) continue to bring to the forefront the message of prevention, awareness and the need for support.

The core of OBIA's work is to support ABI survivors and their families. Education and awareness are all components of providing support to those with lived experience. However, OBIA remains committed to providing direct support, where possible, to those living with brain injury. Through the years, OBIA's 1-800-263-5404 helpline has received more than 90,000 calls where we have, and continue to provide information, support and advocacy to survivors and their family members.

As the Executive Director, I am so very proud of the work that OBIA has and continues to accomplish. What impacts me most in my role at OBIA, is the contact I have with survivors of brain injury and their families. I can not tell you how moved I am at the courage, determination and perseverance that those living with brain injury demonstrate. Brain injury changes everything in an instant. No one can be fully prepared for the injury or what life will be like after the injury. When a survivor or family member approaches me and shares with me how OBIA helped them through a tremendously difficult time, it moves me and humbles me that OBIA made such a difference.

At times, OBIA’s support is direct and sometimes it is indirect. I think of a mom, who I met last summer. The mom shared with me that since her son’s injury, she has kept every single issue of the OBIA Review, as it is her guide and sense of comfort. I also remember another mom’s words to me, which were “OBIA saved my life.” I do not take these comments lightly and I hold them close to my heart. When I hear such profound gratitude, it only further fuels my passion for ensuring that OBIA continues to make a profound difference in the lives of those living with brain injury.

◊◊◊

We want to hear from you.

Survivors and Caregivers are invited to participate in OBIA’s Annual Research Questionnaire.

Your participation will enhance our ability to provide a greater unified voice on behalf of people living with the effects of brain injury in Ontario.

In appreciation for your participation in our research study, you will receive a free one year dual membership with both OBIA and the participating local brain injury association of your choice and a Survivor Identification Card.

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**CAIP Year 1 Report Summary**

By Chris McBride, Executive Director Spinal Cord Injury BC

Editor’s Notes: This spring, the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) held public consultations with persons who have sustained brain injuries (and also their family members) to gather input into their ideas of what would help make an accessible and inclusive Canada. OBIA held three consultations, with 49 people in attendance. OBIA is proud to be the only organization in Canada where the voice of persons living with the effects of brain injury was shared when it came to this federal initiative.

In the late spring of 2016, the Government of Canada, through the Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, invited proposals from disability organizations to establish networks in order to lead coordinated consultations within their constituencies, with the specific intent of reaching as wide a possible range of people with disabilities, and creating cross-disability cooperation that endures well beyond the life of the consultation.

To take advantage of this unprecedented opportunity to provide input for this critically needed accessibility and inclusion legislation, Spinal Cord Injury Canada quickly mobilized 32 well-known organizations of and for people with disabilities and older adults to form the Canadian Access and Inclusion Project (CAIP). In the fall of 2016, CAIP was one of eight projects awarded federal funding to conduct a community-based consultation to provide the Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities, with an accurate snapshot of the barriers preventing full participation of our respective memberships, along with suggestions for new federal accessibility legislation.

The objective of the first phase of the CAIP project was to learn from Canadians with disabilities and older adults about the barriers that prevent Canada from being a fully accessible and inclusive society and what needs to change to make our country more accessible and inclusive to all.

In January 2017, CAIP project partners hosted 52 consultations in communities across the country, including one consultation dedicated to youth with disabilities. In addition, 10 workshops were held within First Nations communities. An online survey version of the consultation was also available for those who were not able to participate in the in-person consultations and workshops. In all, 660 people contributed their experiences, wisdom and ideas. Importantly, participants included Canadians with disabilities who are hard to reach or whose input is infrequently captured. Another 60 people shared their stories and ideas on the Rant, Rave and Recommend feature of the project’s website, www.include-me.ca.
Through a structured research process, CAIP’s academic research partners analyzed the consultation input and identified common sets of barriers and areas in which changes could overcome these obstacles to make Canada more accessible and inclusive. These include:

- **Lack of public awareness, knowledge, and training** were consistently identified as barriers, and were also identified as areas where more funding is required to support making Canada fully accessible and inclusive—these are areas that need to be changed.

- **Insufficient infrastructure and services** were also consistently identified as barriers—these areas require more funding to support changes to make Canada accessible and inclusive.

Several legislation-related issues and considerations were identified through the consultations, including the need for national standards and equity, accountability, transparency, and representation by people with disabilities and indigenous people to be in the legislative processes.

Lack of housing and transitional barriers (as youth age into adulthood) were brought to the forefront in the First Nations community workshops and the youth consultation, respectively. Employment was brought forward as one of the top priorities identified by participants in the youth consultation.

The results of phase one will now be used to inform the consultation plan for phase two, which will focus on how the identified priority issues faced by Canadians with disabilities can be addressed and how the Federal Government can employ its policy and legislative tools to create a Canada that is accessible and inclusive of all Canadians.

Phase two activities will include additional consultations with private and public sector stakeholders with expertise in the identified priority areas as well as those with expertise in fields such as legislation and policy development. In addition, CAIP’s partner organizations will participate in a think tank aimed at exploring bold and innovative ways of changing attitudes to improve access and inclusion in Canada.

To view the report and all of the input received from each of the 62 consultations and workshops, please visit www.include-me.ca.

For more information on the CAIP project, contact Tanya Jewell at the OBIA office: tjewell@obia.on.ca
Rob is a seasoned litigator.

As an experienced advocate for seriously injured clients and their families, Rob Durante has successfully represented clients at all levels of court in Ontario. He is also an in-demand speaker and authority on issues concerning personal injury law. To relax at the end of the day, Rob enjoys spending time in the kitchen, cooking and creating traditional Italian dishes passed down from his parents.

Rob understands that in litigation, a recipe for success includes prep work. Like a chef, a lawyer always needs to be in prep mode, getting ready for the next step. Adding creativity to the mix helps Rob blend all the ingredients he needs to build a difficult case into one that wins the day.

Rob gets great satisfaction when he’s able to help provide a sense of justice and closure for family members who can then begin the healing process. That level of commitment means that when the pressure is on, Rob can really take the heat.

To learn more about Rob visit www.oatleyvigmond.com/rob
Are you a caregiver?

Looking for one-on-one support after brain injury?

Our FREE Peer Support Program can connect you to a trained mentor who understands.
I’ve Got a Long Way To Go But I’m Going To Get There

By David Smith

There are probably months out of many of our lives that, if given the chance, we may choose to forget. I was not given that choice. Odds are, I will never remember August 20, 2015. Now, I do not really want to recall the day because the probability is that nothing exciting happened until the explosion.

I had been with my company for a little more than two years and knew the crew well. We all got along and I had all the help I needed when required. The location was a factory just inside Toronto. Our day progressed past the eight-hour mark, as usual, and the piping system we had created was ready to be tested. To test for leaks there are a few methods that are used. We used air pressure. Now I do not remember what happened but the pipes exploded under pressure and hit me. A month is gone: my morning drive to the site, the day of work, the month at St. Mike’s hospital nothing; has come back to me.

I am a person who knew literally nothing about brain injuries. You could say that I met it head-on. A friend of Ashley, my girlfriend, suffered one about a year before I did. I realize that the term would have come up, but it would have led me to think she hit her head hard and would be fine after not too long. This friend helped Ashley to understand what to expect and how to deal with it all. It must have been terrible for Ashley to deal with, but she pushed on.

It was a few days after I was brought out of the coma and Ashley came to my bedside. I believe the nurse was helping me wake up and told me that it was August 29, 2015. She asked what that meant to me. My response was to question if it was my wedding anniversary. Ashley laughed and told me we were not married. It was my birthday.

August 20, 2016 was one year for me. One full year of meeting the new me. In the Toronto Rehab Centre, I was convinced after eight months I would be driving, working and back to myself. It takes acceptance and patience to deal with a brain injury. The lucky thing for me is I realize it was a freak accident. I can not look in the mirror and point my finger at the person who changed everything for me. It was not another driver who made a bad choice and changed everything for me. Hands down, a freak accident. Nothing more; and I realize it could have been worse in so many ways.

Meeting the new you at the age of 35 is a tough one to explain. Now I am not a different person, but things have changed.

