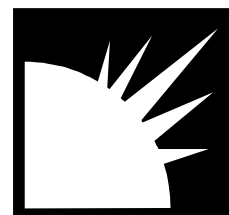


TBI TODAY

NEWS, IDEAS, AND RESOURCES FROM THE VIRGINIA TBI MODEL SYSTEM



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Are you interested in learning about strength-based parenting?
Would you like to learn more about how to develop positive relationships and raise resilient children?

Enhancing Parenting Skills (EPS) of Civilians and Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury and their Non-injured Partners: A Service-Based Program is a project funded by the Virginia Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative and offered by Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

The goal of EPS is to enhance the parenting capability of Virginia's civilians and veterans with TBI and their non-injured partners.

Through these sessions our goals are to:

- Support parents and families that experience challenges
- Give hands-on tools and skills that will assist in positively changing the way families deal with the stress associated with brain injury

Our first training will be offered in Richmond on Saturday, September 14th. The training is 3 hours long and will include a gift card incentive for participants (one per couple). We invite partners who are co-parenting minor children living at home to attend.

For more information contact: tbiparenting@gmail.com

DARS/CNI contract A262-80329



Managing Anger That Can Surface As a Caregiver

Imagine you are on a sandy beach at sunset. You look into the horizon and see dark clouds, lightning, and thunder quickly rolling your way. You try to estimate its arrival overhead, but can't. So you immediately seek shelter to protect yourself from the coming storm.

As a caregiver of a TBI survivor, the frustration and anger that occasionally surfaces inside of you is like an impending thunderstorm you can't control. You can experience a wide range of emotions throughout the day. You can experience happiness as the person with a TBI progresses with a new skill. You can feel anger when you have to answer the same question repeatedly throughout the day. (cont'd on page 6)



Mark Your Calendar

Aphasia Support Group

- ♦ **When:** 2nd Thursday of the month, 6-7pm
- ♦ **Location:** Wells Coleman office building in Monument Corporate Centre office park, 5004 Monument Avenue, Richmond, 23230
- ♦ **Contact:** Susan Hapala at (804) 908-3261 or Jan Thomas at rva.aphasia@gmail.com

Stroke/Brain Injury Survivor & Caregiver Support Group

- ♦ **When:** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 2-3pm
- ♦ **Location:** Sheltering Arms Rehab Hospital, 8254 Atlee Rd, Mechanicsville, 23116 Conference Rm C OR 13700 St. Francis Blvd, Midlothian, 23114 4th Floor Conference Rm
- ♦ **Contact:** Kate Lim at (804) 764-5290 or klim@shelteringarms.com

Support Group for Adults with TBI, Family, and Friends

- ♦ **When:** 3rd Monday of the month, 6:15pm-7:45pm
- ♦ **Location:** Disability Law Center of Virginia, 1512 Willow Lawn Drive, Suite 100, Richmond, 23230
- ♦ **Contact:** Christine Baggini at (804) 355-5748 or christine@biav.net

Supportive Survivors

- ♦ **When:** 2nd, 4th, and 5th Tuesdays, 6-8pm, Outings planned for the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays
- ♦ **Location:** Regency Mall Food Court, 1420 Parham Road, Richmond, 23229
- ♦ **Contact:** Ted Taylor at (804) 781-2144 or taylor58@yahoo.com

Women's Luncheon Group

- ♦ **When:** 2nd Tuesday of the month for lunch, 11:30am
- ♦ **Location:** The Mill House, 7812 Shrader Road, Henrico, 23294
- ♦ **Contact:** Jen Candela at (804) 386-0926 x 104 or jennifercc@communitybraininjury.org

Looking for a support group in your area? Check out www.biav.net/virginia-support-groups.htm for more support groups organized by region!

If you have an upcoming event of interest to the Brain Injury community in Virginia, we would be glad to consider including it here. Please call (804) 828-3704 or email jennifer.marwitz@vcuhealth.org.



The Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) was founded 36 years ago when two loving parents were faced with a challenge that no parent anticipates – their son sustained a significant brain injury. As they navigated this new challenge, they found their son lacked crucial services he needed to navigate life. So together with other brain injury survivors and families, they formed the organization they desperately needed in the years prior.

