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Heads Up is a publication of the Brain Injury Association of Vermont which does not necessarily endorse treatments, individuals, or programs which appear herein.

The Help Line
(toll-free number)
877.856.1772

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@BrainInjuryVT

HEADS UP



Walk for Thought
2017 Walk for Thought
May 20, 2017

The Walk for Thought is the Brain Injury Association's premiere public awareness and grassroots fundraising event. For 14 years, Vermonters affected by brain injury & the family members & providers who support them have gathered on a beautiful spring day to walk together in celebration of life, hope and healing.

The Walk for Thought helps ensure the Brain Injury Association can continue providing support, education & advocacy to survivors, their family members and professionals across Vermont. This year, please join us & be part of the fun! **We've set up a special website to make it easy to sign up for the 2017 Walk for Thought:**

<http://biavt.donorpages.com/WalkforThought2017/>

Click on the key labeled 'Register or Walk'. Use the website to register, set up a personal Walk web page, start building a Walk Team, and invite your contacts to support you, via social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter or old-fashioned email. Getting started early gives you more time to promote the event to your contacts & reach your goal. *It's easy--give it a try!*

If you need help to register online, call us at 1-877-856-1772.

Volunteers are essential to the success of the Walk for Thought. *We really need your time & talent!* Call 1-877-856-1772 or e-mail to let us know if you can help. There are plenty of opportunities including playing with balloons!



Write in the Walk for Thought on your calendar & then spread the word

CRT—what is it?

Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy (CRT) is a broad term used to describe treatments that address the cognitive problems that can arise after a brain injury. Given the wide range of symptoms and severity of cognitive problems in individuals with brain injury, CRT does not refer to a specific approach to treatment. Although physical injuries, or speech or swallowing problems are typically covered by insurance, some health insurers deny coverage for CRT. Struggles with reimbursement may be due in part to the “invisible” nature of cognitive problems, but also to a lack of understanding about what CRT is.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM)’s 2011 report¹ provides the following broad definition: “Cognitive rehabilitation attempts to enhance functioning and independence in patients with cognitive impairments as a result of brain damage or disease, most commonly following TBI or stroke.” (IOM, 2011, p. 76). *It clarifies that CRT is different from cognitive behavioral therapy, a treatment approach for emotional and psychiatric problems.* The IOM describes two broad approaches to CRT:

- Restorative treatment, whose goal is to improve the cognitive system to function in a wide range of activities;
- Compensatory treatment, which trains solutions to specific problem areas such as using memory notebooks or learning self-cuing strategies

Will my insurance cover it?

The site, www.brainline.org, talks about insurance denials of the service and state; “ Families and providers can work together to challenge insurance denials if they occur. Families can appeal denials, and ask the professional to provide detailed reports of functional progress made by the patient or articles demonstrating the effectiveness of the technique being used. Professional associations such as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association provide assistance to speech-language pathologists and their patients by writing letters supporting CRT. Finally, appeals can be made to the state’s Insurance Commission, where a review will take place at a level beyond the health plan.”

In Vermont we have the Healthcare Advocate service from the Disability Law Project. The HCA helps Vermont consumers with a broad range of problems and questions related to health care services and health insurance. They frequently help individuals get onto insurance plans, untangle thorny problems, and intervene when an insurer improperly denies medical treatment. In many cases, they empower consumers by giving advice and education that enables them to better understand and resolve their health care issues and questions.

Healthcare Advocate

Vermont Legal Aid

800-917-7787



Movement Is Medicine

**Spring Into Summer Sportswear Fashion Show
to benefit the the Brain Injury Association of VT
and the UVM Cancer Center**

April 8, 2017 6pm– 8:30pm at The Doubletree Inn, South Burlington VT
Performances by local dance groups (Ballet Viridis, DSantosVT, Orchesis Dance, Sprinticity, Crossfit, and the Super Spin Set from Rev), modeling of this summer's sportswear fashions by survivors and athletes. There will be a silent auction and raffling of donated items, such as a 1-night, mid week (Sun-Thur) stay for 2 at the Stowe Mountain Lodge, \$100 gift cards for ski rack, and a grand prize drawing of \$1,000. Join us to help raise money for 2 great causes and to have fun!