The Dave before would work 12 hours, go to the gym, eat and head out to see friends. Five hours of sleep and do the whole thing over the next day. Today I will head out for an hour-and-a-half meeting and that may be all it takes to make my brain tired enough to just head home and call it a day. I have read and heard many people saying the whole “meet the new you” thing. It did not make sense to me before, but I get it now. The new you does not have to be a bad thing.

From the hospital stay of two months, I was excited to get home and be able to get back to myself. WSIB has been great about keeping me busy with therapy. At first, I had speech, physio and occupational therapies, along with psychologist’s visits. Lucky for me, I was able to “graduate” physio after a few months. My balance was affected, but has come back quite
a bit. My shoulder was a mess, but with the titanium inserts and amazing surgery, I have no issues as of now. The rest of the therapy is ongoing, and it is just one of those things you have to accept. Therapists know what they are doing; they’ve met many people struggling with the same, if not worse, problems or limitations than you could ever imagine.

It has been a time of “following the doctor’s orders.” If any other part of my body had been injured, I would have figured it out on my own and got back to where I could. However, when it is your brain, you have to realize that there is so much affected. What works for me may not work for others, and what works for them, maybe I would put up the blinders and not accept. That is where Toby comes in. He is my service dog. Before him, I would go to an hour and a half of therapy and head back home. If it was not a good day and I could not remember things, I would get back home and let it spin through my head all day. Being tired after an hour and a half was not the me from before. Not being able to remember things was new. Essentially, I would be watching TV and eating, letting the negative aspects of my injury keep clouding my brain. With Toby, I would come home, and the day was wiped clean. I concentrated on walking him, hanging out and being with my buddy.

I believe that dogs (given the right person) are a huge help. If you have an animal that is just interested in you and keeps you happy, then you will not concentrate on the negative aspects of the new you. Depression and anxiety are hard to deal with. I have met many people who suffer from depression after a brain injury and it is understandable. We have a lot going on. We are not the same people. However, we are still here, and concentrating on the positive is how we can make the most out of our lives.

If you are new to this ordeal, or someone close to you is suffering from a brain injury, it is a big deal, but it is not the end. Every single person is different; however, we all need the right people behind us. Without my team, I would not know where to turn. Get behind the people with brain injury. They need help, but more than that, they need understanding. I have a long way to go, but I am going to get there.

---

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**OBIA’s Support Services can offer:**

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- Online mTBI/Concussion support group

Call our toll free Support Line 1.800.263.5404
or eMail: support@obia.on.ca
It’s Never Too Late for Success

By Craig Dunn

I was seven courses away from a second degree from Acadia University. I had represented Newfoundland in three sports, competed in seven provincially, and won gold or silver in six of them. I was travelling to British Columbia representing Newfoundland & Labrador in the 1992 Senior Badminton Nationals, but suffered a traumatic brain injury in a motor vehicle accident on a stopover in Ottawa. I was visiting a friend and we crashed at more than 200 km/h. I was the passenger in the back seat of a Camaro with my head touching the ceiling. They told me that the car flipped six or seven times and landed on the roof of my section of the car, ergo the injury and coma. The Jaws of Life were used to extricate me from the car. My heart stopped once or twice in the ambulance ride to the hospital, and I was admitted with a Glasgow Coma Scale score of three. I spent two weeks in a coma and remained in hospital/rehab for four and a half months. I had to learn everything again as though I was a newborn. I did not say relearn because my past was gone, as though it had never existed!

Returning to Gander, I had a tutor for 228 weeks, two to three hours daily. Brain injury was new to the tutor, a retired special education teacher, but he learned and fine-tuned as the therapy progressed. I did my own physical therapies from the start, then mental therapies as I healed. All of the things I attempted were with the goal of achieving normality. My tutor said on his last day of tutoring, “I’ve taken you as far as I can; now you have to fine-tune.” I am still tweaking it in 2017.

Some repercussions have dissipated and I manage those that remain. If you never saw me play sports before the accident, you probably would not notice. However, when I am fatigued or interacting in a group of people, repercussions are noticeable. I know what my limitations are and what I can and cannot do. Sometimes events happen in the spur of the moment and I react incorrectly, but I try to remove myself from situations to prevent showing the injury. These are things I have to do and that is not all too bad. Major effects I cannot control immediately but am still learning how to control these situations.

Sports are based on the foundation of muscle memory. I was told that the brain is a muscle; therefore, repetition became imperative in recovery in order to build memories. I wholeheartedly believe in the importance of brain injury retraining programs adapted for each individual survivor, as well as strength and fitness programs to help with muscle loss. I was told early in recovery you need to build muscle because, “the brain might forget but the muscle does not.” Even though brain circuits have been destroyed and connections lost, I feel a healthy mind needs a healthy body.
I described who I was before the accident (BA – before accident) because I used this as a goal, an unattainable if not erroneous thought, in hospital (AA – after accident). One needs to set goals low, reach them and then set others. You need to return to the basics, crawl before you walk in everything you do and learn as though you have never done them before, which is the case for some such as me. You learn the ways to do things at different times and there is no guarantee; you are always learning and fine-tuning.

I always compare AA Craig to BA Craig so I keep working to make things better. A friend of mine, Shawn Roberts, said to me in December 2000, “It’s time to live life and not therapy. A sports victory does not make a man. If you want to feel like a man, get a mortgage,” he laughed. “I’m proud of you and what you’ve accomplished but I think you want more.”

I turned my attention to life, and to become part of society, slowly, and as an equal. I had to fit back into society and not have society fit into my brain-damaged world!

I won four awards locally, two provincially and passed six post-secondary courses. I completed life therapies (paid bills, kept house, lived independently, worked, developed interpersonal relationships, etc).

However, sports was always integral to my recovery. Badminton and golf returned to a high level, my golf handicap lowered to an eight (now 11; it was ten BA). At one point, squash, tennis and badminton left me among the top five in Gander.

A doctor in Gander diagnosed my back with Lumbar Scheuermann Disease. It peaked March 2003, and is still noticeable in 2017. Almost like the night of the crash, everything I had worked for and achieved had vanished. The doctor told me it would have occurred anyhow, the accident just brought it on faster.

However, you have to keep trying, keep fine-tuning, and keep adapting to the situation. Somehow, leave the past where it belongs but use your past to build on your future. I set myself up on a five-year plan to normality and did well, but must always be aware of limitations as my injury was so traumatic.

I discovered that it is never too late for success. I am a 48-year-old brain injury survivor and on the weekend of January 28, 2017, I won singles in the NL Senior A Open badminton tournament and second in doubles, 25 years after I last won such a prestigious championship. Competition was not what it was when I was number one in the province in 1992, but this is my success and I am proud to share it with all of you.

#IAmTheFaceOfBrainInjury

Do you have a story of survival? Do you have coping strategies to share? Are you a caregiver to someone with ABI?

To help spread the awareness of how brain injury impacts our lives, OBIA is pleased to share stories from our readership. The goal is simple:

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DID YOU KNOW?

A study of women in domestic violence shelters found that:

- An estimated 92% reported their partners hit them more than once
- Up to 83% reported being both hit in the head and severely shaken
- 8% disclosed they were hit in the head over 20 times in the past year (Jackson, 2002)

For support, please call: 1-800-263-5404
#ConcussionHitsHome
How Strangulation Affects the Brain

Six things to know about healing after a traumatic brain injury

Most people would associate traumatic brain injury (TBI) with violent accidents, strokes or even concussions from sports. But a TBI caused by strangulation in violent relationships probably never crossed your mind, even though it may be the leading cause of TBI when coupled with being hit in the head or severely shaken by abusive intimate partners.

Hirsch Handmaker, MD, chairman and chief executive officer of The CACTIS Foundation, an institution focused on advancing the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of TBI, estimates that as many as 20 million people could be suffering from TBI in the U.S., a figure that is 12 times greater than any published incidence of TBI in the general population.

Why such a large discrepancy? One reason is the two types of TBI: severe and mild. Severe TBI is more easily noticed and measured because it results in impairment of higher level cognitive functions and limited body or mind function. Mild TBI, which strangulation attacks more commonly lead to, may not even show up on an MRI and CAT scan, and symptoms like headaches, difficulty thinking, memory problems, attention deficits, mood swings and frustration can be easily overlooked or misdiagnosed.

Strangulation and TBI

During a strangulation assault, the pressure applied to the neck impedes oxygen transport by preventing blood flow to and from the brain. The trachea can also be restricted, making breathing difficult or impossible. The combination can quickly cause asphyxia and unconsciousness, which can lead to brain injury even without loss of consciousness or those lasting mere seconds.

