



NEWS, IDEAS, AND RESOURCES FROM THE VIRGINIA TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY MODEL SYSTEM



Socializing Skillfully after TBI

The holidays are fast approaching, and for some this means being invited to a number of social events to celebrate the season. While spending quality time with friends and loved ones is an important feature of any holiday celebration, it can be made more complicated after a traumatic brain injury. Some common effects can include:

- Feeling out of place and uncomfortable around other people
- Interrupting conversations
- Losing focus
- Misunderstanding others
- Talking too much or too little

If any of the above issues sound familiar, not to worry! You are not alone! Research shows that social skills can improve after a TBI, even many years later. Below are some tips to keep in mind as you work to improve your social skills:

1. **Evaluate** - The first step in improving your social skills is thinking about your social skills. By thinking about what you do well and what might be challenging for you, you can gain a better understanding of what you'd like to improve (i.e. taking turns in conversation, staying focused, listening, etc.)
2. **Set Social Skills Goals** - Decide on one or two areas you would like to improve and write them down. Post your goals in a place where you will see them everyday and share your goals with a supportive family member or friend who can help "coach" and practice with you
3. **Practice Social Skills and Get Feedback** - Practice at home, work, or any other social situation. Some examples of skills to practice include thinking about what you're going to say before speaking and how what you say might affect other's feelings, showing interest in what other people are saying, and paying attention to the feedback given to you from the other person. Aim to ask for feedback once a week from your supportive family member or friend on how you are progressing in your goals.

Ultimately, changing habits can take time and effort. But, with the right tool-kit you can enjoy this time spent with others.

More information: [MSKTC Social Skills](#)

Brain Injury in the News

Several major news organizations have had articles related to brain injury recently. See the below links for more information:

- Study: Injured brain's ability to heal my hinge on time of day, circadian rhythms, [MSN](#)
- Article: A new hard hat could help protect workers from on-the-job brain injuries, [NPR](#)
- Study: COVID raises risk of long-term brain injury, [Reuters](#)
- Article: The NFL and players union agree to an updated concussion protocol, [NPR](#)



Just for Fun!



Football is back! Match the team with their starting quarterback:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Washington Commanders | a. Tom Brady |
| 2. Indianapolis Colts | b. Aaron Rodgers |
| 3. Green Bay Packers | c. Carson Wentz |
| 4. Dallas Cowboys | d. Dak Prescott |
| 5. Los Angeles Rams | e. Baker Mayfield |
| 6. Carolina Panthers | f. Matthew Stafford |
| 7. Tampa Bay Buccaneers | g. Matt Ryan |

Answer Key: 1.C, 2.G, 3.B, 4.D, 5.F, 6.E, 7.A

New Grant, New Look!

We were recently renewed for another 5 years of research! As we move forward into our coming season of Virginia Traumatic Brain Injury Model System we are happy to be able to offer you additional ways to be engaged with the work here at VCU.

In our efforts to modernize, we have updated our look and are shifting to an **ONLINE ONLY** distribution of our quarterly newsletter. Make sure you are signed up to our TBIMS Listserv to have the newsletter delivered directly to your inbox.

If you would like to continue to receive the physical version of our newsletter please let us know.

For both the listserv and for physical newsletter requests, please contact Laura.Albert@vcuhealth.org.



The contents of TBI Today were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DPTB00005). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of TBI Today do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

VISIT OUR WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Chat with Pat

Dear Pat:

I am writing regarding a friend with a brain injury. Do you have any recommendations for a person who refuses to seek professional help to deal with his behavior? He thinks it is going to get better, but it is only getting worse.

Pat's Response:

The best thing you can do is to continue to provide your friend with feedback about his behavior. If he does or says things that make you uncomfortable or embarrassed, let him know. Encourage other friends or his family to provide feedback as well. Be sure to balance criticism with positive feedback. Remember, if the behavior is due to a brain injury, he may not always be in control of his behavior. Some people aren't aware of the impact of their behavior on others. Don't give up. Have faith that things can always change for the better.

Links to more behavioral support resources:

- [BIAV](#)
- [MSKTC](#)
- [Caregiver.org](#)



Aphasia Support Group

When: 2nd Thursday of the month, 6-7 pm

Where: Wells Coleman office building in Monument Corporate Centre office park, 5004 Monument Ave, Richmond, 23230

Contact: Susan Hapala at (804) 906-3261 or Jan Thomas at rva.aphasia@gmail.com

Stroke/Brain Injury Survivor & Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 2-3 pm

Where: 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, 6:15-7:15 pm

Where: Disability Law Center of Virginia, 1512 Willow Lawn Drive, Suite 100, Richmond 23230

Contact: Christine Baggini at (804) 355-5748 or christine@biav.net

Upcoming Events!



Supportive Survivors

When: 2nd, 4th, and 5th Tuesdays, 6-8 pm, Outings planned for the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays

Where: Regency Mall Food Court, 1420 Parham Road, Richmond, 23229

Contact: Ted Taylor at (804) 781-2144 or taylorted58@yahoo.com

Women's Luncheon Group

When: 2nd Tuesday of the month for lunch, 11:30 am

Where: The Mill House, 7812 Shrader Road, Henrico, 23294

Contact: Jen Candela at (804) 386-0926 x 104 or jennifer@communitybraininjury.org

VCU, PM&R

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY MODEL SYSTEM

BOX 980542

RICHMOND VA 23298-0542

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

