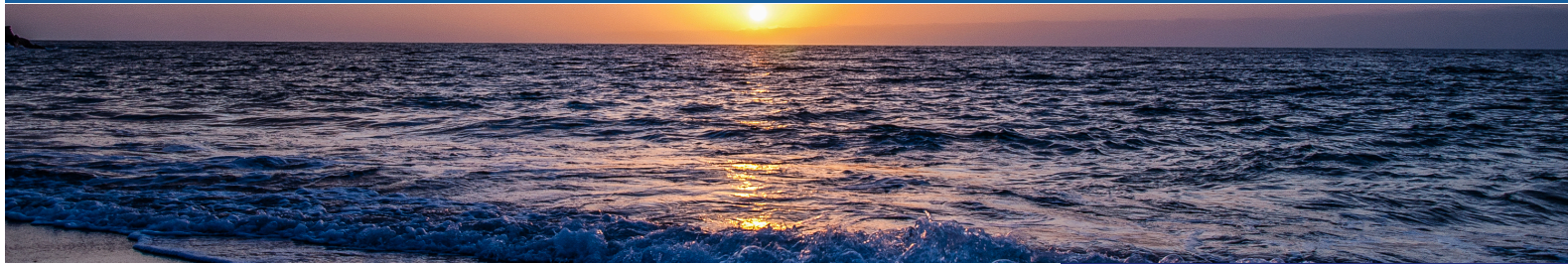




RESEARCH NEWS, HEALTH TIPS, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES FROM THE VIRGINIA TBI MODEL SYSTEM



Smart Tips to Keep Summertime Fun!

by Kelli Talley, PhD, OTR/L

The summer season can be relaxing and fun. Yet, brain injury can increase the risk of heat-related problems. After TBI, the body may be more sensitive to heat and not properly cool. Overheating can cause discomfort, dehydration, and in extreme cases, heat stroke or death. Spending lots of time in the sun can lead to fatigue, slowed reaction time, and decreased alertness. You may forget to use sunscreen and get a bad sunburn, even on cloudy days. TBI and sun-related fatigue can make driving, socializing, and everyday activities more difficult and increase the risk of injury. Summertime can increase crowds which causes anxiety, frustration, and stress. Here are some tips to keep the summer fun and avoid setbacks.

- **Keep your body cool and protect your skin.** Limit direct sunlight between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Wear a hat and sit in the shade. Use 50 SPF sunscreen, which blocks 98% of harmful sun rays. Carry and drink plenty of water. Bring a small towel that you can wet and put on your head to keep cool.
- **Be aware of your energy and stress levels.** Notice if you are sweating a lot or feel tired, irritable, or stressed. If so, go indoors or to a shaded area and drink water. Find a quiet, cool place to “chill”. Practice mindfulness or use relaxation techniques such as deep breathing. Take a short 20-minute nap.
- **Travel and do activities safely.** Focus 100% on a single activity. That helps you stay alert and maintain focus. If you drive, start your trip at the time of day that you are most alert. If possible, travel with a friend or family member. When you start to feel tired, pull over in a parking lot or other safe place and take a break. Do outdoor chores on cooler, cloudy days; on sunny days do outdoor work before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m.



Research Highlight:

TBI and Substance use

by Katherine Abbasi, MA

TBIMS participants who took part in the chronic pain study were asked questions about use of opiate medications and marijuana. Of the 3,750 participants who responded, 215 misused opiates (took more than prescribed or took opiates that were not prescribed to them), 353 occasionally used marijuana, and 714 regularly used marijuana. Misuse of opiates and/or use regular marijuana use was associated with higher risk for PTSD, depression, anxiety and poor sleep quality. People with TBI should be told about the impacts of substances on mental health.

- [Click here to read more about this study!](#)
- [To learn more about the impact of substance use on the health of people with TBI, check out this factsheet.](#)
- [If you or someone you know needs help with substance use, visit here.](#)

Virginia TBI Model System

Project Director

Ronald Seel, PhD, FACRM

Dissemination Director

Kelli Talley, PhD, OTR/L

Newsletter Editor

Katherine Abbasi, MA

Research Team

Mark Bender, PhD

Karen Brooke, MT

Rochelle Brown, MPH

David Cifu, MD

Carolyn Frey, BS

Amol Karmarkar, PhD

Daniel Klyce, PhD

Richard Kunz, MD

Dylan Marcuson, BS, BFA

Rana Mohsen, BS

Robert Perera, PhD

Eunice Richardson

Hiba Saleem, BS

William Walker, MD

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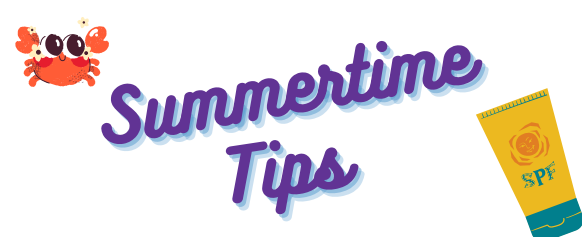
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VISIT OUR WEBSITES FOR MORE
INFORMATION:



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





- Check the weather before you go to dress for the temperature and have an umbrella or poncho on hand
- Apply sunscreen every 45 minutes to keep sunburns, blisters, and redness away
- Drink plenty of water and take breaks from the heat when you can to cool off
- Wear light clothing for the warm weather and use bug spray to stay bite-free
- Keep picnic dishes covered to keep bugs from digging in along with you and take food inside after eating to avoid spoilage

Support Groups

RVA Aphasia Group

Monthly Meetings

Contact: rvaaphasiagroup@gmail.com for upcoming monthly meeting information

Coffee and Conversation Group

Contact: rvaaphasiagroup@gmail.com for upcoming coffee and conversation groups

BIAV

Online Caregiver Group

Virtual meeting for caregivers who live in VA.
When: 1st Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm
Contact: Email Debra Holloway at debra@biav.net to register

Online Support Group for people living with BI, family and friends

When: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:00 pm
Contact: Christine Baggini at christine@biav.net or 804-355-5748 to register

In-Person Support Group

When: 3rd Monday of the month, 6:00 pm
Where: Willow Lawn area of Richmond
Contact: Christine Baggini at christine@biav.net or 804-355-5748 to register

Community Brain Injury Services

Caregiver Support Group

When: 2nd Monday of the month, 6:30 pm
Where: ZOOM:
<http://bit.ly/CBIScaregiversupport>
Contact: Jennifer Zemke at (804) 386-0925 x104 or jennifer@communitybraininjury.org

Community Connection: Sheltering Arms Institute Clinical Science and Research Expands to the Outpatient Setting

By: Amber Walter, Clinical Science Director, SAI

The Sheltering Arms Institute (SAI) Clinical Science and Research Teams and the Sheltering Arms Foundation work to bring new findings from scientific studies into the rehabilitation setting. This work happens at SAI's Short Pump area inpatient rehabilitation hospital and eight outpatient clinics around Richmond. The teamwork of Sheltering Arms and VCU Health began several years ago to deliver a direct connection of top researchers and highly skilled clinicians. The joint outreach benefits our community by providing access to the newest technologies, advancements, and treatment methods backed by science and ready to improve outcomes after injury or illness so that people can get stronger quicker and back to their lives.

To further the scientific work at SAI, a clinician scientist program has been developed. The program wants to close the "17-year gap" between when research findings are published and when they are used in patient care. Clinician scientists at SAI look for gaps in evidence-based care, collect data, perform statistical analyses, and share what is learned from the work. The clinician scientist then advances care by applying the learned information, known as knowledge translation, to create care plans to improve patient outcomes.

Applying scientific findings to new populations

A recent project by a clinician scientist looked at the use of walking technology for persons who have a condition called critical illness myopathy (CIM). CIM can often result from prolonged hospital stays. Walking technology (body weight support) can be used to increase the intensity of treatment sessions and this is known to improve outcomes after some types of illnesses. The clinician scientist was able to examine records for patients with CIM using the technology at SAI for various numbers of sessions. The results showed the technology was helpful and should continue be used to improve walking function for people with CIM.

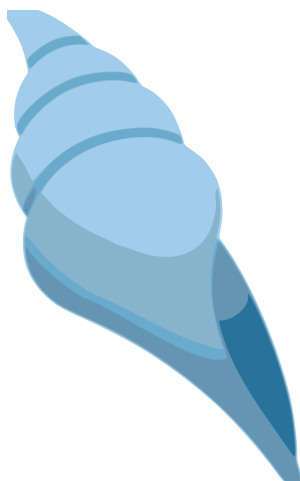
Investigating new technologies

A current clinician scientist project is using a wearable technology to look at the effect on walking for people with any condition that may lead to stiffness or spasms that cause difficulty walking. This technology is an approved medical device, but we know less about how therapists might use it in the clinic. Therefore, we are looking at how easy it is for providers, family members, and patients to setup and use within treatment sessions and if patients achieve beneficial improvements with wearable use in therapy sessions. Investigating these new technologies might help people in outpatient rehabilitation and in the home.

Click here for more information on Sheltering Arms Institute, its facilities, and its services.

Sheltering Arms Institute frequently posts information related to rehabilitation care.

Click here to see what's new and take a look at past articles! Inquiries about this program or research at SAI can be made to: SAI-Research@sai.rehab



Brain Games for

Fun!

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

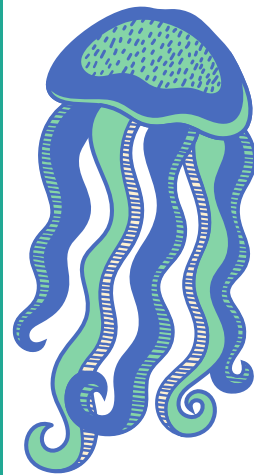


SCAN ME

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.



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