 Victims of multiple strangulation attacks or longer durations of unconsciousness are at greater risk of TBI. The New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence says side effects associated with TBI can include:

- Cognitive difficulties, such as decreased ability to concentrate, pay attention and solve problems
- Communication difficulties
- Difficulty with executive functioning, such as making decisions, considering long-term consequences, taking initiative, feeling motivated, starting and finishing actions and controlling impulsiveness
• Changes in behavior, personality or temperament, such as irritability, difficulty tolerating frustration, and emotional expression that doesn’t fit the situation

• Physical effects, such as vision problems, insomnia, loss of coordination and seizures

These problems take on a doubling effect because they also make coping with violence or escaping it all the more difficult, and can make it harder for survivors to make their case to a judge or a police officer. They can even be used against survivors in custody disputes.

Recovering from Mild TBI

Being diagnosed with TBI is an important step in the recovery process because it helps explain the cognitive issues that a person has been experiencing and opens the door to education and treatment. The Brain Injury Association of America offers these healing guidelines:

1. **The recovery is not always quick.** There can be wide, individual variations in the timeframe for recovery. It can take several weeks or several months for symptoms to fully resolve.

2. **Recovery is often uneven.** There will be “good days” and “bad days.” This is normal in recovering from a brain injury. On the good days, people want to get as much done as they can. Often, this can lead to overdoing it, which can bring back symptoms that were previously gone.

3. **Create the best possible environment for recovery.** Substances like caffeine, alcohol and nicotine can affect a person with a brain injury much more than they did before the injury. Be aware of the possible consequences and consider abstaining.

4. **Give yourself more time to complete things.** Issues like fatigue, attention and memory issues can cause delays in completing tasks that were easily done before the injury. Allowing additional time to do things like laundry, menu planning, shopping and bill paying can help. Thinking out the steps needed to complete tasks and writing them down can be helpful too.

5. **Professional help is important.** It is important to understand the effects of a brain injury. The injury itself can impair the ability of a person to accurately assess their abilities. And once problems are identified, often a person with a mild brain injury struggles with figuring out effective strategies to compensate for problem areas.

6. **Support groups can be helpful.** Brain injury can be isolating. People say things like “you look fine,” with the implication that you should be fine. It is an invisible injury. Sometimes talking with others who have experienced similar situations can help a person with a brain injury understand they are not the only one dealing with these issues. Contact the brain injury association in your area to find out about local support groups.

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Enjoy the Little Things in Life

By: Kyra Noseworthy

I heard faint voices and noises, but I recognized only one… my mom. I slowly opened one of my eyes, but not my right eye; I couldn’t. It was held shut with rocks and blood. I was so confused, but I couldn’t think. My mind was a blur; if I tried to think my head would ache. What had happened? Where was I? Then it hit me. Had we been in a car crash? Fear washed over me and I needed to know what was going on, but maybe it would make it worse if I knew? I could smell latex; almost like… gloves… dentists’ gloves? No, hospital gloves? I blinked a few times and looked around with my left eye. I saw people, lots of people. Doctors and nurses and my mom and dad. I don’t know why, perhaps I was scared, but I started to cry. The tears stung my cheek as they dripped down my face. I moved my hand toward the pain and felt the left side of my face. It was ripped and torn and rough. All this was happening, but still one thought lingered in my head; “what happened?”

The lunch bell rings, saving me from math class. It pierces my ears. I wish this brain injury had never happened. I watch all the kids run outside to play as I wait for Megan, my best friend, to put her lunch in her bag. We walk in silence to the office. I know she doesn’t like me leaving but I was done for the day. I am exhausted and I can’t think. I just need to get home and rest. I am so glad that I am taking tomorrow off. School hasn’t been the same. It’s not an enjoyment to come anymore. I’ve always been a straight A student but now it seems as if I’ll never make it through Grade 6. Meg and I walk into the office. “Hi Kyra,” the secretary chirps. I’m a regular here now. “I called your mom already, she’s on her way.” “Thanks,” I say. I jump in the car and we drive away. “You have another MRI tomorrow,” my mom says. I lean my head against the window. Just another day living with a brain injury.

I’ve loved horses ever since I was younger. I still remember the first time I found interest in them. I was in kindergarten and my older brother was in Grade 2 or 3. As a field trip, his class went to a farm and they rode horses there. I remember when he came home and told us about his trip I got jealous. So I begged my mom for some lessons and that’s where it all started.

I guess this would be a good time to tell you about what happened to me. February 6, 2016 was the day I thought would never happen. My mom and I and a few barn hands decided to take a last-minute trail ride at a local riding stable. It was a beautiful day, the grass was soft and dewy, and it shone in the sunlight. It was fairly warm (for being February) but the gentle breeze kept my mind clear. Then suddenly and unexpectedly the horse I was riding took off. I had been on a racing horse before, so it didn’t frighten me… until he turned a sharp corner. The saddle slipped, I hit my head on the stirrup and that was it. Whoever tacked that horse up wasn’t aware the saddle improperly fit this underweight horse. I must have looked like a rag doll dropping off the 15-hand (five feet)-high animal. I was unconscious and badly hurt on the side of an old country road. I don’t remember any of it, which I’m glad about. From what I’ve been told, a man in a passing car stopped when he saw me and called 911. That’s when my mom came around the corner looking for me. She saw me lying there by the man’s car and immediately ran to me. Meanwhile, the horse I had been riding had taken off back to the barn. One of the stable hands spotted him and became suspicious about where I was. She called 911 also. An ambulance came from the two nearest towns. I was driven to the Tillsonburg Hospital. As soon as I came through the doors they could see that my injuries were too severe, so I was airlifted to the Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario.

I woke up there in the emergency room. I was assessed by the trauma team. My injuries included a 2-centimeter liver contusion, significant right facial abrasions, right flank and left knee abrasions and the most serious injury of all was a
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hemorrhagic diffuse axonal brain injury. “What’s a hemorrhagic diffuse axonal brain injury?” you ask. Well, a hemorrhage means a bleed, so I had a bleed in my brain. Imagine that your brain is a big communication system full of fibers that are all talking to each other. One big hard drive for your body, technically. So a diffuse axonal injury meant that those fibers in my brain were twisted or torn. So therefore they weren’t communicating quickly enough, or not at all. Most people thought that my face was going to be scarred for the rest of my life, but it healed perfectly, all thanks to Dr. Ben.

If you have a broken arm, nobody is going to make you lift weights anytime soon. But a brain injury is invisible, so people can’t tell that you are still recovering. Usually when people asked why I wasn’t participating in certain things they were shocked to find out I had a brain injury. I don’t want people to see me as a hospital patient. I’m still normal. I still hang out with my friends and joke around. It’s not like I will never heal from this; it’s only temporary. There’s no prescription to quicken the recovery time. There’s only rest. I had to stop horseback riding for three months and I couldn’t listen to or play any music because it would give me a headache. I couldn’t read or go on my phone, which for a teen is something HUGE. I didn’t even go back to school full time for the rest of that year. It’s been 10 months since then, and I’m much better now. I still have accommodations for school. It’s been slow, but I have definitely moved forward. I can’t last a whole week at school yet and I have to take breaks or I won’t be able to think. It takes me longer to finish work so I get extended deadlines. A lot of people have asked me if I will ever get on a horse again. The answer is yes and I already have. I thought I would be scared, but as soon as I got on I knew how much I had missed it.

So, why did I decide to share my story? Well, first off let me tell you, I didn’t want to, but then I was having trouble with people thinking it wasn’t that bad. If I hadn’t had this injury I probably would have thought the same. But now I know. Riding is second nature to me and people always ask me why I like it so much. My answer is usually, “well, why do you breathe?” Not everything in life is going to be horrible, and good things have come out of the bad. I have met so many amazing people through all of this, and I have better relationships with some I already knew. Is horseback riding a risk? Yes, I may get hurt, I have gotten hurt and it won’t be the last time. But life itself is a risk we take on every day. I’ve learned that anything can happen to anyone. Riding brings me so much joy. When

I’m upset I go to the barn; when I’m mad I go to the barn. I cannot imagine life without it. Everyone has different hobbies, different things they love. I’m just a simple girl, and all I do is act, play music, and ride. I don’t need much else because those are the things that keep me optimistic and looking forward to the next day. You have to enjoy the little things in life because if those are things that make you smile every day, then those are the things you should never stop doing! DON’T LET ANYTHING HOLD YOU BACK FROM WHAT YOU LOVE.

