



RESEARCH NEWS, HEALTH TIPS, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES FROM THE VIRGINIA TBI MODEL SYSTEM



## Chronic Care Needs of Individuals with TBI and Their Families

TBI is not a short-term condition—it often lasts a lifetime. A new Model System study looked at what people with TBI and their families need after leaving the hospital. People and families often feel unprepared. Many struggle to find help for outpatient rehab, mental health, and jobs. Families play a large supporting role and often feel stressed. The study found that:

- TBI is a lifelong chronic condition
- Better access to community services and transportation is critical
- Mental health care is often missing.
- Families need counseling, support systems, and respite care

The Virginia TBI Model System is testing a transition from rehab to home program. If effective, this service will address many of these reported individual and family needs.

[Click here to read more!](#)

 **The Virginia TBI Model System has a new website!**



It's called the **Brain and Spinal Health Hub**. This site offers helpful tools and info for:

- People with brain or spinal injuries
- Their families
- Doctors and teams who support them

## Outcomes Across 20 Years After TBI Inpatient Rehabilitation

Another new Model System study tracked the recovery of people with severe TBI over 20 years after inpatient rehab. Here are the main findings:

- Most people stayed the same or got better in the first 5 years after rehab
- Younger people and those who did well at 1-year after rehab had better long-term outcomes
- Younger people also had lower death rates
- Good recovery rose early but lessened at 10+ years
- Severe disability decreased over time
- Younger age and better early recovery had the best outcomes.

The study suggests that obtaining early access to outpatient rehab and mental health services improves long-term outcomes.

[Click here to view the article!](#)

## Virginia TBI Model System

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If you would like to continue to receive the paper version of the newsletter, please let us know!

For all listserv and for paper newsletter requests, email us at: [tbi.modelsystem@vcuhealth.org](mailto:tbi.modelsystem@vcuhealth.org)

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EXPLORE THESE WEBSITES FOR MORE UPDATES FROM OUR CONTINUUM OF CARE:

TBIMS.VCU.EDU | SAI.REHAB | BIAV.NET | MSKTC.ORG



# Virginia's Social Drivers of Health Network

The following list of needs link to service providers that are dedicated to supporting folks with brain injury and their families across Virginia.

- [Housing](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Medical Care](#)
- [Medical Insurance](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Return to Work](#)
- [Childcare](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Utility Bill Relief](#)
- [Legal services](#)
- [Urgent Needs](#)

## Community Support Groups

### RVA Aphasia Group

For Monthly Meetings, Contact: [community.engagement@sai.rehab](mailto:community.engagement@sai.rehab)

### Coffee and Conversation Group

Contact [debby.seitz@gmail.com](mailto:debby.seitz@gmail.com) for upcoming meetings

### BIAV Online and In Person Monthly Support Groups and Network Events

Visit [info@biav.net](mailto:info@biav.net) for updates

### Community Brain Injury Services Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Thurs. of month, 6:00 pm  
Where: 12725 McManus Blvd. Ste. 2E Newport News, VA 23602  
Contact: **The Denbigh House: 757-833-7845**

### Clubhouse Program for People Living with Brain Injury

Visit [the website](#) or call **804-261-7050**

## Communicating about Brain Injury as a Chronic Condition

*Adapted from the TBIMS Knowledge Translation Joint Messaging Statement*

The words we use to talk about brain injury matter. They affect how people understand and think about injuries, get support, and live well.

Healthcare professionals, researchers, and people with lived experience came together to help guide communicating about brain injury to family, friends, and health providers unfamiliar with TBI. The key overall message is:

Brain injury doesn't define a person. It's just one part of who a person is.

Download the statement here:

<https://biausa.org/CommunicatingAboutBrainInjury>

Researchers can cite the statement published here:

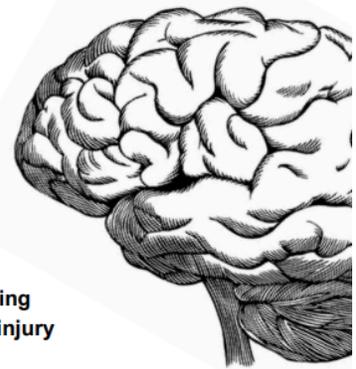
[https://journals.lww.com/headtraumarehab/fulltext/9900/communicating\\_about\\_brain\\_injury.320.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/headtraumarehab/fulltext/9900/communicating_about_brain_injury.320.aspx)

#BrainInjury #TBI #BrainHealth #Healthcare #TBIMS

## COMMUNICATING About Brain Injury

**Anyone can have a brain injury at any time.**

Some people recover quickly, while others experience lasting effects. Brain injuries don't just affect the person with the injury —they also impact family, friends, and caregivers.



