



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



Spring Into Action!

by Kelli Talley, PhD, OTR/L

As we look forward to spring, let's reflect on what the word means. Spring is a time or season of growth or development. Another meaning for spring is "a source of action or motion." These two definitions serve as a driving force to "Spring into Action" and focus on more movement and increased productivity during this upcoming season. Increased activity level can be especially helpful when one is recovering from a brain injury. It is well-known that lack of movement reduces the proper blood flow for the body to function properly. Activity is key to increasing life satisfaction and quality of life after a brain injury. As we transition into a season representing renewal and motion, here are some tips to encourage movement, growth, and reengagement in day-to-day life.

- Start your day off with an exercise routine. You do not have to take a long and structured class at the gym. You can complete a few minutes of low-impact exercises in the comfort of your living room. Low-impact exercises, such as yoga, Tai Chi, and Pilates, help strengthen the core, decrease stress, and improve balance.
- Go for a walk outside. A change in scenery can reduce stress and improve your mood. Walking burns calories, improves energy, increases circulation, and releases endorphins in the brain to make you feel good. Mental health benefits from walking in nature include reduced anxiety and increased feelings of happiness.
- Engage in an outside hobby. Hobbies outside will likely require movement while breathing fresh air and being exposed to sunlight. Engaging in hobbies will allow you to set goals and proceed at your own pace. Some nice outdoor hobbies to choose from include photography, birdwatching, gardening, sports, and meditation. Since outdoor hobbies allow exposure to Vitamin D and cardiovascular fitness, they can improve your immune system, and sleep quality, and boost motivation.
- Find a volunteer position. Volunteer opportunities are easy to find because organizations need community support to provide services or products. Volunteering is a perfect motivator to get out of the house and gives a sense of pride when you accomplish a goal for the greater good. Volunteering is key to working your way back to employment after having a brain injury.

Research Highlight:

Volunteering After TBI

by Katherine Abbasi, MA

Many people who sustain TBI are not able to work. To have a sense of purpose, some people do volunteer work. A team of TBI researchers studied whether volunteering improved the lives of people with TBI. A survey was completed by 725 TBI Model Systems participants. People with TBI who volunteered tended to be 2 or more years out from injury and had better day-to-day functioning. People who reported volunteering in the past month had greater life satisfaction and better social relations than those who did not volunteer. [Click here to read more about this study!](#)

We want to start a follow-up study to see what helps and what stops people with TBI from volunteering. Findings would help us identify resources or develop tools to make it easier to volunteer. What things would help you to volunteer? [click here](#)

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VISIT OUR WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION:



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



Upcoming Events



Brain Injury Awareness Day

March 4, 2024

LOOKING FOR WAYS TO BE INVOLVED?

Attend the Awareness Rally on Capitol Hill:

Awareness Rally 2024 - Brain Injury Association of America (biausa.org)

Find ways to observe Brain Injury Awareness Day:

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS DAY - March 4, 2024 - National Today

Support Groups

RVA Aphasia Group

Monthly Meetings

When: 2nd Thursday of each month from 6:00 pm

Where: To be announced

Contact: rvaaphasiagroup@gmail.com for exact dates and locations

Coffee and Conversation Group

When: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2:00 pm

Where: Ellwood Thompson
4 North Thompson St.
Richmond, VA 23221

Contact: rvaaphasiagroup@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.rva-aphasia.com>

BIAV

Online Caregiver Group

A meeting for caregivers who live in Virginia.

When: 1st Wednesday of the month, 6:00 pm

Contact: Email Debra Holloway at debra@biav.net to register and for location information

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

When: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:00 pm

Contact: Christine Baggini at christine@biav.net or 804-355-5748 for an invitation to the virtual meetings

In-Person Support Group

When: 3rd Monday of the month, 6:00 pm

Where: Willow Lawn area of Richmond,
Registration required prior to meeting to see exact location

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

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

Website: <https://communitybraininjury.org>

Community Connection: Community Brain Injury Services Reclaiming Independence Through Community-Based Services

By: Claire Yarbrough, Director of Operations, CBIS

Experiencing a brain injury is a life-altering event that impacts the person, the caregiver, and the entire community supporting the individual. The individuals we support at Community Brain Injury Services (CBIS) are navigating the lifelong disability they have as a result of their brain injury.

CBIS helps individuals build back independence after a brain injury by working with them to set up needed supports to live independently safely, re-engage with their community, return to competitive employment, and offer support through a network of peers. CBIS is most well-known for our Clubhouse-model vocational rehabilitation programs. We operate two programs, The Mill House in Richmond, and The Denbigh House in Newport News. The programs help individuals work on the socio-emotional, cognitive, and behavioral changes that can occur following a brain injury. Clubhouse programs emphasize the power of work and offer an array of vocational services, including options such as participation in the work-ordered day of the Clubhouse, Employee Development Services- a 30-day assessment to evaluate an individual's readiness to return to the workforce, and traditional Supported Employment Services provided by a dedicated Employment Coordinator.

Building back towards independence includes setting up the needed supports in the community to ensure health, safety, and accessibility for each individual. This looks different for each person. Our skilled case managers in our Case Management Services program work with the survivor and their treatment team to put into place the appropriate resources and supports.

To get involved, learn more, to make a referral, or to view our full service area, please visit our website at www.communitybraininjury.org. You can also reach us at 804-386-0925. We are also always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join us in helping us with the execution of our events, including our annual Gala, Lifting the Silence, scheduled this year for May 4th! More details about this event can also be found on our website.

Community Brain Injury Services employs a dedicated team of professionals who are driven to do this work through their passion for the mission, and who are honored by the privilege to work with individuals on their journey of rehabilitation. Our mission at CBIS is to empower individuals to regain and maintain independence and as a result we see the growth of self-advocates who not only learn to advocate for themselves, but also speak up for all of the brain injury community.



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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