Kyra is a Grade 7 student at Harrisfield Public School, where she continues to excel, but still needs support and accommodations. She lives in Ingersoll, Ontario with her family. Kyra continues to receive support from the Paediatric Acquired Brain Injury Community Outreach Program (PABICOP) at Thames Valley Children’s Center in London, Ontario.
My journey with brain injury began on July 2, 1999, when a tow truck T-boned the car I was in and I ended up in Sick Kids Hospital in a medically induced coma. I finally woke up a month later and began my journey of life again. I was four years old, but I had to learn to eat, breathe, walk and talk all over again. The doctors told my parents that I would never talk, never walk, and never get past Grade 2, but we are all stubborn! I do walk, and I do talk; and not only that, I just graduated from Loyalist College, and am now working toward a certificate in writing.

I was so young when I was injured that I don’t remember life before brain injury. My mom feels like she has had three kids because she raised me through infancy twice and she raised my younger brother, who was a toddler when I was injured. I have dysarthria of speech, which makes my speech difficult to understand, although I have gotten better over the years. My elementary school experience was not the best experience of my life! The teachers knew me as happy, bouncy junior kindergartner and then I was the kid with the brain injury. They all felt sorry for me, but didn’t know how to help. Kids can be cruel! When they don’t understand you, they exclude you!

Because of my experience in elementary school, I didn’t want high school to be the same or worse, so my speech-language pathologist and I decided to present a speech to the whole school the first day of Grade 9. Although I was terrified that first time, that speech helped students and teachers understand my injury and how to communicate effectively with me. It was so beneficial that the principal asked me to educate the new Grade 9s and new students each year. High school was a new beginning—I participated in woodworking club—to my mother’s chagrin, competed at provincial track and field, participated in drama productions, displayed art in the community, contributed to a small community in Nova Scotia through a service strip, and walked across the stage on graduation day to a standing ovation! I know that the standing ovation was my teachers, friends and their parents showing me how proud they were of my accomplishments but I just wanted to be like everyone else.

College was a new experience. It was harder to make friends but it opened up a whole new world of information and possibilities. There was more reading, more studying and more assignments! I had to plan and work more independently.

My stubborn nature also comes through in other ways. I have had lots of experiences that my family did not necessarily recommend. My mom would try to protect me, but I am more stubborn than she is. At Mont-Tremblant, I zip-lined into a tree just like Wile E. Coyote, but I survived with no more than my mom shaking her head. I just forgot how to stop! The horseback guide in Costa Rica did not understand balance issues and somehow thought he was helping by holding my reins. Guess what – off the horse I went! However, I was not walking down that mountain path so the horse and I made it back somehow without another incident. Over the years, I have given my mom heart palpitations because if my brother can do it, I want to do it. Since my brother jumped off a cliff in Jamaica under lifeguard’s supervision, I did it too! Paintballing was another story – it’s hard to shoot a gun with one hand and keep out of firing range when you have balance issues and it’s dark! My mom said, “don’t come crying to me,” but paintballing is now off my bucket list!

If I had let fear rule my life, I probably would not have left my house. Instead, I have seized opportunities and tried many new experiences. I refuse to let my brain injury define me but it has opened up opportunities and let me share my life lessons with others. My motto is, “at least try it.” If you don’t like it, you never have to try it again (like me and paintballing).
Meet the OBIA Team

Diane Dakiv, Training Program Coordinator

After many years of being the “Chief Cook and Bottle Washer” at home, I joined the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) in June 2007 as a part-time Administrative Assistant, becoming full-time after a few short months.

The work I originally started out doing at OBIA is quite different than it is today. Currently, my primary role at OBIA is to oversee and execute all aspects of the OBIA/Brock University certificate training programs and our Brain Basics training programs, and provide administrative support for OBIA’s Board of Directors along with the various board committees. In addition, I am the primary receptionist in the office and carry out other duties as required.

I love what I do and feel extremely honoured and privileged to work with such a fantastic, worthwhile organization and an amazing group of people.

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Specific
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Goal Setting After a Brain Injury

By: Alison Foo

Before my concussion, I was always busy. I worked long hours, travelled three times a year, hosted parties, played sports, volunteered, and maintained a blog. I was always planning something, but after my injury, my symptoms were so debilitating and unpredictable that I couldn’t even make plans for 10 minutes in the future. As a result, I was constantly failing to meet my own expectations and becoming increasingly frustrated. I was close to giving up entirely, until I changed my perspective and approach to goal-setting.

How to Set Goals After a Brain Injury

Step 1: Change Your Perspective and Set Your Goal(s).

First you have to decide what you want your goal to be. It is imperative that you don’t set yourself up for failure by having unfair expectations. If you set an unrealistic goal, you will de-motivate yourself and give up. Through accomplishing a series of challenging yet doable goals, you will achieve the once seemingly impossible ones.

To start, set simple goals that are achievable in the short term (i.e. daily and/or weekly). Then gradually work your way up to more difficult goals. At the time of my accident, I was working on 1-year fitness goals, 5-year career goals, 10-year family goals, and 30-year financial goals. After my injury, just lifting my head off the bed to drink water was exhausting, so my first goal was to perform one task every three days. Tasks included taking a shower, folding clothes, or going to an appointment. Once I could do that, I slowly increased the frequency and difficulty of the tasks. I then added outings to my goals, which later included running errands. Eventually, I was performing multiple tasks each day, having outings a few times per week, and running multiple errands per outing. As my energy levels improved, I also set my first fitness goal - to walk for at least 10 minutes each day. Over time, this evolved to taking longer walks and faster-paced walks. Once I had more confidence in my capabilities, I focused on social goals. I started with phone conversations and one-on-one meetings, before working my way up to group dinners at bustling restaurants. Finally, I started hosting parties in my home.

Perhaps the best first goal is to focus on improving your physical activity. Exercise is well-known to improve brain function, depression, anxiety, and sleeping problems. Furthermore, recent studies indicate that moderate exercise is the best treatment for concussions (John J. Leddy, et al, 2012).

Step 2: Plan Out Your Goals and Take One Tiny Step at a Time.

Now that you’ve set your goal, the next step towards achieving it is to make a plan. Write your plan down on a piece of paper so you can follow it easily and cross things off as you complete them. The best approach to planning (and executing) is to take things one tiny step at a time. Break down each goal into as many small, manageable components as you can, then tackle one component (i.e. tiny step) at a time. The definition of ‘manageable’ is different for everyone and will change as you recover.

For example, these were the tiny, manageable steps that I planned for my goal of going for a walk:

- Stand up (Note: You could break this step down further. e.g. lift head off bed, then lift head and shoulders off bed, then sit up, then sit on the side of the bed, then stand up.)
- Drink some water
- Change my clothes
- Gather my cell phone, keys, and health card
- Put walking/running shoes on
- Leave the house (i.e. simply step outside)
- Start walking (even if it’s just a few feet) and rest as needed
- Walk home and rest as needed
- Stretch
- Drink some water

When you start executing your plan, the most important thing to remember is to focus only on the task at hand. Don’t even think about how you’re going to tackle the next step until you’ve completed the current one. That means, not worrying about whether or not you’ll be able to complete all of the steps, and not counting the number of steps you have left. Taking one tiny step at a time will earn you little wins, keep you motivated, and make your goal seem less daunting. Take breaks when you need them and try again later.

It helps to have someone else’s support when you’re working towards a goal, but only if they understand the importance of taking things one step at a time. I remember one night in the winter, my partner wanted to take me to the mall to help me achieve my daily walking goal. I was fatigued and dizzy and convinced that I wouldn’t be able to do it. But he talked me through one step at a time. He said, we’re just going to get in the car and we’re just going to drive to the mall. If you’re still not feeling well when we get there, you don’t have to get out of the car, we’ll come straight home. So he helped me up off the
couch and into the car. He drove me to the mall, turned the engine off, and asked if I was able to get out of the car. I was, and in that moment, we set a goal of walking to the mall entrance and back. When I got to the entrance, I felt okay, so we went inside. That night, I ended up walking for longer than my daily goal. So when you’re faced with a particularly daunting moment, keep repeating to yourself, “I’m just going to do this tiny task. That’s not too hard.” One and a half years of tiny steps later, I jogged 5 km in the BIST Run, Walk & Roll. I’m working towards running a 10 km race next year.