Since its founding, BIAV has given families hope as the only statewide organization focused solely on brain injury. BIAV coordinates programs like Information & Resources, Heading Forward Together and Making Headway conferences, and Camp Bruce McCoy. These programs have allowed for a network of thousands of people to be built.

With a new community engagement focus, BIAV is seeking to involve wider audiences across Virginia in fresh and exciting ways. With the launch of an Advisory Board, BIAV will hear from survivors, caregivers, and professionals about unmet needs, services, and research that could impact more lives around the state. A new Speaker's Bureau will give a platform to those who wish to share their stories to raise awareness of brain injury, and advocate for change in the community. Along with these two groups, BIAV is launching a Meetup calendar to encourage member networking, motivate advocates, and educate the general public. And with a revamped membership program and new online support forums, it's easier than ever to get involved with BIAV and provide help, hope, and healing! To be a part of the new programs mentioned, or learn about other BIAV services, visit www.biav.net or email Brandon Matthews at brandon@biav.net.

TBI Recovery Journey: Alive for a Reason

by Cheryl Dean

It began as a typical day which resulted in my new normal. As I was walking across a street on the evening of January 31, 2017, a truck turned at a nearby intersection stop sign and struck me. It is believed that the driver's side mirror hit the back of my head. I have no memory of the incident. After being flown to the hospital by a helicopter, I was placed in an induced coma on life support with traumatic brain injury, skull fractures, hemorrhaging and fluid in my brain, sutures covering the back of my head, and an ICP bolt drilled through my skull. I also had a stroke while in the coma. The team of neurosurgeons did not know whether I would survive, and if I did, what my future held. Nine days later, I began to slowly awaken and began the long road to recovery. It began with inpatient physical, occupational, and speech therapy followed by months of ongoing outpatient therapy. I relearned how to walk, stand, balance, project voice, strengthen breathing, write, think, problem solve, remember, increase processing speed, and improve fine and gross motor function. It was like starting from scratch to learn basic life skills. I struggled with headaches, sleepless nights, depression, anxiety, and PTSD from the traumatic event.

It has not always been an easy recovery, yet I find myself finding ways to cope with the changes experienced following my TBI. A gratitude journal has helped me focus more on the positive and less on my losses. I write six things each day to be thankful for. It may be as simple as being alive and getting through the day. Getting back to daily activities slowly but surely has been important. I'm discovering our brains to be amazingly resilient. Neural plasticity finds new routes to take over the ones that are no longer working. The three F's: faith, family, and friends have also been essential in my recovery. We all go through times in our lives when we need to rely on others. It is a sign of strength rather than weakness to reach out during these difficult periods. Joining a brain injury support group has made a significant difference in my life. Being among others with similar circumstances is a comfort during the unique challenges resulting from injury.

Currently, I am serving on the Board of Trustees of the Brain Injury Connections of the Shenandoah Valley and have spoken at the General Assembly in Richmond, VA. I am on the Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery YouTube channel interview with Dr. Dan Gardner from San Diego, CA, which can be found online under the search "Cheryl's Story with Dan Gardner." I want to be used to advocate for others going through this life-changing experience. TBI is often a lifelong process which affects all aspects of one's life physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and financially. I'm continuing to find new ways to go on living a full and meaningful life, even when reasonable accommodations are needed.

I was given an anonymous saying which helped in my recovery. "In case no one told you today: you're beautiful. You're loved. You're needed. You're alive for a reason. You're stronger than you think. You're going to get through this. I'm glad you're alive. Don't give up." We are not alone in this journey and can make a difference in the lives of others. Through sharing our stories, TBI can mean "To Be Inspired."

Cheryl Dean lives in Harrisonburg, VA with her husband Nick. She has a bachelor's degree in social work and sociology and a master's degree in education with specialization in diverse needs and at-risk populations from Eastern Mennonite University. She is retired from her career as an academic advisor at James Madison University due to multiple sclerosis, diagnosed in 1992.



DEAR PAT,

By reading your advice, it has been really helpful to know that what I've been going through is normal and that others deal with the same problems. The only thing that continues to frustrate me two years after my brain injury is that I seem to be tired all the time. Before my injury, I worked full-time, took care of my husband and our two children, kept a clean house, and still made time to go out with my friends. Now, I barely work part-time and feel exhausted when I get home from work. I have no energy to clean or cook. Work takes everything out of me, and I can't even think about going out with friends.