Award Winning Brain Injury Blogs

<http://www.healthline.com/health/best-traumatic-brain-injury-blogs#2>

The effects of a brain injury can range from short term to lifelong, and from debilitating to mild. People with brain injuries can find relief in physical therapy, medications, psychological treatment, and social support. A medical team can provide much of that treatment, but social support must come from friends, family, and others within the community. To help, Healthline.com rounded up some of the best sources of online support for people who have brain injuries and the people who love them.

Adventures in Brain Injury

Cavin Balaster is a TBI survivor and public speaker. His blog is a great place to find posts on everything from nutrition tips for post-brain injury, to what it's like to watch football as a TBI survivor, to glimpses into his personal journey. Balaster frequently shares his podcasts here, too, if you'd rather listen than read. Visit <http://adventuresinbraininjury.com/> Tweet him: @CavinB

Brain Trauma Foundation

The Brain Trauma Foundation was founded by Dr. Jamshid Ghajar in 1986 to support research on TBI. Since then, the organization has worked to improve outcomes of patients with TBI through research, education, and guidelines. The blog is packed with interesting reading. We particularly like the Athlete Spotlight, highlighting athletes who have experienced TBI. Visit <https://www.braintrauma.org/news> Tweet them: @brain_trauma

BrainLine.org

BrainLine.org is a nonprofit that seeks to provide accurate information on prevention, treatment, and life with traumatic brain injury. The website is a comprehensive resource, where you'll find information sorted for people who have TBIs, for families and friends, and for professionals. Needless to say, it's chock full of good information and worthwhile reading. Visit <http://www.brainline.org/> Tweet them: @BrainLine

David's Traumatic Brain Injury Blog

Blogger David suffered a TBI when he was hit by a car while cycling in 2010. Since then, he's written a book on his journey and started this inspirational blog. Six years after his accident, David still rides his bike an average of 25 miles per day. A self-described TBI advocate, David's posts are a mix of honest reflections and valuable advice. Visit <http://surviving-brain-injury.blogspot.com/>

Traumatic Brain Injury Blog

When a brain injury is caused by someone else, it's not unusual for the injured party to seek compensation. This blog, written by a personal injury attorney in Vermont who also chairs the board of the state's Brain Injury Association, has useful information for TBI sufferers across the country. You can read about some of the latest research news on TBI as well as personal stories. Visit <http://www.vermontbraininjury.com/>

This blog is written by a Bob Luce, President of the BIAVT Board.

Lash & Associates: Blog on Brain Injury

Lash & Associates is a publishing company that specializes in books on brain injury, and they've got a blog, too. There are numerous worthwhile stories here, many of them highly personal from people who have TBI and their families. Peppered in are excerpts and poems from some of their books on brain injury. Visit <https://www.lapublishing.com/blog/>

NeuroNotes by Neurologic Rehabilitation Institute

The Neurologic Rehabilitation Institute (NRI) at Brookhaven Hospital in Tulsa, Oklahoma is dedicated to helping people with TBI. They offer inpatient and outpatient care and specialize in helping people with TBI get back out there after their hospital stay. But you don't have to be a patient of theirs to benefit from their informative, helpful, and inspirational blog. Visit <http://www.traumaticbraininjury.net/blog/> Tweet them: @traumatreatment