**Step 3: Be Flexible and Be Kind to Yourself.**

Celebrate each tiny success and never criticize or punish yourself for setbacks. Goal-setting after a brain injury requires time and practice through trial and error, so be patient with yourself, do what you can, and be flexible with changes to your plans. If something’s not working for you, try again and then try something different. You might need to re-evaluate your goals, revisit them at a later time, or break certain steps into smaller components. Don’t be afraid to ask someone for help.

**Step 4: Set New Goals and Keep Challenging Yourself.**

As your symptoms improve, you’ll be able to accomplish more each day. When you’re further along in your recovery process, gradually increase the breadth and difficulty of your steps. Soon, you’ll be working on various goals (e.g. fitness, cognitive, financial and social) simultaneously. Eventually, your goals will become more and more challenging, complex, and long-term. No matter what your physical barriers are, there’s always something to learn, something to improve, and new ways to challenge yourself. As long as you take things one step at a time, you’ll look back one day and surprise yourself with how far you’ve come.

**References**

OBIA’s Concussion Booklets

Information includes:

- What is a concussion?
- Anatomy of a concussion
- Symptoms
- What should I do?
- How long will it take to feel better?
- When can I go back to work, school, play, activity?
- What is Second Impact Syndrome?
- Where can I get help?
- Resources

To receive a copy of this brochure, order online at: www.obia.ca or if you need further information on concussion, contact: 1.800.263.5404 or support@obia.on.ca

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OBIA Advisory Council (OAC) Report

The last OAC meeting was held on March 11 at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. There were 18 representatives from the community associations in attendance and another five joined the meeting via webcast.

We were very fortunate to have Mark Blumberg present on *The Top 20 Compliance Issues for Charities*. Mark is a partner at the law firm Blumberg Segal LLP (Blumbergs) in Toronto and works almost exclusively advising non-profits and registered charities on their work in Canada and abroad. Mark has written numerous articles, is a frequent speaker on legal issues involving charity and not-for-profit law and is the editor of [www.canadiancharitylaw.ca](http://www.canadiancharitylaw.ca) and [www.globalphilanthropy.ca](http://www.globalphilanthropy.ca)™ – Canadian websites dedicated to news about the Canadian charitable sector as well as legal and ethical issues for Canadian charities operating in Canada or overseas. He also has established the websites [www.charitydata.ca](http://www.charitydata.ca) and [www.smartgiving.ca](http://www.smartgiving.ca).

BIA Sudbury and District

On March 10, 2017, Brain Injury Association Sudbury and District, in partnership with March of Dimes Canada, hosted our annual “Luck Of The Irish” Porketta Bingo. The event featured a fun St. Patrick’s Day-themed bingo where the prizes included porketta sandwiches and treats. This may sound strange for anyone who is not from Sudbury or participated in an event like this. We can assure you the event delivered an afternoon of laughter and deliciousness. Porketta Bingo is certainly no traditional bingo. The bingo cards are comprised of three laminated playing cards, from the Joker to King. The objective is easy – once all three of your playing cards are called you win. To claim your prize you must yell PORKETTA!

With spring and summer around the corner, BIAD is gearing up for many fun activities, including Brain Injury Awareness events, public awareness workshops, a day trip to Killarney and, of course, our Annual Charity Golf Tournament. This year, we are celebrating our 20th Annual Golf tournament on Thursday July 13, 2017 at Timberwolf Golf Club. It promises to be a day of fun for all!

BIS Toronto

On February 11, 2017, BIST was proud to offer a Self Care and Communication Workshop for ABI Caregivers. This workshop allowed caregivers to learn skills and strategies from Stacey Levine of Journey Rehabilitation and Behaviour Therapy and our very own Peer Support Coordinator, Carrie Mackinnon, MSW. This workshop was filled with dynamic, resourceful participants and a request was made following the workshop for BIST to help develop a Caregiver Peer Support Group. Listen we did, and we are working on starting this group for September 2017. If you live in Toronto and are interested in participating in this group or would like more information please email info@bist.ca. For those who could not make this event, you can find the top takeaways from the workshop on our website: [www.bist.ca/caregiver](http://www.bist.ca/caregiver).

BIST also began a new Adults with ABI support group in February 2017. This group takes place once a month at our head office, but is also set up for virtual participants to attend. So far we have had members attend using both options, and despite a few technical glitches, its been a success.

In May 2017, we will be hosting our 2nd Annual Community Resource Fair with special guest speaker Faed Hendry of 211 Toronto/Findhelp Information Services. This year we will be
showcasing art from our ABI survivors/thrivers at the fair and we are beyond impressed with what has been submitted.

In April 2017 we were sad to say goodbye to our BSW student Jaleesa Thomas. Jaleesa was with us since January and was instrumental in helping our team run programs and assisting with additional resourcing of supports. We will miss her and we wish her the best of luck with her future plans!

As always we are looking forward to a busy and interactive June! Once again we will be passing out ABI literature in hospitals throughout the city and we also have a booth at Toronto Pride. Mayor John Tory has once again declared June Brain Injury Awareness Month in Toronto and both the CN Tower and the Toronto sign at City Hall will be lit up in our colours (blue and green) on June 14 to help us commemorate this event. Our Brain Injury Awareness Committee has been working hard to make these things happen and we can’t thank them enough!

We are also very much looking forward to the annual Mix & Mingle event on June 14, 2017 and our 3rd Annual Birdies for Brain Injury on June 23.

BIA North Bay and Area

The Brain Injury Association of North Bay and Area (BIANBA) had a busy October-December quarter! On November 4, we announced that we had entered into a collaborative agreement with “PEP” (People for Equal Partnership in Mental Health - Nipissing). The purpose of this agreement is to allow both BIANBA and PEP to learn from each other and to provide our respective members with increased services and educational opportunities. PEP has generously permitted BIANBA the use of its facilities for meetings and events. We look forward to nurturing this mutually beneficial relationship.

On November 13, the J.O.Y. Band held a concert at Trinity United Church in North Bay and graciously donated all of the proceeds raised to BIANBA. This was done through a “free will offering” on admission and $1200 was raised.

BIANBA hosted its first ever “Speaker Series” event on December 5th at the North Bay Public Library. We had four
speakers (three survivors and one caregiver) who shared their stories with the audience of approximately 35 people. It was an informal evening, and the speeches sparked some great conversation. We also had two survivors who set up tables to showcase their talents – Phil McCoy, author of “Lily & the Witch of Pfifflers Mill,” and John Chalmers, photographer (his work can be seen at www.wildlifecapturephotography.ca). Everyone is looking forward to our next Speaker Series event, scheduled for March 6.

On December 16th BIANBA hosted a Social at the PEP office. We had 20-25 people attend, including survivors, caregivers, and many new faces. Everyone enjoyed a bite to eat, a warm beverage and some awesome conversation!

BIANBA accepted a donation of $775 on December 23, that was raised by Knight Piesold and its employees in North Bay. We were honoured to be one of 17 local charities that KP and its employees chose to donate to.

On January 26, BIANBA and OBIA hosted two Canadian Access and Inclusion Project sessions at the PEP office. Many thanks to Tanya Jewell for making the trip to North Bay to gather input for this very important initiative—we look forward to seeing the results in the upcoming months.

Looking ahead, BIANBA will be hosting another Speaker Series event on March 4, and we are planning another Social (the date is yet to be determined). We have also started working on a couple of events for the month of June, to commemorate Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Note: Our apologies, this report was left out of the March issue in error.

BIA Sault Ste. Marie and District

The association has been very busy over the past few months. We were able to have a display at City Hall for Designated Brain Injury Day.

During the local Santa Claus Parade, we entered a brain injury awareness float using the Frozen theme.
We also hosted a fundraiser concert featuring the amazing singer Carl Dixon. During this concert, Carl told his story about the motor vehicle accident that changed his life and left him with a traumatic brain injury.

