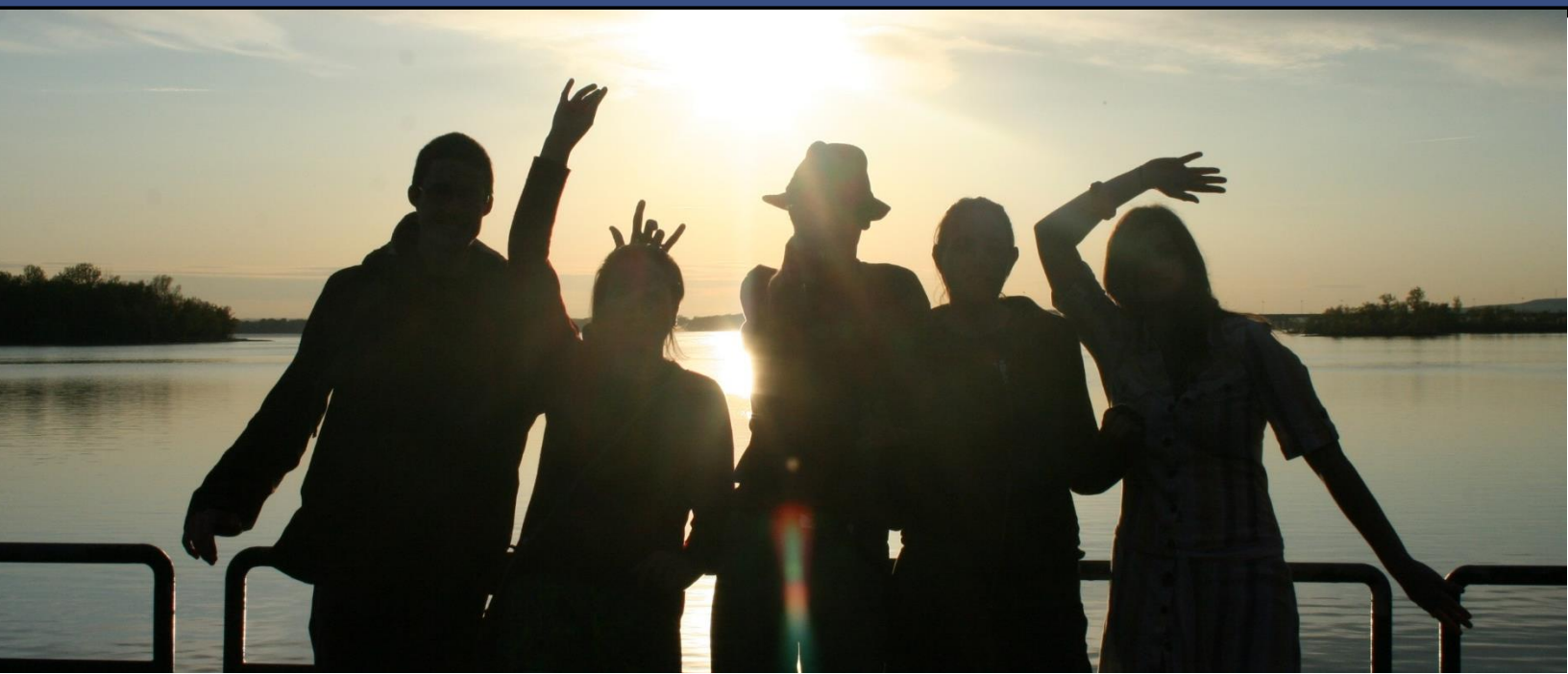




2021 Brain Injury Fund Annual Report

For Services Delivered August 2020 to July 31, 2021

www.braininjuryalliance.ca





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President's Message to Alliance Members

The board of directors of the Brain Injury Alliance and community-led brain injury societies in British Columbia are grateful to the Government of British Columbia for the announcement made on July 28, 2021.

The government has chosen to replenish the Brain Injury Fund with funds totaling \$1,000,000 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year and \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2022-2023.

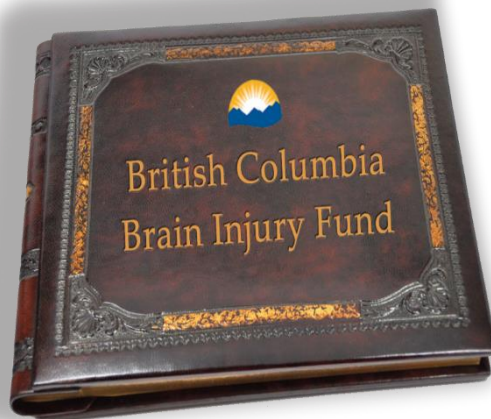
As a result, services provided in communities across the province will continue uninterrupted.

