



Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota

Helping people who have been touched by brain injury

Newsletter | Spring 2024 | Volume 7 | Issue 1

This is an independent newsletter that aims to serve the brain injury movement in South Dakota. To contact us, please email braininjurysd@gmail.com or go to www.braininjurysd.org. Newsletter Coeditors: Doris Schumacher & Jennifer Williams

Current BIASD Board Members: Justine Ashokar, Karen Brokenleg, Brenna Christiansen, Jenny Hallan, Brian Poelstra, Mary Tommeraasen, & Jennifer Williams

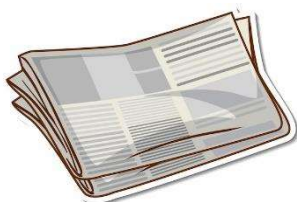
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What's New?!



- The Black Hills area support group will be starting back up this May! The specific location is yet to be determined, but will be held in Rapid City, SD. See support groups on page 7 for details.
- Over the coming months, listening sessions will take place at support groups in South Dakota, offering individuals affected by brain injury a platform to share their experiences. The first listening session will take place in May at the Black Hills area support group. See you there!
- The February 2024 South Dakota Brain Injury Final Needs Assessment Report underscores the importance of addressing the identified gaps and challenges to enhance the support system for brain injury survivors in South Dakota, advocating for improved professional training, increased



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awareness of services, and better navigation aids for patients and families navigating the post-injury landscape.

Resilient minds



*Recovering from a TBI and experiencing a seizure.
Continuation from “My Journey of Understanding” (Fall
2023 issue) Jack, Sioux Falls Support Group*

A Seizure, Too?

A seizure occurs when there is an abnormal release of electrical impulses in the damaged parts of your brain, disrupting the usual flow pattern. The more severe the seizure, the larger the affected area. Doctors once believed (back on July 27, 1984) that removing the damaged area should control the seizure. However, it doesn't always work that way. Recovering from a

traumatic brain injury is a journey in and of life itself, forever changed without choice, leaving you with feelings and wonders of what might come next. When will this be over? Only to arrive at the realization of the words you never wanted to hear: “Never.”

Now comes the lifelong reality that my life will always be ever-changing due to medications and aging with new health issues. Twenty-eight years into my altered life, I discovered that I would have to go through it all over again, which made me question whether it would be worth it. The surgery for seizures I faced was as daunting or worse than the motorcycle accident. Contemplating all the struggles over the years made me wonder why I should continue. I could end up worse, or even die. My next thought was of all the loved ones who supported me through it all, and that made me decide to try for them. If they could endure it again, so would I. This gave rise to chapter two of a brain injury survivor's life.

Once again, many things changed with me in so many ways. These never-ending changes are endured every day, week, month, and year. Each year is always distinct from the last. (Continued)



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This struggle isn't easy for anyone who lives with or supports a loved one with a brain injury. One thing I believe we all learn is to take each day as it comes and to handle whatever comes our way. We do the best we can and hope tomorrow will be a better day. Because for someone with a TBI, no two days are ever the same, even if they might feel like it. Every day is a new day. Try to smile and embrace this new day. Our journey is sometimes a moment at a time, hour by hour, through ups and downs, just like any other day.

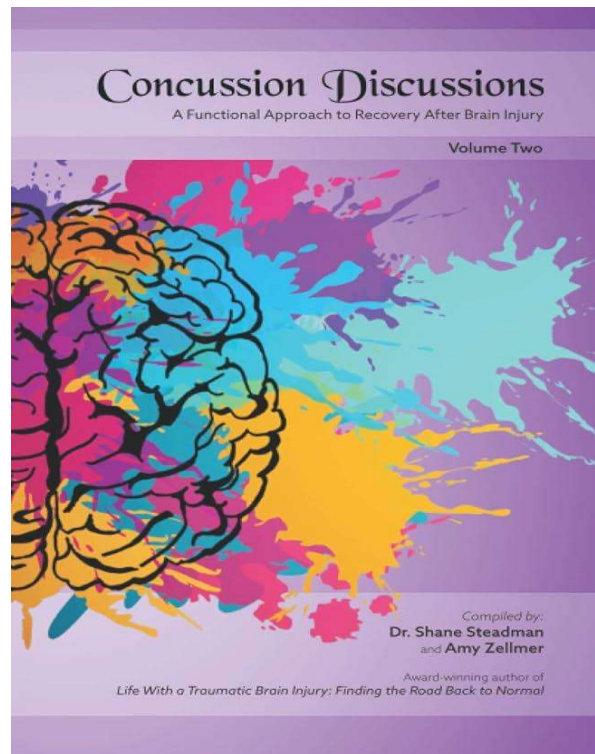
Always remember, your brain injury is your unique story with many chapters that you write anew each day. Keep writing your story and savor every moment you can.