**BIA Sarnia-Lambton**

Brain Injury Association Sarnia Lambton has some exciting news. They were chosen by the organization “100 Women Who Care Sarnia” ([www.100whocaresarnia.com](http://www.100whocaresarnia.com)) to receive money to hire a part-time Program Director, and to enhance the Social - Leisure Program. BIASL is so grateful to 100 Women Who Care Sarnia for the opportunity to receive this money to be able to expand our programs. The BIASL Annual Golf Tournament was held on May 25 and was a great success.

BIASL is kicking off Brain Injury Awareness Month with the Annual Candlelight Vigil on Thursday, June 1 at 7 pm under the Bluewater Bridge. The Annual Family and Friends Picnic in the park will be held at the Beach Pavilion in Canatara Park on Thursday, August 24.

We would also like to welcome our new Board of Directors President, Kevin Cheung.

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**OBIA REVIEW | JUNE 2017**

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**OBIA REVIEW | JUNE 2017**
Say Hello to the New Hailey!

#IamTheFaceofBrainInjury

“A brain injury may have put a stop to my competitive figure skating, but it redirected me towards my next goal ... I am grateful to have the chance to share my story and help other athletes like me.”

Hailey

Brain Injury can Happen to Anyone.

#BIAM17

June is Brain Injury Awareness Month
Pathways to Independence specializes in providing services and supports to adults with an acquired brain injury (ABI). These services could be a place to call home or day services designed to support a person living with a brain injury to reintegrate into their community.

Pathways Service Plan supports a person’s rehabilitation and reintegration to the community following a brain injury. In addition to assisting with activities of daily living, Pathways employees actively work with the person to access social networks and community partners to develop and support the implementation of a person’s individualized service plan.

Pathways ABI programs and services are tailored to accommodate individual needs and provide a continuum of care.

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- Occupational Therapy
- Behaviour Management
- Speech Therapy
- Dietician
- Nursing
- Adult Education, Vocational Training or Upgrading
- Legal Services
- Family support

1 in 26 Canadians are living with a brain injury

Brain injuries can be a non visible disability

There will be 18,000 new brain injuries this year

Men experience brain injuries twice as often as women

ABI is damage to the brain that occurs after birth

ABI is not a developmental disability or autism

ABI affects cognitive, emotional, behavioural, & physical functioning

Reach out to us to find out more about Pathways ABI Services:
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I do not believe my life began when I was born like most. I truly believe my life began the day I found out I had a brain injury.

When I was 17, I was an active outgoing teen who loved snowboarding. Two head hits and one car accident later, I would never be the person I once was. Unfortunately, it took six months of struggle and confusion before understanding what was really happening inside. Six months of chaos, six months of torture. I lost all of my friends; any chance I had of getting into university; my future; all communication with my family, especially my parents; and what seemed to be my entire life.

Not only did others question what was happening, but so did I. Because I looked the same, nothing could possibly be different; it was an act or a choice.

Of course then my school career shifted from learning, to fighting for what was right and what I needed, at the same time doing everything I could just to be able to attend class. That was the most difficult and misunderstood part. I was in the middle of rehab and trying to get a grip on my sanity with all my mental health issues, and let's just say school might not have been my number one priority. Again, never seen, so not believed.

While I wasn’t at school, I was in appointments or just at home wishing I were at school because that’s what was the norm and all I wanted to do was fit in. Instead, I was in bed fighting the voices of depression, anxiety, insecurity, loneliness, and suicide. I had to grieve my past self, life, and future wants. At the same time, I had to get to know my new self and learn how to deal with all these new things going on in my head all the while attempting to manage what’s left of the life I once had. This is a daunting task for anyone, not just someone with a brain injury. For some reason this should have been the end of me, the death of me, but it was not. It was the total opposite; this was the re-birth of me.

I would not change my life or what happened to me for the world. With this, I learned to see the world in a new way, have a perspective I never would have been able to see before my injury. I learned there is always a bright side in every situation; it is just about how far you are willing to go to find it. When reaching for the stars is your only hope of sunshine that day, you will go to the ends of the earth until you have found it. That is what I did.

While on the path searching for the light, I always find greater things, things I never noticed before that I could now see because of my brain injury. With this, I not only get the opportunity to teach others, but also find myself in the process. I was able to speak to the resource teachers in my county and teach them first-hand of my experience. I explained what I needed and what would have helped, so they can help others.

I have had two art shows and even won a local district school board award. I found a love of traveling, helping others and a love of painting. I found a comfort in painting and a newfound compassion for people. Now, at 19, I travel helping people and paint my days away with pure bliss.
If you’ve had a serious injury who will stand up for you?

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NORTH BAY
133 Main St. W.
(705) 472-7300

NEW LISKEARD
11 Armstrong St. N.
(705) 647-6330

OTTAWA
Chateau Laurier (by Appt)
(613) 234-1866
Throughout my rehabilitation, I have had such great support from my family; we are all growing together. I might not be that teacher I have always dreamed of being or have the immense group of friends I have always envisioned, but I get to experience things in a way I could have never even dreamed.

Having the ability to see things so differently helps in my new career path. My life began again in the midst of sorrow, pain and suffering. It is a place anyone could crumble, but somehow I am soaring.

This awful tragedy is my greatest blessing, but I believe that is how I learned to look at it. Instead of it being the thing that destroyed my life, it became the thing that re-created my life. I might not be where I once hoped to be, but I believe I am exactly where I am supposed to be. Living a life with a brain injury courageously and fearlessly, pursuing the future head on with an open heart.
Need a Break to Relax and Recharge?

Community Solutions Cottage Getaways in scenic Muskoka offer the ultimate escape for people living with Acquired Brain Injury.

Designed to cater to the unique needs associated with ABI, our fully accessible and expert support staff enable people with ABI to experience a greater sense of independence in a relaxing and enjoyable environment. This ideal retreat has proven to be restorative for both the cottager and family members.

We offer:
- A fully accessible cottage suitable for people with physical challenges such as spinal cord injuries
- 24/7 expert support staff
- Outdoor activities such as hiking, exploring, boating and fishing are guided by our team of rehabilitation & personal support workers
- Week-long stays in the summer & long weekends in the spring and fall

To discuss our Cottage Getaway and how to make an application contact:
Barbara Claiman at (905) 349-2020 ext. 23 or bclaiman@commssolitll.com or info@commssolitll.com www.communitysolutionsltd.com

Brain Fast Facts

- 67% of caregivers indicated that the brain injury changed their family circumstances.
- 38% of ABI survivors indicated receiving family counselling and support services.
- 31% of survivors are not satisfied with their ability to make new friends/keep them.

- 2012 OBIA Impact Report

Support Services for Brain Injury

Helping individuals living with the effects of brain injury achieve a better quality of life

Serving East Central Ontario

MindWorks Group
312 Rubidge Street
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3P4
Phone: 705-741-3412
Fax: 705-741-4098
Toll Free: 1-800-559-8323

www.mindworksgroup.ca

OUR SERVICES
- Rehabilitation Assistants
- Community Support Staff
- School Support Staff
- Recreational Programming
- Vocational Planning, Programming and Coaching
Events Calendar

For more listings, check: www.obia.ca/events

June 14, 2017
OBIA and BIST present:
2017 Mix and Mingle
Location: The Steam Whistle Brewery, Toronto, ON
Contact: Terry Bartol
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 234
Email: events@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

June 17, 2017
OBIA presents:
Annual General Meeting
Location: Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Toronto, ON
Contact: Diane Dakiv
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 231
Email: ddakiv@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

September 27-28, 2017
OBIA and BIA Sudbury & District present:
Brain Basics
Instructor: John Kumpf
Location: The Caruso Club, Sudbury, ON
Contact: Diane Dakiv
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 231
Email: training@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

September 29-30, 2017
OBIA and Brock University present:
Children and Youth with Acquired Brain Injury (Level 1)
Professor: Dr. Roberta De Pompei
Location: Holiday Inn, St. Catharines, ON
Contact: Diane Dakiv
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 231
Email: training@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

September 28, 2017
PIA Law and the Toronto ABI Network presents:
Back to School Conference - Acquired Brain Injury Across the Ages / 2017
Awards of Excellence in Brain Injury Rehabilitation
Location: The Carlu, Toronto, ON
Contact: Elisa O’Neill
Phone: 416-868-3195
Email: eoneill@thomsonrogers.com
Website: www.eventbrite.ca/e/back-to-school-conference-2017-registration-33685349788?aff=es2

October 24-25, 2017
OBIA and Brain Injury Society of Toronto present:
Brain Basics
Instructor: John Kumpf
Location: TBA Toronto, ON
Contact: Diane Dakiv
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 231
Email: training@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

November 1-3, 2017
OBIA and Participating Community Associations present:
2017 Acquired Brain Injury Provincial Conference
“Making a Difference”
Location: Sheraton on the Falls Hotel, Niagara Falls, ON
Contact: Terry Bartol
Phone: 905-641-8877 ext. 234
Email: conference@obia.on.ca
Website: www.ontarioabiconference.ca
The 2017 Awards of Excellence in Brain Injury Rehabilitation

The Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) in collaboration with the Personal Injury Alliance (PIA Law) are pleased to present the 2017 Awards of Excellence in Brain Injury Rehabilitation.

