



Brain Injury
Association
of Waterloo - Wellington

Media Kit

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ANYTIME, ANYWHERE
ANYONE

Brain Injuries do not discriminate
www.biaww.com

The banner features the text "ANYTIME, ANYWHERE ANYONE" in large, 3D, light blue letters. Various people are interacting with the letters: a person on a skateboard on the 'A', a couple standing by the first 'N', a person sitting on a chair by the 'Y', a person doing a handstand by the 'O', a person sitting on the 'N', and a person on a motorcycle on the 'E'. The Brain Injury Association of Waterloo - Wellington logo is in the bottom right corner.

A second can last a lifetime...*Decisions that can change lives forever – take only a split second to make. Brain Injury happens in an instant – recovery is lifelong.*

The Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington

The Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington (BIAWW) is a registered not-for-profit charity that provides support, advocacy, and programs to survivors of acquired brain injury and educational programs to the children and youth in our community.

- ♦ We provide information on how to access community resources such as legal, rehabilitation, health care, work re-entry, school re-entry and community services. We make available information on concussion and acquired brain injury to survivors and their caregivers.
- ♦ We offer a day program called the "Opportunity Centre" in partnership with Traverse Independence where members can come 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Monday to Friday to participate in various social and leisure programs.
- ♦ We offer a community prevention and education program called "Lidz on Kidz" which allows us to visit area schools and minor sport leagues to promote wearing the gear and playing safe with the proper helmet.
- ♦ We provide a caregivers support group called "Care to Share" where caregivers can speak with their peers to gain support and develop friendships.

Mission

Give support, hope and answers to survivors of acquired brain injury (ABI).

Vision

To be recognized as pioneers in meeting the needs of survivors and their caregivers and setting the standard for innovative program delivery, education and prevention of ABI.

Values

- ♦ Dignity
- ♦ Acceptance
- ♦ Respect
- ♦ Empowerment

Goals and Objectives:

- ♦ Improve current programs and develop new initiatives for survivors of Acquired Brain Injuries
- ♦ Develop customized support programs and information tools for caregivers
- ♦ Raise awareness and reduce incidence of ABI

What is Brain Injury

Of all types of injury – brain injury is the most likely to result in permanent disability or death. The brain is the centre of the nervous system and the most complex human organ. The brain is the boss of our body; it runs the show and controls everything we do, even when asleep. The annual incidence of acquired brain injury is greater than that of multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, Alzheimer, HIV/AIDS, and breast cancer combined.

Acquired brain injury occurs when the brain becomes damaged because of an event that happened sometime after birth. Each person's brain injury is unique. Different parts of the brain have different functions and the damage depends on which part of the brain that was injured. The effects range from mild to severe and the severity of the injury is a good predictor of recovery. Generally the more severe the injury, the less likely it is that the survivor will return to normal. It is not an acquired brain injury if the survivor is injured at birth. The damage must be a result of an injury or an illness, but not an illness that degenerates with time, such as Alzheimer's disease or multiple sclerosis.

Brain Injuries can happen to anyone at anytime. They occur suddenly and without warning and in an instant life is changed forever. Every day we participate in activities that produce endless risks for sustaining a brain injury. They can happen while driving a car, riding a bike, playing sports, or walking down the street. Many things can damage the brain. A blow to the head, brain tumours, lack of oxygen, brain infections, strokes and aneurisms can all cause brain injuries. Acquired brain injury has become recognized throughout the world as a problem of epidemic proportions. Unfortunately, due to the cognitive nature of the disability it has become known as ***the Silent Epidemic***.

The true numbers are staggering ...

- ♦ Traumatic Brain Injury occurs 500 out of 100,000 individuals yearly in Canada with 18,000 alone in Ontario and every day there are 35 persons admitted to hospital
- ♦ Within the next hour, 6 Canadians will suffer a brain injury
- ♦ An estimated 1.3 million Canadians are living with an acquired brain injury right now
- ♦ Close to 500,000 people in Ontario are living with an acquired brain injury
- ♦ 1 in 10 people will know someone who will suffer a brain injury this year
- ♦ About 3,000 of these will be left with physical cognitive/and or behavioural consequences severe enough to prevent them from returning to pre-injury lifestyles
- ♦ 465 people suffer a brain injury daily in Canada, this amounts to one person injured every 3 minutes
- ♦ Occurs at a rate of 100 times that of spinal cord injury
- ♦ The greatest killer under the age of 45, the greatest disabler under the age 44 and kills more children under the age of 20 than any other causes combined
- ♦ The highest incidence of traumatic brain injury are men aged 16-24
- ♦ 85% of all cyclists deaths in Canada involve brain injury
- ♦ 1 in 5 sport related injuries are head injuries
- ♦ When injury due to stroke or other non-traumatic causes are included, close to 4% of the population in Canada live with a brain injury (1,400,000)

Causes of Acquired Brain Injury

- ♦ Motor Vehicle Collisions (30%)
- ♦ Sports (20%)
- ♦ Biking (15%)
- ♦ Medical (10%)
- ♦ Violence (10%)
- ♦ Industrial (10%)
- ♦ Diving (5%)

What Happens

Brain Injury results in a variety of physical, cognitive and behavioural problems. Unless significant physical injuries occur it is often misdiagnosed or missed completely.

Cognitive difficulties are not always obvious, but have devastating consequences:

- ♦ 53% of homeless individuals live with brain injury the vast majority 77% were injured prior to becoming homeless
- ♦ 82% of the prison population live with a disability as a result of traumatic brain injury
- ♦ up to 10% of all children have an undiagnosed brain injury affecting learning abilities
- ♦ 20% of children diagnosed with emotional disabilities and 30% classified as Learning Disabled have brain injury
- ♦ after brain injury people are up to 7 times more likely to develop mental illness
- ♦ people living with disability as a result of brain injury are often the most complex and difficult to serve. They are often not served because their complex needs cannot be met with limited resources offered by non-specialized programs
- ♦ data demonstrates that brain injury is a permanent chronic condition that plays a significant role in the development of other costly health and social issues.