## Brain Games for Fun!

Check out the games highlight for some fun exercises to engage your brain



SCAN ME

Website: <https://freegames.org/>

How to use a QR Code:

Open your smart phone camera and center the QR code. A link should pop up on the camera screen. Click this link to be directed to our puzzle page.



Visit [tbims.vcu.edu](http://tbims.vcu.edu) to access back issues!

# REFLECT, REFRAME, REFOCUS

BY: JANNELLE CHARLEMAGNE

Let us all start the New Year of 2026 full of new beginnings. Life happens to us all, but a person can still overcome their struggles that they may face. A person cannot change the past, but they can look forward to the future. Let us all have and set goals for improvement, by erasing and replacing negative self-doubt. Obstacles are opportunities for growth, while taking small steps in manageable tasks.

Let's use the 3R's process throughout the New Year of 2026, to regain control and keep moving forward.

**Reflect:** Focus on identifying areas for improvement.

**Reframe:** Change your thoughts, see a setback as a learning opportunity to grow and aim for progress.

**Refocus:** Adjust to new opportunities, and set goals to focus on solutions

Let's choose our priorities by identifying what are the top goals. We all have the power through our actions, beliefs, thoughts and progress to take a leap into what lies ahead, as long as we keep moving forward. Look at setbacks as an opportunity to reflect, reframe and refocus. As a reminder, we need to realize that opportunity comes in different packages. Our lives change in recovery, as we find ways to create and find our own path. Let's take a moment to read, "The Road Not Taken."

## The Road Not Taken

By Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

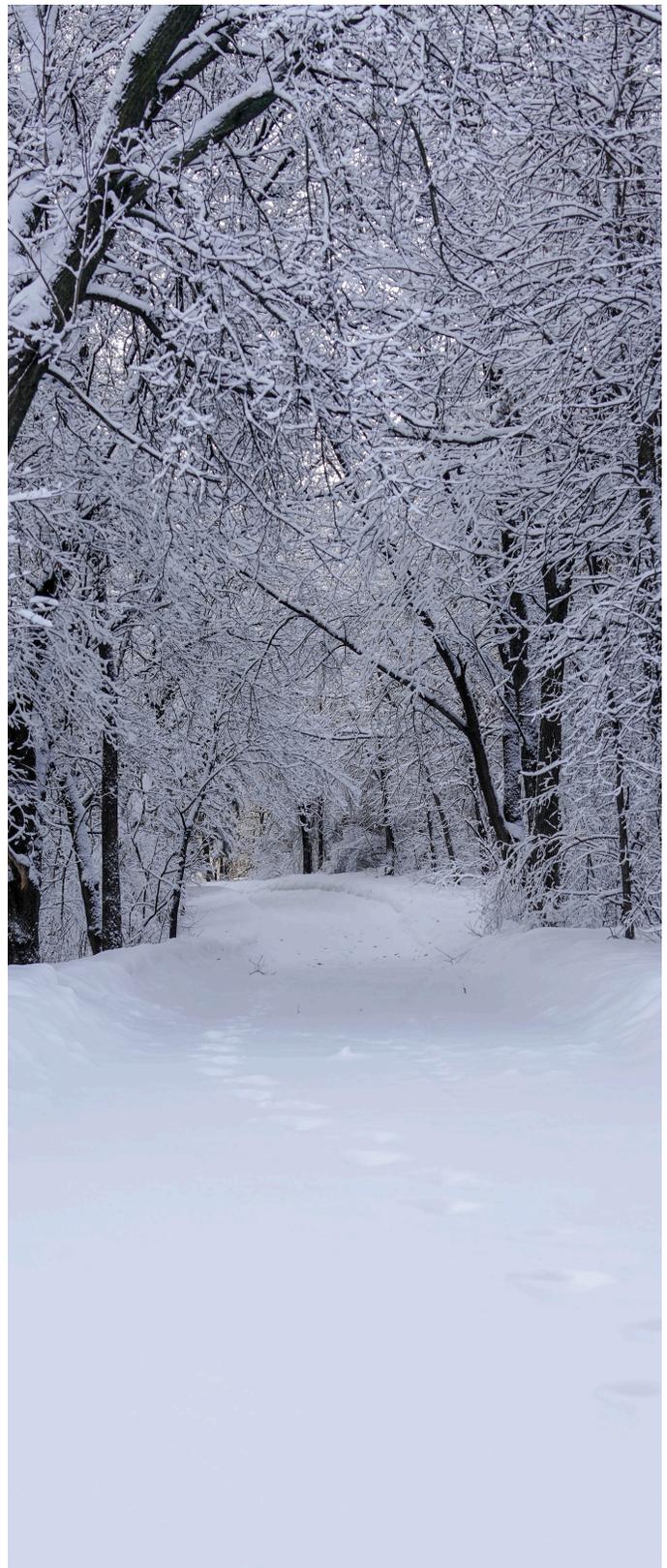
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

The poet considers both paths but can only choose one to travel. Nonetheless, he chose the road "less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." The poem also explores the idea of choices or options, reflecting on how decisions shape our lives and influence us.