These awards are meant to recognize exceptional service to the brain injury community in the following categories:

- Hospital Social Worker
- Case Management
- Health Care Provider
- Community Brain Injury Association
- Rehabilitation Company

Nominations for the Awards of Excellence can be made online between June 1st and July 14th, 2017.

Voting for the selected nominees will take place online between August 8th and September 15th, 2017.

The Awards of Excellence will be presented to recipients at the Back to School Conference hosted by PIA Law and Toronto ABI Network on September 28th, 2017 at The Carlu.

To nominate, vote or for more information about the Awards of Excellence, visit: OBIA.ca
Brain Injury Associations

**Ontario Brain Injury Association**
Phone: 905-641-8877 or 1-855-642-8877
Toll-free support 1-800-263-5404
Email: obia@obia.on.ca Website: www.obia.ca

- www.facebook.com/OntarioBIA
- www.twitter.com/OntarioBIA
- www.instagram.com/OntarioBIA
- www.LinkedIn.com/company/Ontario_Brain_Injury_Association

**Belleville**
**BIA of Quinte District**
Phone: 613-967-2756 or toll free: 1-866-894-8884
Email: info@biaqd.ca
Website: www.biaqd.ca

**Chatham-Kent**
**New Beginnings ABI & Stroke Recovery Association**
Phone: 519-351-0297
Fax: 519-351-7600
Email: info@newbeginnings-cksl.com
Website: www.newbeginnings-cksl.com

**Dufferin County**
**Headwaters ABI Group (HABI)**
Phone: 519-215-1519

**Durham**
**BIA of Durham**
Phone: 905-723-2732 or toll free: 1-866-354-4464
Email: information@biad.ca
Website: www.biad.ca

**Fort Erie**
**BIA of Fort Erie**
Phone: 905-871-7789
Email: biafeoffice@gmail.com
Website: http://braininjuryfe.wixsite.com/biafe

**Hamilton-Wentworth**
**Hamilton BIA**
Phone: 905-538-5251
Email: info@hbia.ca
Website: www.hbia.ca

**London and Region**
**BIA of London and Region**
Phone: 519-642-4539
Email: info@braininjurylondon.on.ca
Website: www.braininjurylondon.on.ca

**Niagara Area**
**BIA of Niagara**
Phone: 905-984-5058
Email: pat@bianiagara.org
Website: www.bianiagara.org

**North Bay Area**
**BIA of North Bay and Area**
Phone: 705-840-8882
Email: contact@bianba.ca
Website: www.bianba.ca

**Ottawa Area**
**BIA of Ottawa Valley**
Phone: 613-233-8303
Email: contact@biaov.org
Website: www.biaov.org

**Peel-Halton**
**BIA of Peel & Halton**
Phone: 905-823-2221 or 1-800-565-8594
Email: biaph@biaph.com
Website: www.biaph.com

**Peterborough Area**
**Brain Injury Association Peterborough Region**
Phone: 705-741-1172 or 1-800-854-9738
Email: biapr@nexicom.net
Website: www.biapr.ca

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Call OBIA
1-855-642-8877
Toll Free Support Line
1-800-263-5404 (HELPLINE)
Sarnia-Lambton
BIA of Sarnia-Lambton
Phone: 519-337-5657
Email: info@sarniabiasl.ca
Website: www.sarniabiasl.ca

New Beginnings ABI & Stroke Recovery Association
Phone: 519-491-2668
Email: info@newbeginnings-cks.com
Website: www.newbeginnings-cks.com

Sault Ste. Marie
BIA of Sault Ste. Marie & District
Phone: 705-971-1050
Email: braininjuryssmd@gmail.com
Website: www.soobraininjury.com

Sudbury and District
BIA of Sudbury & District
Phone: 705-670-0200
Email: info@biasd.ca
Website: www.biasd.ca

Thunder Bay
BIA Thunder Bay & Area
Phone: 807-621-4164
Email: biatba@yahoo.ca
Website: www.bisno.org/brain-injury-association-of-thunder-bay

Timmins
Seizure & Brain Injury Centre
Phone: 705-264-2933
Email: sabicrl@eastlink.ca
Website: www.seizureandbraininjurycentre.com

Toronto (GTA)
Brain Injury Society of Toronto
Phone: 416-830-1485
Email: info@bist.ca
Website: www.bist.ca

Waterloo-Wellington
BIA of Waterloo-Wellington
Phone: 519-772-7768
Email: info@biaww.com
Website: www.biaww.com

Windsor-Essex
BIA of Windsor and Essex County
Phone: 519-981-1329
Email: info@biawe.com
Website: www.biawe.com

York Region
Brain Injury Association of York Region
Office Voicemail: 905-780-1236
Fax: 905-780-1524
Email: n/a
Website: www.biayr.org

Provincial Associations

Brain Injury Canada/Lésion Cérébrale Canada
Phone: 613-762-1222, Toll-free Line: 1-866-977-2492
Website: www.braininjurycanada.ca
Email: info@braininjurycanada.ca

British Columbia Brain Injury Association
Phone: 604-984-1212
Website: www.brainstreams.ca
Email: info@brainstreams.ca

Central Alberta Brain Injury Society (CABIS)
Phone: 403-341-3463
Website: www.cabis.info
Email: cabis@telus.net

Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association
Phone: 306-373-1555 or Toll-free (in Sask) 866-373-1555
Website: www.sbia.ca
Email: info_sbia@sasktel.net

Manitoba Brain Injury Association
Phone: 204-975-3280 or Toll Free: 866-327-1998
Website: www.mbia.ca
Email: info@mbia.ca

Ontario Brain Injury Association
Phone: 905-641-8877 or 1-855-642-8877
Toll-free support 1-800-263-5404
Email: obia@obia.on.ca
Website: www.obia.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador Brain Injury Association
Phone: 709-579-3070
Website: www.nlbia.ca/index.php
Email: nlbia2011@gmail.com

Regroupement des associations de personnes traumatisées cranio-cérébrales du Québec
Phone: 450-575-8227
Website: www.raptccq.com
Email: info@raptccq.com

Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia
Phone: 902-473-7301
Website: http://braininjury.ns.com/
Email: info@braininjury.ns.com

Brain Injury Association of Canada (New Brunswick)
Phone: 506-721-8003
Website: www.biicnb.org
Email: biicnb@icloud.com

Brain Injury Association of P.E.I.
Phone: 902-314-4228 or 902-367-3216
Website: www.biapie.com
Email: info@biapie.com
Raising Awareness Through Social Media

Social media, by definition is digital technology whereby online means of communication are used by large groups of people to share data and to develop social and professional contacts. In recent years, it has become an invaluable business tool and a means to raise awareness and disseminate important information.

OBIA was established to assist people with brain injuries, their caregivers, professionals and friends offering self-help and support. Providing education, awareness and support has been the mission and mandate of the organization for more than 30 years and the use of social media has had an incredible impact on furthering its mission.

The implementation of this digital technology and social media marketing strategy has been facilitated by a Corporate Champion of OBIA, Social Know How.

At the beginning of 2017, Elio Gatto and his team at Social Know How developed a social media strategy and direction for OBIA by establishing a campaign to increase our presence and following on Facebook. The results of this campaign have already been incredible, demonstrating significant growth and reach. The profile of OBIA in three months has increased by 200%. This increased exposure has built a social media community that helps to spread the message about the organization and the services they provide. This is crucial to the continued success of OBIA in that it provides the people of this province knowledge about the resources available to them or their loved ones. An increased social media presence has raised awareness of brain injury and has allowed it to become a topic of mainstream discussion.