Every day, I pray that this feeling would get better. I know that fatigue is a common problem after brain injury, but this is definitely something I have never experienced before. It's not just physical exhaustion, but I'm mentally drained at the end of the day. I have been really frustrated by this problem, especially since I'm so far out from my injury date. It has caused tension with my husband because he just doesn't understand why I'm so tired at night when he gets home from work. I know he just wants to spend more time with me, and I want to have energy to spend time with him and the kids, too!

PAT'S RESPONSE:

Thank you for being a loyal follower! You seem to be pretty knowledgeable about brain injury and informed about what has happened to you. You are right that fatigue is one of the most common problems people with brain injury struggle with. Fatigue often occurs more quickly and frequently for people with a brain injury than it does in the general population.

Consider the following strategies to decrease your fatigue:



- * Learn to identify the early signs of fatigue and triggers of fatigue. Keep a journal log to help you with this process. Once you are able to identify the signs and triggers, you can plan your activity accordingly and stop an activity before getting tired.
- * Get plenty of sleep and rest. You might need more sleep than you did before the injury. Listen to your body to determine if you feel rested when you wake up.
- * Create a regular sleep and wake schedule so your body develops a rhythm. Your body and mind can be more efficient by reducing confusion surrounding sleep. Limit your napping to 30 minutes and avoid evening naps.
- * Avoid the use of alcohol and marijuana as they tend to make fatigue worse.
- * Improve your time management by:
 - Planning and following a daily schedule. Using a calendar or planner can help manage mental fatigue.
 - Prioritizing activities. Finish what is most important first.
 - Doing things that require the most physical or mental effort earlier in the day, when you are fresher.
 - Avoiding over-scheduling your calendar.
- * Incorporate exercise into your daily routine. Research has shown that people with brain injury who exercise have better mental function and alertness.
- * Discuss this matter with your treating physician to consider if medical or physical problems, medications, depression, or other factors may be causing fatigue.



Pat answers your personal questions about brain injury with compassion and practical advice. However, advice from Pat's column should not be substituted for consultation with a doctor or rehabilitation specialist. The identity of individuals submitting questions to "Chat with Pat" is kept strictly confidential.



Questions for Pat or the FAQ column are welcomed.

Send them to:

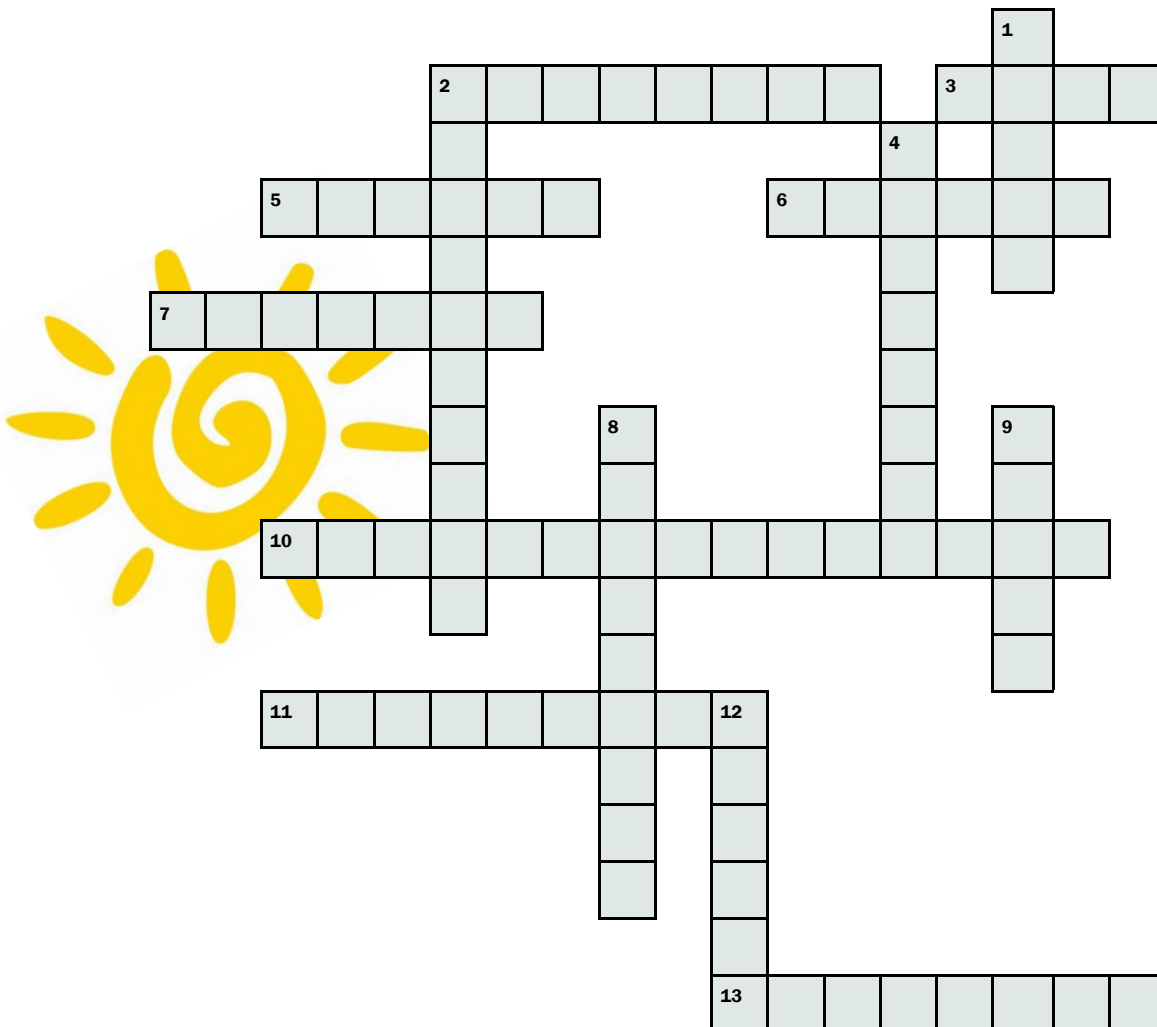
“ASK PAT” OR “FAQ”