What does this poem mean to you? What are your thoughts about it? Keep in mind only you have the answer to these questions. We must learn to embrace change in order to make room for new possibilities.

As TBI survivors, let us **reflect**, **reframe** and **refocus**, while setting a goal or goals and see it through the New Year of 2026. As a reminder, life is full of surprises and also opens new doors.



# Currently living with a brain injury?

Take our 15-20 minute survey asking about your experiences!

## QUALIFICATIONS

- ✓ **Currently living with a brain injury**
- ✓ **Live or receive services in Virginia**
- ✓ **18 years and over**

**Your response will guide future state planning to better serve the needs of individuals with brain injury**



Scan the QR code if you're interested



[braininjury@jmu.edu](mailto:braininjury@jmu.edu)



[www.jmu.edu/chbs/brain](http://www.jmu.edu/chbs/brain)

This study has been approved by the James Madison University IRB (protocol FY25-395)

# Caring for for an individual with Brain Injury?

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## About Our Project

The project strives to learn from individuals with lived experience following a brain injury & their caregivers. Findings will guide future planning to better serve the needs of persons with brain injury.

## Why Participate

The information gained from this project will help the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

**This study has been approved by the James Madison University IRB (protocol FY25-395)**

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## QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be over 18 years old
  - Caregiver to someone living or receiving services in Virginia
  - Additional criteria may apply
- 

## Scan the QR code If You're Interested



[braininjury@jmu.edu](mailto:braininjury@jmu.edu)



[www.jmu.edu/chbs/brain-injury](http://www.jmu.edu/chbs/brain-injury)

# WE WANT TO HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO HAD A **MODERATE-SEVERE TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)** AND THEIR LOVED ONES (18 YEARS OR OLDER) WHO HAVE UNDERGONE **INPATIENT REHABILITATION IN THE PAST 10 YEARS.**

## WE ARE CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS TO LEARN ABOUT:



Your **experiences** with **inpatient rehabilitation** and how it **may have** helped (or not) with **behavioral changes** after TBI.

Your **recommendations** on how to **best support** the person with TBI and their loved ones to address **behavioral changes**.

## LIVED EXPERIENCE FOCUS GROUP

Focus groups will occur over **Microsoft Teams** and will last **60-90 minutes**. Participants will be compensated for their time with a **\$50 gift card**.



### For questions, contact:

Natalie Gilmore  
(813) 606-0273  
VHAIHEALteam@va.gov



### To inquire if you are eligible, scan:



### For more information on I-HEAL and our consent form, visit:

<https://iheal.tbindsc.org/>

# DO YOU PROVIDE CARE FOR SOMEONE WITH A DISORDER OF CONSCIOUSNESS\*?

## DOC 101: A GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS OF SEVERE BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS



### FREE EDUCATION & PEER SUPPORT GROUP

- Open to individuals in the United States who have been providing care to someone with a DOC for at least one year Facilitated by
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) mental health providers



12-week group



Tuesdays  
4:00-5:15pm CST



Meets virtually  
over Zoom

### WHY JOIN?

- Learn about topics that are important to caregivers of people with a DOC
- Connect with and receive support from caregivers and mental health professionals
- Recognize that you are not alone in your experience

### \*WHAT IS A DISORDER OF CONSCIOUSNESS?

A DISORDER OF CONSCIOUSNESS(DOC) IS A CONDITION THAT FOLLOWS

A SEVERE BRAIN INJURY.

PEOPLE WITH DOC HAVE NOT RECOVERED THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE OR MAKE DECISIONS. THEY REQUIRE A CAREGIVER TO ASSIST WITH ALL PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND COGNITIVE NEEDS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL:

[claire.burdick@vumc.org](mailto:claire.burdick@vumc.org)



Scan here to complete our interest form!



CRITICAL ILLNESS, BRAIN DYSFUNCTION,  
*and* SURVIVORSHIP (CIBS) CENTER