Award winning blogs - continued

TryMunity

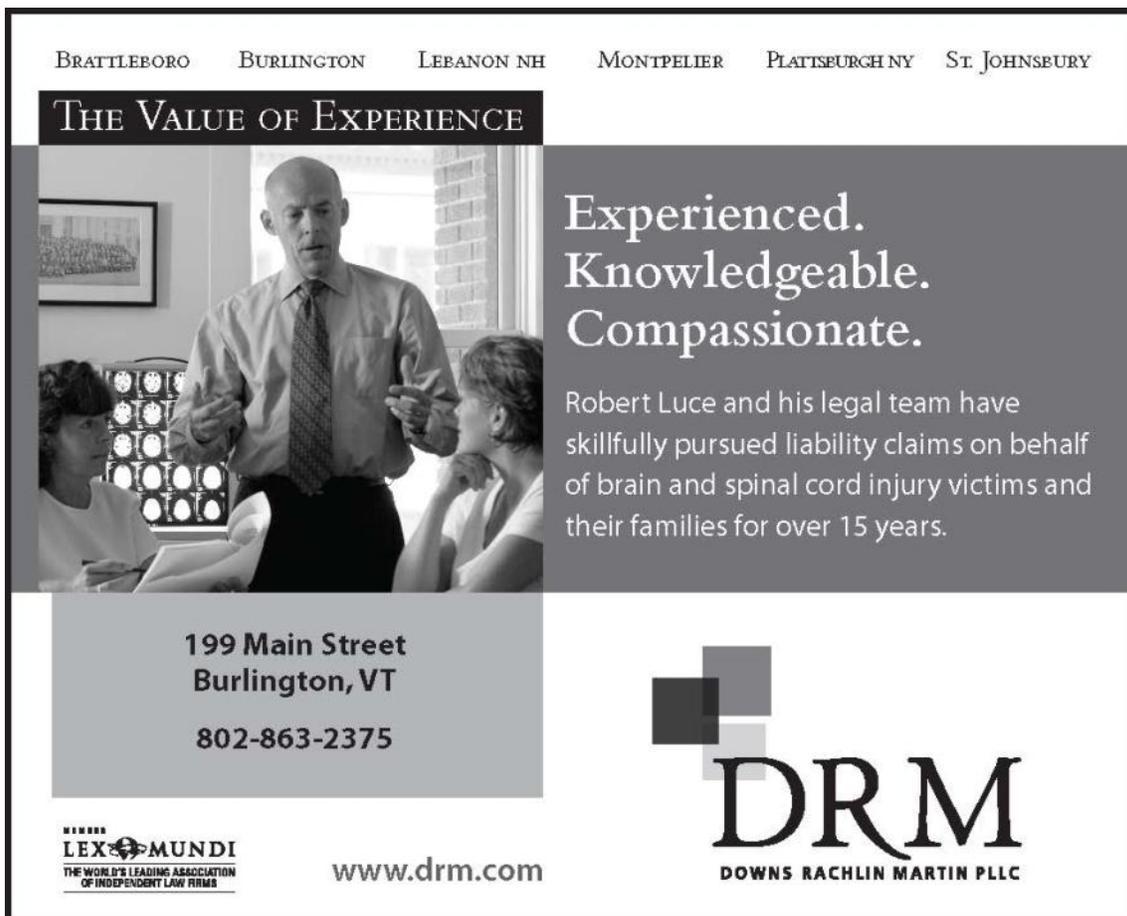
TryMunity is an online community that provides support to people with TBI, their loved ones, and their caregivers. It's a GREAT place to meet others who are going through similar struggles and for people to share their experiences through photos and blog posts. You'll find tons of helpful posts here and a great sense of support from the people who frequent the site. Visit <http://www.trymunity.com/blog/>
Tweet them: @TryMunity

Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injuries can happen to anyone, but veterans are at particularly high risk. This web portal is a project of the Center of Excellence for Medical Multimedia (CEMM), founded with the support of the Office of the Air Force Surgeon General. But the topics here aren't only for veterans with TBI. The website is a complete resource for all people with TBI, their caregivers, and the general public interested in learning more. Visit <http://www.traumaticbraininjury.net/blog/>

BrainInjury.com

Staying abreast of the latest in medical research can be a daunting task, but the blog at BrainInjury.com can help. The posts here focus on medical and legal developments in traumatic brain injury research. You'll find worthwhile information on new treatments and therapies, and how TBI can affect the brain and the lives of people it touches. Visit <http://blog.braininjury.com/>