The Costs

From existing estimates, the cost in direct care costs is estimated at over \$650 million dollars annually. Lost productivity costs are estimated at an additional \$580 million dollars – totaling over 1 billion dollars annually.

Unfortunately support services have not been developed at the same rate as life saving procedures. The vast majority of health dollars are dedicated to acute care and short term rehabilitation. A small fraction of resources are dedicated to decades of living with a profound disability incurring increasing health, social service and criminal justice system costs.

Brain injury is an issue of enormous proportions with devastating social and economic consequences. In the majority this is a condition of the young. The highest group are just starting careers and families and do not possess the resources to fall back on when injured. The cost in health, lost wages, increased reliance on the welfare system, legal costs and the devastating impact on families are nearly incalculable.

If we can prevent just one serious brain injury each year, over the lifetime of this person who may have been injured we would save over \$90 million dollars.

Prevention and Education of brain injury is one of the most cost effective strategies to save health, social service and criminal justice resources.

So what happens to survivors in Waterloo-Wellington

Hopefully survivors, family and caregivers will be referred to the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington. We offer a day program called "The Opportunity Centre" where survivors can come in to socialize and participate in recreational activities. This assists them in developing new friendships and an understanding of what has happened to them and to help them to adjust to their current life. It also provides caregivers a chance to attend to their personal lives and careers knowing that their loved ones are being cared for. Each of the survivors has their own story to tell of their injuries and their rehabilitation. They are unique stores of great courage and strength.

Here are just a few of the stories and why the Opportunity Centre is important to them.

Bob was not in an accident, something just 'snapped' in his brain. He does not remember the exact date of his stroke, but he knows it must have been six years ago. After recovering in Freeport Hospital, Bob began attending the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington's (BIAWW) day programs at the Opportunity Centre. No longer able to make a living as a Meat Inspector for the Federal Government he needed to have something to do. The Opportunity Centre gets Bob out of the house and gives him a chance to socialize with others. He highly recommends the BIAWW to other survivors. Bob loves to play cards, do crosswords, helping to package the glass designs and participates in whatever else is going on at the time.

On August 30, 2004 Client A was admitted to St. Mary's Hospital with a stroke to the left side of his brain. He was transferred to Grand River Hospital, accepted Tissue Plasminogen Activator and immediately went into a coma. Client A was transferred to London where he was "close to dying" and then returned to Grand River "to die". When he arrived at Grand River Hospital, the doctor said, "He is going to make it". The program at the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington has given Client A a sense of worth and a second set of friends. Unable to continue his career as a Professor who taught at Wilfred Laurier, University of Waterloo and Trent University, Client A is now involved with activities at the BIAWW. He is involved with the music program and helps out with meals. When asked what he would be doing if the program didn't exist Client A said, "Short Answer? Dead. But really I don't know. It gives me a sense of purpose, a reason for living and a life." He recommends to other survivors that, "They need to discover the BIAWW. They need to heal slowly without anyone rushing them, I recovered to what I have now by listening to myself and a little to teachers, but I owe my recovery to the BIAWW and the members of the Opportunity Centre."

Graham was in a car accident on December 22, 1989 the first day of the Christmas break from school when he was 16 years old. He was the only passenger to survive the car accident. Having just received his driver's license the week before the accident, he was never able to return to driving. While Graham was living in Oakville and attending a different Brain Injury Association, his mother told him to come back to Kitchener and attend BIAWW, which had more "slow paced environment". Graham has been attending programs at BIAWW since 2000. The program gives Graham a chance to mingle with peers who have gone through similar traumas as well as participate in worthwhile activities such as tai chi and the fitness programs. If the program didn't exist Graham would do more volunteer work but wouldn't have the supports he has without the support of other survivors. Graham would advise other survivors to "Adjust to your condition and don't rush into new experiences."

Dietlind has been part of the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington community since 2002. She developed a catastrophic brain injury as a result of a car accident involving a careless driver in June of 2000. While rehabilitating after brain surgery a worker, told Dietlind about the BIAWW program. Unable to return to supply teaching after her accident, Dietlind began attending the program and became involved with creating fused glass jewelry. "Come out and join our programs and get involved," she says when asked what to recommend to a new survivor of a brain injury. The programs at BIAWW gives Dietlind a "Sense of purpose each day." She loves working in the glass program by creating and organizing the pieces and orders for customers.

Although they have different stories they have common answers to survivors and requests to their community:

- ♦ Adjust to your condition and don't rush into new experiences
- ♦ You will get better in time if you're willing to work on it
- ♦ Maintain the relationships with your family, friends and associates; believe in yourself and realize with time you will improve
- ♦ Understand that you won't achieve full recovery to your pre-injury self but you will improve with determination and hard work
- ♦ It takes courage to keep going after a brain injury
- ♦ Tell us when improvement will take a long time
- ♦ It is difficult for our old friends to "handle" the injury, and it is difficult for us to make new friends
- ♦ Provide positive feedback
- ♦ We still need to take risks now and then

Because of the privacy of our clients we cannot post pictures with this Media Kit. Pictures and interviews with our clients can be arranged through the Brain Injury Association Waterloo-Wellington's office. Please call 519-579-5300 for further information.

Information in this Media Kit has been provided by:
Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington: www.biaww.com

Resources:
Ontario Brain Injury Association www.obia.ca
Canadian Brain Injury Association www.biac-aclc.ca
Brain Trust Canada www.braintrustcanada.com