This funding makes it possible for brain-injury societies to continue providing these essential community services — services which give survivors and their families hope and enable them to regain their lives.

Managed at the local level, these societies are able to tailor their services to the specific needs of their communities, ensuring programs meet client needs and can respond quickly as demands and circumstances change.

Our member societies work in concert with B.C.'s five health authorities and play a vital role in the continuum of care for those who have suffered a brain injury.

Dr. John Higenbottam
President
Brain Injury Alliance



*"This investment is part of the government's commitment to delivering the services people count on, particularly improving and strengthening health services for seniors, those with mental health and substance use issues, and other adults who have complex-care needs. Ensuring both short- and long-term services are available at no cost to adults in B.C. who have had their lives altered by an injury to the brain is essential to meeting this government objective."*¹

Government of BC, 2021

¹ <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021MMHA0042-001492>



Brain Injury Alliance and the Brain Injury Fund

Between May 2015 to June 2021, the Brain Injury Alliance has addressed the funding disparity to non-profit, charitable brain injury service agencies with the assistance of two grants from the Province of BC. These two grants, totaling \$6 million, established the Brain Injury Fund (BIF) to help support brain injury societies across the province. To date, the Alliance has distributed more than \$6 million dollars to these agencies for programs and services.

On July 28, 2021, the Government of BC replenished the Brain Injury Fund with \$2 million dollars, ensuring that the Alliance will be able to continue to support brain injury agencies until 2023.

In 2020-2021, the Alliance funded 42 programs operated by 13 brain injury societies.

The Alliance provides funding to charitable brain injury societies for:

- One to one service (comprehensive case management, life skills, community access, outreach, etc.)
- Service to groups of individuals with brain injury (brain injury education, facilitated support groups, drop-in supports, social events, etc.)
- Service to support family members and associates of persons with a brain injury
- Education programs to increase knowledge & awareness of brain injury among generic services providers, educators, students, employer's and the community as a whole
- Injury prevention programs and community event services

Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund

In addition to direct funding of brain injury societies, the Alliance administers the Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund established by the Government of BC in 2015 with a \$1 million endowment. This funding is available to those individuals with an acquired brain injury who want to upgrade their education and/or job readiness and are sponsored by a local brain injury society.

“Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a leading cause of disability globally. In Canada, 2% of the population lives with a TBI, and there are 18,000 hospitalizations for TBI each year. One-third of individuals with a TBI are women, and TBI is particularly common early in the reproductive years (15-24 years), with intimate partner violence and accidents being major causes. Women with TBI are more likely than men to experience mental health problems post-injury.”

Brain Injury Canada



Community Impact of Brain Injury Societies

In 2020-2021, nearly thirty-nine hundred (3885) people with acquired brain injury² were able to participate directly in programs geared to the development and retention of skills designed to assist the individual to build a life after an injury to the brain. Brain injury societies:

- Improved lives
- Increased employment
- Reduced impact on the medical system
- Reduced impact on the justice system

Families and friends of people with brain injuries also participate directly or indirectly in programming and benefit as participants become more self-aware and stable.

Social Impacts of Alliance Funding (# of Client/Incidents) 2020-2021		
Obtained Employment	Reduced Client Involvement with Medical/ Hospital Services	Reduced Client Involvement with Justice System
101	294	70

Employment

More than 100 people with brain injury secured employment in whole or in part due to their association with a brain injury society in 2020-2021.

Retaining or securing employment during the Pandemic was challenging for everyone, particularly people with disabilities, but brain injury societies continued to provide pre-employment skills development, assistance with job searches and ongoing employment support.

Agencies provided support and funding for people with brain injuries to obtain training in First Aid and/or Food Safe which can be very beneficial for securing jobs in a variety of fields.

Some of the competitive employment positions and employers included:

- real estate,
- landscaping/yard care and cleaning businesses,
- sawmill, wood working
- working for local businesses (retail, cashier, car dealerships, skateboard shop, ski hill host, Habitat for Humanity, Canada Post, etc.)
- teaching, farm worker, office administration,
- various volunteer roles

² COVID resulted in a small decrease in the number of people served. Member agencies typically serve in excess of 4000 survivors of brain injury annually



Health Care System

Interventions provided by brain injury societies in 2020-2021 prevented at least 294 interactions with the primary care system.³

“Clients have needed support this year to fill the gaps where other services were unavailable due to COVID restrictions causing cancellation of other community programs. We were able to support for changes that were required to access health care appointments which moved to tele-health. Some clients planned surgeries were canceled and then later scheduled again with very short timelines. Case Management supported logistics to ensure positive outcomes were achieved.”