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Here are a few ways you can help support BIAVT

- **Become A Member:** membership applications can be downloaded from www.biavt.org or call for one.
- **Honor Someone:** Honor a special person in your life with a donation to BIAVT, or donate in memory of someone special you lost.
- **Leave a Bequest:** Talk with your tax advisor or attorney about how you can support BIAVT in your will.
- **Designate:** If your employer allows you to donate through employee contributions designate BIAVT as your pledge.
- **Donate:** Send BIAVT a check for any amount.
Or you can donate with a credit card at www.biavt.org.

Your gifts,
no matter
what the
amount,
truly make
an impact.



Bolton Valley Resort generously donated 2 lift tickets for the Silent Auction at our 2016 Conference. We decided not to do a Silent Auction and instead asked that individuals share a positive experience with brain injury.

Rather than vote on the best, it was the first submission that won the tickets.

Ellen was the first survivor and is hopefully going to have a delightful day skiing at Bolton Valley Resort. All of the submissions are wonderful so we are including them here.

Enjoy reading them!

Thanks to Bolton Valley Resort.

At first glance I thought, this "mild" tbi that has continued to significantly affect my life after nearly four years is not positive. Minutes later I am responding to your invitation to share a positive experience as a result of a brain injury I am forwarding a letter I sent after my first LOVE YOUR BRAIN Yoga class:

Dear Kim, Emily, Adam, Kyla, Kevin,...

To everyone who made this yoga series possible for people like me, THANK YOU! I desperately needed something to look forward to: Something that felt like fitness, something I could tolerate, something I could share with others who struggle with the effects of a tbi, something where I didn't have to talk about it unless I chose to, something that does not involve thinking about it because I used to be able to do so much more...something hopeful. Namaste Ellen

My head injury has help me break out of my shell. It has taught me that I am more resilient then I every knew before. It has also helped me connect with my community of other TBI folks and helped me find a place that is safe and I feel welcomed. I have found lots of opportunities to be the best version of myself I can be.

Jeremy Colburn

In 2012, through 45 years of life in our ever-accelerating modern society, where 24-7 living is the rule and we're expected to be constantly connected through email and cell phones, I had never thought about the demands and stress we continue to place upon the human brain—until I fell from a maple tree on my northern Vermont property and had a traumatic brain injury, and met other incredible and inspiring people with TBIs, all of whom changed my perspective on life and my consciousness about the miracle of being alive. My life-changing TBI was a blessing.

Joseph B. Healy Waterford, Vermont

The most positive experience I have with brain injury has been to listen to those who have a brain injury and are having a challenging time, and hear them say "Thank you for listening. I feel like you really understand". There are many life changes that come with brain injury, many of which may be seem invisible to those supporting the person with a brain injury, hence the term 'invisible injury'. It is important for me to allow for time in a conversation for silence and working for the BIAVT and answering the hotline showed me how much this can make a difference. I have heard many survivors say that it takes longer to get their thoughts together and others often answer for them or finish their sentence. While others may have the best intentions, this does not allow the survivor to truly be heard. I appreciated every story and conversation I had while working with the BIAVT, good and bad, and feel like that experience expanded my knowledge around brain injury and the amazing people who have had their lives changed by such events.

Ceili Quigley

The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope."

— Barack Obama

Concussion Corner

Snowboarders and Skiers Need to Protect Their Heads

Adapted from a post on the DCoE blog (dcoe.mil/blog) by Myron J. Goodman, DCoE Public Affairs on February 1, 2017

Did you wear a helmet the last time you went skiing or snowboarding? If you said no, it's time to change the way you think about winter sports safety. Dr. Scott Livingston, director of education for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center, said that people need to wear helmets for these types of activities.

"There is definitely ample research that shows that wearing helmets reduces head injury risk," he said.