P.O. BOX 980542. RICHMOND, VA 23298-0542

or e-mail: jennifer.marwitz@vcuhealth.org



JUST FOR FUN



Down

1. Dries you off after swimming
2. Protects your eyes from the sun
4. Fruity, frozen treat
8. Helps to prevent sunburn
9. A popular type of summer destination
12. Hitting water makes a _____



Across

2. Worn at the beach or in the pool
3. Transportation in the water
5. Eating a packed meal outdoors
6. A sandwich of graham crackers, chocolate, and marshmallows
7. Open shoes worn in the summer
10. Celebrated on the 4th of July
11. Lights in the sky on the 4th of July
13. Virginia summer air when it is hot and muggy. Some say, “It’s not the heat, it’s the _____”

(*Managing Anger, cont'd*) The feeling of impending anger is a sign that you are experiencing a situation over which you feel limited control to influence, and you want it to end. If you catch the impending feeling of anger early before it rolls over you like a thunderstorm, you can address the cause in constructive ways.

Use the Anger Speedometer

To avoid having anger takeover your day, you need to notice it building up in order to keep it from getting too extreme. To help, psychologist John Riskind developed a method called the Anger Speedometer.

It's fashioned after a car speedometer to check your speed and slow down when you creep past the speed limit. As you see on the anger speedometer, the faster your emotional speed, the more angry and explosive your emotions become. That's when it's time to slow down.

Michael Cerreto, MS, CPCRT, CSC, LDR is a Certified Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapist with A Talented Mind Clinic in Richmond, Virginia. Learn more about Michael at www.atalentedmind.com.

Anger Speedometer

20 miles per hour and below: *Calm and cool*

40 miles per hour: *Irritable and frustrated*

60 mile per hour: *Angry and mad*

80 miles per hour: *Irate and exasperated*

90 miles per hour: *Boiling, explosive, and violent*



To use this speedometer throughout the day, you should periodically ask "What is my anger speed right now?" If your speed is at 40 miles per hour, *irritable and frustrated*, slow yourself down before it speeds up to 60 miles per hour, *angry and mad*.

Slowing Down

You can use a variety of methods to slow down. You can remove yourself from the situation or person, express what you need from someone else, or breathe and release physical tension. Whatever method you choose, make sure it slows down your thinking, emotions, and physical tension.