Read and Review

Volume 1 Review by Randy, Sioux Falls Area Support Group:

My initial impression of this book was its singular focus on concussions, which I found slightly misleading, given the title. However, it does provide quite useful information on a variety of brain injury topics. The book delves into how survivors of brain injuries can flourish during their recovery, often finding success where traditional medicine has not provided solutions. It presents a treasure trove of knowledge and hope for those affected by brain injuries, covering specific subjects that may be relevant to them.

The book features the insights and experiences of twenty experts in the field of brain injury. It guides survivors through innovative methods to manage symptoms such as headaches, dysautonomia, eye tracking issues, brain fog, dizziness, thyroid disorders, and more. It also aids in understanding





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available treatment options and legal rights. Essentially, for anyone impacted by a brain injury, this book doesn't just provide information—it offers hope. Noteworthy information from the book includes:

- A concussion, also identified as a mild traumatic brain injury, is a head injury that temporarily disrupts brain functioning, with possible symptoms including loss of consciousness, memory loss, headaches, and other difficulties.
- Alternate designations include mild brain injury, mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI), mild head injury (MHI), and minor head trauma.
- Relevant medical specialties include emergency medicine and neurology.
- Common symptoms are headaches, cognitive difficulties, memory issues, concentration challenges, nausea, blurry vision, sleep disruptions, mood alterations, and balance issues.
- Potential complications encompass chronic traumatic encephalopathy, Parkinson's disease, depression, and post-concussion syndrome.
- The primary cause of concussions in humans is automobile accidents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that there are over 3.8 million concussions each year, indicating frequent head injuries.
- Defined as a subset of traumatic brain injury (TBI), concussions are linked to more than 60,000 deaths annually in the United States, approximately 170 per day, as reported by the CDC.
- Related traumatic brain injuries include epilepsy, whiplash, head injuries, and chronic traumatic encephalopathy.

Volume 2 Review by Lori, Brookings Area Support Group:

This book was excellent and a quick read. As someone who has experienced multiple concussions, I once thought myself fortunate that my injuries weren't as severe as those with TBIs. This book corrected that assumption. I learned that concussions are indeed quite serious. The book details how various bodily systems, such as the endocrine system, are affected. Understanding the different side effects has helped me recognize that some of my health issues may be connected to my concussions. However, the book was challenging to read due to its technical nature, with statistics that were difficult to grasp. It includes case studies that clarify the more technical information. Unfortunately, the treatments and facilities discussed are not readily accessible



near Brookings, SD, and the treatments described are costly, requiring multiple sessions. This book is a must-read for those affected by concussions

Making an Impact



On February 10, 2024, Dr. Cami Hollins from LearningRx spoke to the Sioux Falls Area Brain Injury Support Group. Dr. Hollins is the Executive Director, and her office is located in Brandon, SD. She shared information about the training they provide for individuals who have sustained brain injuries, as well as those with ADHD and attention issues, reading difficulties and dyslexia, autism, learning disabilities, and adults over the age of 50.

LearningRx works with seven core cognitive skills: attention, processing speed, working memory, logic and reasoning, auditory processing, visual processing, and long-term memory. The data for 18,000 participants who completed the training show improvements across all seven core cognitive skills. Their program is one-on-one and intensive. However, the training may not be suitable for everyone, as it requires consistency, and some individuals who have sustained a brain injury may not be able to attend all required sessions due to headaches or other health issues.

If you are interested in learning more about this program, please email Dr. Hollins at SiouxFalls.sd@learningrx.net, call her at 605-582-2020, or visit www.learningrx.com/sioux-falls. She will be able to help evaluate whether you might benefit from this program and discuss the costs with you.

-Written by BIASD Board Member, Karen Brokenleg



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Support Groups

Aberdeen Area

Where:

Independent Living Choices · 110 6th Ave SW Suite 101 Aberdeen, SD 57401

When:

Third Tuesday of every month · 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Contact:

(605) 626-2976

Brookings Area

Where:

United Way Office · 908 Hope Drive · Brookings, SD 57706

When:

First Thursday of every month · 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Contact:

(605) 961-8168

Sioux Falls Area

Where:

Active Generations · 2300 W. 46th Street · Sioux Falls, SD 57105

When:

Second Saturday of every month · 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Contact:

(605) 940-1815 · (605) 322-5066 · (605) 367-5260

Black Hills Area

Where:

TBD · Rapid City, SD

When:

Second Tuesday of every month · 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM · *Starting May 2024!*

Contact:

(605) 343-7297



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Brain Bites



Exercise for Brain Health:

- Regular physical activity is not only good for your body, it's also beneficial for your brain. Studies show that regular exercise can increase the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory.

Meditation and Brain Structure:

- Long-term meditation can lead to changes in brain structure, particularly areas associated with attention, introspection, and sensory processing.

Nutrition and Cognitive Function:

- Eating a diet high in fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and omega-3 fatty acids can help preserve cognitive function. Certain foods like blueberries and turmeric are thought to be particularly beneficial for brain health.