Helmets don't always prevent concussion, but they do reduce concussion risk and they are highly effective in preventing catastrophic brain injury, Livingston said, citing a book about preventing concussion by Dr. William P. Meehan III, director of the Micheli Center for Sports Injury Prevention at Boston Children's Hospital.

Most people don't associate winter sports with concussions the way football, soccer and lacrosse are. They also don't have as many participants. However, about 20 percent of skiing or snowboarding injuries are head injuries, Livingston said.

"That may not sound like a huge amount," he said. "But when you think about all the injuries you can get skiing or snowboarding, the fact that almost a quarter of them are head injuries is quite a lot."



When to replace your helmet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xxfBCOPQCc>

How to inspect your helmet:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_sBaGqKKuo

Changes in Winter Sport Safety

The fact that people generally aren't too concerned about concussions in these sports is "a big reason for concern," Livingston said. That's finally changing, he said. As with riding a bike, people are gradually accepting the importance of head protection while skiing and snowboarding.

So, why haven't we encouraged helmets for winter sports until now?

One reason is that data on these injuries isn't very accurate or readily available, said Livingston.

By some measures, one of every 20 professional snowboarders gets a head injury per season. The figures are higher for freestyle skiing professionals (5.7 per 100 athletes) and lower for downhill skiers (3.5 injuries per 100 athletes).

After a Concussion

If you hit your head while out in the snow, recognize the symptoms of concussion, get assessed by a health care provider, and follow the proper treatment for any head injury.

There's no set period of time a snowboarder or skier should stay off the slopes after a head injury, Livingston said. In general, people with head injuries should avoid participating in active sports "until they are symptom free and medically cleared by a doctor," he said.

Rules for the general public about skiing and snowboarding are hard to find. However, you can find one guideline in the protocol for athletes at the United States Skiing and Snowboarding Association.

The Brain Injury Association of Vermont has a concussion toolkit developed by the Concussion Task Force on the website. It is downloadable and able to be edited. <http://www.biavt.org/vermont-s-youth->

BIAVT Support Groups



Questions about the groups? Call the BIAVT Help Line at **877.856.1772**

Location	When	Where	Facilitators
Burlington Area Evening	First Wednesday of every month 5:30—7:30 PM	Fanny Allen Campus/Hospital Board Room-follow the signs 790 College Parkway (Rte	Diane Wheaton Barb Winters
Burlington Area Daytime	Last Friday of the month Noon—1	Dept of Labor, Conference Room A 63 Pearl St, Burlington	Courtney Blasius Jodie Casarico
Middlebury Area Evening No meetings during summer months	First Monday of every month 5:00—6:30 PM No meetings May—Sept.	Isley Library 75 Main St , Middlebury Conference Room Entrance in back	Lisa Bernardin Debbie Tracht
Montpelier Area Daytime	Third Thursday of the month 1:30—2:30 PM	Unitarian Church Ramp Entrance 130 Main St, Montpelier	Kathy Grange Marsha Bancroft
St Johnsbury Area Daytime VCIL/BIAVT group	Third Wednesday of every month 1:00—2:30 PM	Grace Methodist Church 36 Central St St Johnsbury	Tom Younkman
Rutland Area Daytime Lenny Burke Farm	First Saturday of the month 2:00—4:00 PM	Emmie’s Place 212 Main St, Wallingford	Emmie Burke
Waterbury Evening	Second Wednesday of every month 6:15—7:30 PM	Waterbury Library 28 North Main St	Maggie Allen

If anyone is interested in facilitating a support group in your area and can identify a co-facilitator, please contact Barb Winters at the BIAVT office-braininfo1@biavt.org

Note: There are support groups in Keene, Lebanon & Littleton NH that Vermonters can and do attend. More details on www.bianh.org (the Brain Injury Association of NH)

“It is so helpful to be in a space with others who understand what it feels like to have a brain injury. Knowing that ‘what is said in the group-stays in the group’ is important to feel comfortable. I often learn from others in the group.” - survivor