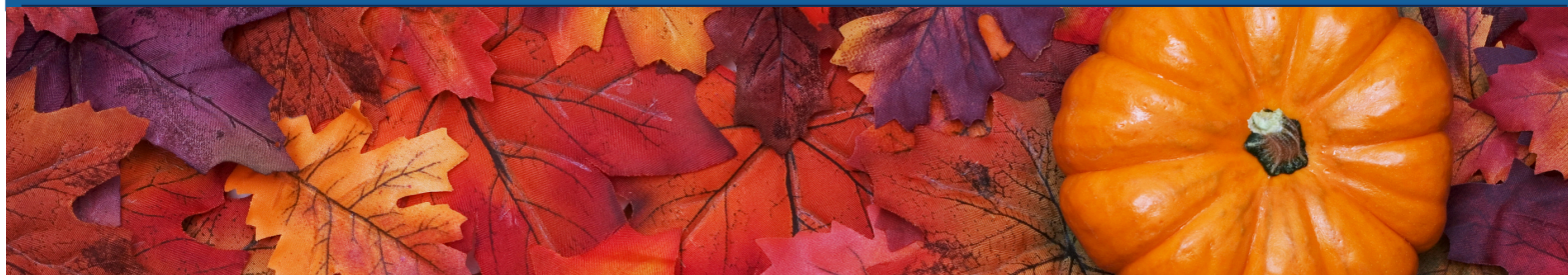




RESEARCH NEWS, HEALTH TIPS, AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES FROM THE VIRGINIA TBI MODEL SYSTEM





Navigating the New Normal: Adjusting to Life after TBI

Adjusting after a TBI is hard and can be upsetting. Changes in how you think, feel, and move makes things seem different or even strange. Getting better doesn't mean becoming who you were. Rather, it means accepting who you are now and having the staying power to get a little better, one day at a time. **Focusing on small gains rather than how you used to be** is the best way to adjust. Other tips that can help you adjust and feel okay with your new normal are:

- Try low stress exercise such as yoga, stretching, and walking to stay active
- Make and keep a daily routine
- Break big tasks into small steps to feel less stressed
- Celebrate every small success!
- Start tasks when you feel most awake
- Take breaks often to refresh energy
- Do one thing at a time
- Don't blame yourself for feeling emotional or having a "bad day"
- Stay connected and express gratitude to people who care about you

Adjusting takes time. Be kind to yourself as you learn and grow through these changes.

 **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

What Helps People Recover Best After a TBI: What We Know...So Far

Researchers did a recent study looked at why some people recover better than others after TBI.

They found that survivors with resilience—keeping positive and having staying power—did best. Resilience can be learned and built over time.

What did resilient people do?

- Stay positive and hopeful to help bounce back
- Cope by staying calm and solution-focused to make recovery easier
- Accept support from family and friends
- Have staying power to keep at it even after one or many "bad days"

Past experiences, such as childhood trauma or mental health issues, can make recovery harder, but not impossible. Getting access to healthcare also matters. Survivors, family and health providers can use this information to help people heal better after TBI.

[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:
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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](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Return to Work](#)
- [Childcare](#)
- [Financial Assistance](#)
- [Utility Bill Relief](#)
- [Legal services](#)

Community Support Groups

RVA Aphasia Group

For Monthly Meetings, Contact:

community.engagement@sai.rehab

Coffee and Conversation Group

Contact debby.seitz@gmail.com for upcoming meetings

BIAV Online and In Person Monthly Support Groups and Network Events

Visit 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**

Helping Caregivers Cope with Stress After TBI

Adapted from the MSKTC Factsheet: [Stress Management for TBI Caregivers](#)

Taking care of someone with a TBI is hard. You might feel tired, sad, or worried. That's normal—and there are ways to feel better.

Common Signs of Stress:

- Body aches, headaches, or stomach problems
- Trouble sleeping or feeling tired
- Forgetting things or having trouble thinking
- Feeling sad, guilty, or alone
- Crying or worrying a lot

Best Ways to Cope:

- Try deep breathing, yoga, or meditation
- Practice mindfulness—relax your mind and body, focus on the present moment or current task
- Accept your thoughts and feelings without judging yourself
- Keep doing healthy things that you enjoy, such as reading, walking or being with positive family and friends
- Reward yourself after both easy and hard tasks
- Solve problems by staying calm and breaking them into small, achievable steps
- Talk to family and friends about how you feel
- Get help from a counselor or support group

You're not alone. Taking care of yourself helps you take better care of your loved one.

Learn More:

Visit the official MSKTC website to read the full factsheet and find additional topics: <https://msktc.org/TBI>



Watch a special movie made and shared by a caregiver!

They created this video to help others and wanted to share it with our readers. thenathanfilm.com



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 to access back issues!

PAUSE

BY: JANNELLE CHARLEMAGNE

Recovery from TBI has many challenges, as well as opportunities. As new challenges rise we are not alone in our TBI recovery. When we're feeling powerless, PAUSE & stop worrying or trying to speed up the process to recovery. The recovery process takes time.

P-lease let us

A-lways believe in ourselves

U-ncover hidden talents

S-trengthen our thoughts &

E-mbrace life

Let's train ourselves to move with a maybe. Don't be afraid to try and accept change and make reachable goals by breaking down large goals into smaller steps, and focus on accomplishments.

When feeling impatient take a **pause** break & pay attention to whatever has us falling apart. Every time we lose our peace, and end up in pieces, we need to look at every area of our lives and ask ourselves these questions below:

Am I on course? Am I growing emotionally? Am I growing mentally? Am I growing physically?

We must set boundaries for ourselves; keep an open mind to new experiences while attaining positive goals. While doing so, **pause** and take a look back to see how far we've come from where we started, also a little effort is the best replacement for excuses not to try. Our TBI experiences matter to others going through a similar situation, and it contributes towards learning about different ways to overcome a TBI tragedy.

A new view of **pause** is to have a positive attitude uplifting our self-confidence in a situation while embracing encouragement.

P-ositive

A-ttitude

U-plifting

S-elf-confidence while

E-mbracing encouragement

Keep in mind a little effort is the best replacement for excuses not to try; as well as having patience is realizing that things take time, and effort.

As TBI survivors, we need to give ourselves credit for our accomplishments.