Be a safe driver of your own emotions and anger by noticing your anger speeding up and take your foot off the anger accelerator. Only then can you effectively care for yourself while caring for someone else.

Frequently Asked Questions

THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE FAQ IS INTENDED TO FAMILIARIZE THE PUBLIC WITH ISSUES RELATED TO TBI. NO INFORMATION PROVIDED HEREIN SHOULD BE CONSTRUED AS THERAPEUTIC ADVICE OR AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR CONSULTATION

QUESTION:

What should I look for if I think I might have a concussion? I slipped and fell on my front steps a few days ago, and I don't feel right.

ANSWER:

It is important that you follow up with a physician to determine if you did sustain a concussion. In the meantime, here is a list of common symptoms that often occur within weeks or months after a concussion.



- ☐ Headaches
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Feeling tired
- ☐ Moving slowly
- ☐ Trouble falling asleep
- ☐ Nightmares
- ☐ Feeling frustrated
- ☐ Impatience
- ☐ Irritability or short temper
- ☐ Feeling sad or blue
- ☐ Misplacing things
- ☐ Losing train of thought
- ☐ Thinking slowly
- ☐ Poor concentration
- ☐ Forgetting if you have done things
- ☐ Forgetting what you read
- ☐ Forgetting names or phone numbers
- ☐ Trouble following instructions
- ☐ Trouble following conversations
- ☐ Trouble coming up with the right word

Join a Supportive Online Community for TBI Survivors and Families

The Comeback Project is a free, private online community for survivors of brain injury and their families to help you get your life back after a brain injury. You can join the community to share and get the support you need at: a-talented-mind.mightybell.com.

The community is provided by A Talented Mind Clinic in Richmond, Virginia, that provides cognitive rehabilitation therapy to brain injury survivors and families. For more information, you may also email Mike Cerreto at cerreto@atalentedmind.com.

Survivor Stories Wanted!

Recovering from a brain injury can be very difficult. Sometimes, one of the most helpful and inspiring things is simply hearing from other survivors who have gone through recovery and faced the same challenges. Are you a survivor with a story you'd like to share? If so, then we'd like to hear it, and it might get into a future issue of TBI Today!

Submit to: jennifer.marwitz@vcuhealth.org

or

TBI Today, VCU P.O. Box 980542
Richmond, VA 23298-0542



RESILIENCE AND ADJUSTMENT STUDY FOR ADULTS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY PARTICIPANTS INVITED!

**Have you had a traumatic brain injury (TBI)?
You May Qualify for an Ongoing Research Study!**

Virginia Commonwealth University researchers in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation are seeking adults with traumatic brain injuries to be part of a research study. We are evaluating the helpfulness of an outpatient rehabilitation program to help people adjust to having a brain injury. Qualified volunteers will participate in seven rehabilitation and education sessions and possibly three additional sessions. Study volunteers will be given information on brain injury, local resources, skills development, and positive coping strategies. Volunteers will also be asked to complete several questionnaires. Participants must be at least 18 years old. There is no charge for services and volunteers are compensated for their time.

**If you are interested in participating,
please call Jenny Marwitz at**

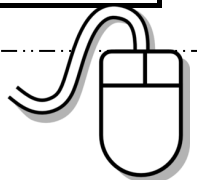
804-828-3704

**or toll free at 866-296-6904 or email
jennifer.marwitz@vcuhealth.org**

KEY

DOWN	1. TOWEL	12. SPLASH
ACROSS	2. SUNGLASSES	9. BEACH
2. SWIMSUIT	3. BOAT	8. SUNSCREEN
5. PICNIC	4. POPCICLE	6. SMORES
7. SANDALS	10. INDEPENDENCE DAY	11. FIREWORKS
13. HUMIDITY		

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*Get involved and be part of something
that changes lives.*

**Call us. Chat us.
We're here to help.**

Visit biav.net for more information
or call 1-800-444-6443

Upcoming Events

October 14, 2019

15th Annual Charity Golf Classic
Salisbury Country Club, Richmond, Virginia

November 22, 2019

9th Annual Caregiver Forum
Founder's Inn Resort & Spa, Virginia Beach, Virginia

November 23, 2019

19th Annual Making Headway Conference
Founder's Inn Resort & Spa, Virginia Beach, Virginia