Sleep and Memory:

- Sleep isn't just important for restoring the body's functions, it also plays a critical role in consolidating memories. One stage of sleep, called slow-wave sleep, is particularly important for memory and learning.

Social Connections and Brain Health:

- Staying socially engaged with friends, family, and community can support brain health. Research shows that people with strong social networks have lower risks of dementia and cognitive decline.

Lifelong Learning and Brain Plasticity:

- Continuing to learn new things throughout life can help keep the brain sharp and agile. The brain can change and adapt (a concept known as neuroplasticity) at any age, and lifelong learning is a great way to support this.



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Mark your calendars!

Discovering Purpose After Brain Injury

April 2, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.biausa.org/public-affairs/public-awareness/events>

A Guide to Cyber Security for Brain Injury Survivors

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

April 12, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

How to Find Purpose After Brain Related Cognitive Impairments

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

May 10, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

Chronic Pain Management

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

June 14, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

How Creativity Can Enrich Your Journey through Brain Injury

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

August 9, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

Latino/Latina/Latin X Panel – This session will be Spanish with English interpretation

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

September 13, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

TBD

2024 Brain Injury Survivor Series

October 11, 2024 | Webinar

Register at: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/online-registration/>

Brain Bites | References

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Lazar SW, et al. (2005). Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness. Neuroreport. [Link](https://journals.lww.com/neuroreport/Abstract/2005/11280/Meditation_experience_is_associated_with_increased.2.aspx)

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BETTER CHOICES
better health[®]
GOOD & HEALTHY SOUTH DAKOTA COMMUNITIES



BUILDING BETTER CAREGIVERS

6 WEEKLY, 2.5 HOUR WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Designed for family caregivers of people with dementia and Alzheimer's, brain injury, other conditions that affect memory, and those who can no longer live at home independently.



Monday's

April 15th - May 20th

8:30 am - 11:00 am CT

7:30 am - 10:00 am MT

Location: Virtual (Zoom link will be sent after registration)

So many of us, whether we realize it or not, are caregivers. Approximately 40 million Americans provide unpaid care to older adults and adults with disabilities—the majority of whom also juggle a job or other responsibilities. Wearing all of these hats can take its toll. BCBH-SD can help you in your caregiver role.



Scan or Call **1-888-484-3800**
to learn more and register!

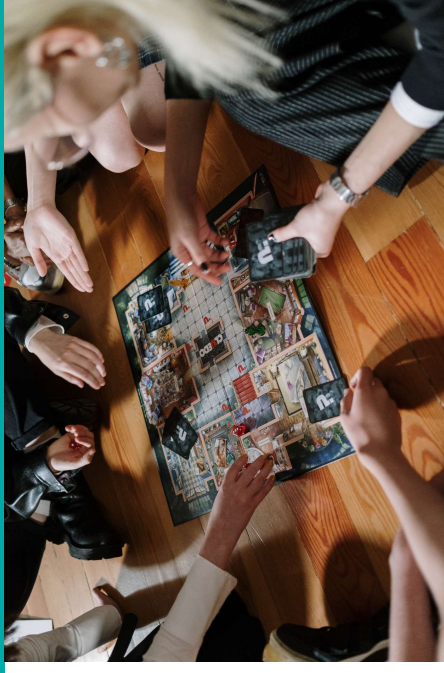




Disability Awareness and Outreach Initiative
at the Brookings Public Library

Accessible Activity Series

Come enjoy disability and neurodivergent-friendly activities at the Brookings Public Library that are accessible, adaptable, and welcoming. Activities are free and open to the public. All ages are welcome. Please contact mneubauer@cityofbrookings-sd.gov with any questions!



Board Game Day
February 9 at 1pm

DIY Birdhouses
March 8 at 1pm

Board Game Day
April 19 at 1pm

These programs are made possible by the Peggy Barber Tribute Grant from the American Library Association

If you require assistance, alternative formats, and/or accessible locations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact the City ADA Coordinator at (605) 692-6281 at least 3 working days prior to any meeting held at the Library



ABERDEEN AREA BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

SECOND THURSDAY EVERY MONTH

3PM – 4PM

ABERDEEN ILC OFFICE
110 6TH AVE SE SUITE 101

Are you someone living with a brain injury or other brain related disability?
Do you ever wish you could talk to other people in the same situation so you
can learn from them and be encouraged? Then this support group is for you!
We'd love to have you join us. You aren't alone.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: ALANIS @ 605-626-2976

Brain Injury Support Group of the Black Hills



Second Tuesday of every month starting May 2024
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Exact Location TBD
Rapid City, SD

This support group aims to bring together individuals and loved ones affected by brain injury. Our group offers a platform for sharing experiences, providing mutual support, and promoting understanding, and we would love for you to join us!

For more information, please call us at: (605) 343-7297

We proudly operate under the Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota, and give thanks to our sponsor, Black Hills Works.