The community created through social media has become a hub where people who have sustained brain injury, their friends, families and caregivers can connect. It enables them to access information and resources quickly and easily while also providing a forum to share, read and provide insight. This medium has given OBIA a greater voice with which to share their message (a message that Social Know How worked to mirror with their strategy).

This enhanced profile and greater reach was made possible by the expertise of Social Know How, a leading social media marketing company. Social Know How assisted OBIA in identifying their audience in order to be able to address them effectively. Mobile devices have facilitated connectivity and brought the world to everyone’s fingertips. Social Know How helped OBIA to harness the potential of that tool and turn it from a means of socializing to an informative network where resources and awareness become accessible through the daily newsfeed (in a quick and cost effective manner).

Elio Gatto began working with OBIA approximately six months ago when he addressed an audience at the OBIA Advisory Council (OAC) meeting in 2016. He demonstrated how to effectively harness the power of social media to leverage platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn to make an impact and raise awareness.

“Working in collaboration with OBIA has been a rewarding experience that has allowed my expertise to assist with raising awareness about brain injury in Ontario. Creating a social hub with access to information and resources for those affected by brain injury and giving them somewhere to turn has been the greatest gain from this partnership.” Elio Gatto, Founder and President, Social Know How.

Visit www.SocialKnowHow.com today to learn more and request your complimentary Social Media Assessment.
One word says it all

“Exemplary”

Step Up! ABI Recovery

A division of Brain Injury Services

Why we are the preferred agency for Acquired Brain Injury rehabilitation

Accreditation Canada has awarded us its highest – and rarest – rating: Accreditation with Exemplary Standing. That standing signifies that the designated agency has greatly surpassed rigorous standards in quality care and service and is at the very pinnacle of programming excellence. It is an “exemplar” to others of how things should be done.

A full range of proven, exemplary, ABI services

- Transition from hospital
- Group homes
- Transitional living apartments
- Outreach services program
- Group activities program
- Adolescent program
- Therapeutic groups
- Daily living skills
- Vocational training
- Workplace support
- Home support
- Accessing education
- Community re-integration
- Experts in complex care
- Experts in cognitive rehabilitation
- Experts in behavioural rehabilitation

225 King William St., Suite 508, Hamilton, ON L8R 1B1, 905-523-8852 Ext. 117
OBIA Bookstore

Two new survivor stories; more available at the OBIA Bookstore!

Rethink Redo Rewired

Using Alternative Treatments to Heal a Brain Injury
By Anthony Aquan-Assee, Md.Ed.
In this book, Anthony shares how neurofeedback, cranial electrotherapy stimulation, laser therapy and kangen water helped him heal his brain in ways that pharmaceuticals couldn’t. These alternative treatments helped to awaken his brain’s healing capacity and he was able to heal himself naturally. The human body is a magnificent creation born with all the tools to heal itself.

$25 (plus shipping)

Some Ding Happened

A Brain Injury Journey
By Veronica Brath
This is the retrospective journey of the author as she gradually learned to build strategies to better cope with affects of a brain injury as a result of a motor vehicle accident. On one fateful day, the author’s life changed drastically. From part-time teacher and artist to full-time recovery work, the author has spent the better part of ten years making herself stronger—mentally, physically, emotionally. Without knowing the how long and how far recovery could be, she worked with many experts to discover and cope with all the differences. She learned and continues to learn patience, acceptance, and taking life at a slower pace.

$25 (plus shipping)

For a list of available resources, visit OBIA’s Online Bookstore
www.obia.ca/bookstore

Brain Basics- eLearning

A Training Program for Health Care Workers, Caregivers and Survivors of Acquired Brain Injury

The Brain Basics Program:
- is an introductory training program on acquired brain injury
- consists of seven modules that outline types of ABI, consequences and strategies for living and working with survivors of ABI
- is designed for both professionals and family members
- offers a certificate of completion given by OBIA to all persons who successfully complete the program

“I am a registered Psychiatric Nurse and have worked in the field of brain injury for almost two years now. I found this course extremely helpful and feel that it will allow me to fine tune the care that I provide to my clients. As a whole, the course was amazing!”

“I have been working as a PSW for 30 years and I wish there was a course like this when I started.”

For more information or to register for the course visit www.obia.ca 1-855-642-8877
Get Your FREE Personal Injury Recovery Kit & Checklist to Discover:

- **How you can get a Free Case Evaluation** and not pay any fees until you win your case
- **Action-Steps** you can take today to prove your claim and win your case
- **Why Timing is so Crucial** and what you need to do to build your winning case FAST

Download your FREE kit at himpro.ca

To speak to a personal injury lawyer, call 1-855-446-7765 or email info@himpro.ca!

**Our Locations:**

**Toronto**
480 University Ave.
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Toronto ON
M5G 1V2
(416) 599-8080

**Brampton**
2 County Ct. Blvd.
Suite 400
Brampton ON
L6W 3W8
(905) 595-6760

**Hamilton**
1 Hunter St. E.
Ground Floor
Hamilton ON
L8N 3W1
(905) 777-8002

**Kitchener**
55 King St. W.
Suite 700
Kitchener ON
N2G 4W1
(519) 772-7659

**Oshawa**
21 Simcoe St. S.
Oshawa ON
L1H 4G1
(289) 634-5554
Featured Training Program

Children and Youth with Acquired Brain Injury (Level 1)

Approved by VRA Canada for 11.75 Continuing Education Hours

This Certificate Training Program will focus on providing information about behaviours after ABI that relate to learning and community participation. Emphasis is on describing the cognitive-communicative problems that affect classroom learning, behaviour and community participation. Group problem-solving activities will develop methods for assessing and treating educational and social challenges for these individuals from a functional perspective.

Some topics covered during this training program include:

- Characteristics that impact learning and behaviour
- Environmental scans and communication partners and treatment strategies
- Transitions, functional outcomes and collaborations

September 29-30, 2017

Details

Location: Holiday Inn Suites & Conference Centre
327 Ontario Street, St. Catharines, ON

Date: September 29 - 30, 2017

Hotels: Holiday Inn & Suites - 905.688.2324

Professors: Roberta DePompei, Ph.D

For more information about this and/or other Certificate Training Programs
visit: www.obia.ca
905.641.8877 1.855.642.8877
training@obia.on.ca
Providing Quality Rehabilitation Support Services

At Lawlor, our business is providing rehabilitation support services to children and adults with an acquired brain injury or spinal cord injury in Central and South Western Ontario.

REHABILITATION SUPPORT WORKERS INCLUDE:

- Occupational Therapy Assistants
- Physiotherapy Assistants
- Developmental Service Workers
- Kinesiologists
- Educational Assistants
- Behavioural Therapists
- Social Service Workers
- Recreation Therapists

1550 South Gateway Road Suite 328 Mississauga On L4W 5G6
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Today, a top tier law firm must be skilled, experienced, tough and respected, but it must also be compassionate, personal and human. As skilled in the courtroom as it is behind the scenes, the firm of Shekter Dychtenberg is ready to fight for your rights and your future.

Shekter Dychtenberg focuses its efforts in the areas of Personal Injury, Brain Trauma, Long Term Disability and Death Claims. Richard Shekter and Alden Dychtenberg are available to assist you seven days a week.

FREE personal consultation: 416.941.9995
Ask for Richard Shekter or Alden Dychtenberg. Visit us: http://braininjury.shekter.com
We design individual programs to assist every ABI survivor to maximize their strengths to live healthy, meaningful lives.

For more information:
Dale Brain Injury Services
815 Shelborne Street, London, ON N5Z 4Z4
Tel: 519.668.0023 ext. 319
admissions@daleservices.on.ca
www.daleservices.on.ca

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advocacy that makes a difference

Committed to providing the highest level of support with dignity, respect and trusted expertise.

GLUCKSTEIN
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DIFFERENT ROLES. ONE GOAL.
TOGETHER WE CARE FOR THEIR FUTURE.

Through your skill and compassion, you help them to heal. Through our legal expertise, and relentless drive, we ensure clients receive the financial support they need now, and in the years to come.

If you or someone you know has suffered a critical injury, or would benefit from a legal second opinion, call McLeish Orlando today at 1-866-685-3311 or visit www.mcleishorlando.com