South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society

Justice System

When asked about whether interventions provided by brain injury societies reduced involvement with the justice system in at least 70 instances.

According to the 2016 study, “Association between traumatic brain injury and Incarceration: A Population-based Cohort Study”, having a history of traumatic brain injury increases the risk of involvement with the criminal justice system by 2.5x.⁴

A 2015 study showed that in 95% of cases, including both male and female populations, brain injury pre-existed criminal behavior. The study went on to recommend that reduction of the rate of brain injury should be a major public health imperative, with benefits realized in terms of reducing costs, injuries, and crime⁵

“Our service ID card has been reported by clients to deescalate interactions with police officers.”

Victoria Brain Injury Society

While the Pandemic and forest fires in the Interior had an impact on several agencies providing services directly to inmates in corrections facilities, Prince George Brain Injured Group was able to train staff at Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association how to offer the Corrections Integrated Brain Injury Services, currently provided at PSSG FRCC (Fraser Regional Correction Centre) over Zoom. As a result, this group was able to continue remotely through 2021.

³ The Alliance does not have a standardized system to count this statistic. As a result, this figure likely represents only a fraction of these incidences.

⁴ Kathryn E. McIsaac, Andrea Moser, Rahim Moineddin, Leslie Anne Keown, Geoff Wilton, Lynn A. Stewart, Angela Colantonio, Avery B. Nathens, and Flora I. Matheson, Association between traumatic brain injury and incarceration: a population-based cohort study, *cmajo* 4:E746-E753; published online December 8, 2016, doi:10.9778/cmajo.20160072

⁵ Kathryn E. McIsaac, Andrea Moser, Rahim Moineddin, Leslie Anne Keown, Geoff Wilton, Lynn A. Stewart, Angela Colantonio, Avery B. Nathens, and Flora I. Matheson, Association between traumatic brain injury and incarceration: a population-based cohort study, *cmajo* 4:E746-E753; published online December 8, 2016, doi:10.9778/cmajo.20160072



“Our membership is needing assistance with information processing, accessing various supports as well as paperwork on a much higher level. Additionally, the need for emotional support has increased due to on going stress, isolation etc.”

Prince George Brain Injured Group

Brain Injury Fund Grant Distributions 2020 - 2021

Community brain injury organizations provide cost effective services.

In 2020-2021, Alliance funding cost per client served was \$207.23 per client per year.

Like brain injury societies themselves, the funding provided to brain injury societies by the Alliance is based on respect and the need to build flexibility into brain injury services.

Member agencies may apply for funds to support up to four programs, but grants are provided as a ‘lump sum’. Member agencies are enabled to amend program budgets within approved programs. This encourages members to apply for external grants and to adapt their plans to meet client needs.

Instead of continuing a program that is less popular, the agency can quickly move funding to support clients with new and emerging issues.

This practice has proven to be invaluable as brain injury societies adapt their services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alliance Quick Facts 2020-2021

13

Agencies funded

\$207.23

Spent per client served

\$964,983

Distributed to deliver programs and services in 2020-2021

>3885

Brain Injury Survivors supported

42

Programs and services delivered

>32,174

Community Members Reached for Injury Prevention & Community Education

“For the society (CRHISS) to continue to provide service through this pandemic, BIA (Brain Injury Alliance) has had a tremendous impact for us to keep services going. With isolation, depression and the sense of fear, being some of the major impacts of COVID, we were able to continue to be creative to reach the vulnerable clients.”

Campbell River Head Injury Support Society

Response to Crisis: The Impact of COVID-19

Because of the ongoing impact of the pandemic, this report features the variety of creative responses implemented by brain injury societies in BC.



The ability to adjust and adapt is one of the many strengths of the community-led non-profit sector. COVID-19 and the restrictions that this crisis has necessitated, have resulted in dramatic changes to all services, so it is essential that services for people with brain injuries are responsive, flexible and based on client needs.

Agencies reported having to offer more frequent, small groups, support with technology, enhanced cleaning protocols, increased one to one and peer support, counselling and mental health support. This required increased staffing along with creativity and flexibility as Public Health Guidelines changed.

Some agencies provided COVID-19 vaccination education and access to clients by hosting pop-up vaccination clinics for clients with brain injuries and the wider community.

ABI PROGRAMS PIVOT DURING A PANDEMIC

"We held sessions on-line, in person on a patio, in the park and in a music studio space. Extra safety precautions and pivots were made for the success of the program.

For those that participated, the impact of funding on health and wellness was imperative to clients mental health and living more engaged, healthier and happier lives during a pandemic."

Comox Valley Head Injury Society

"BC has been facing challenges around vaccination and Covid. In particular, there is a substantial population of people who are not vaccinated, for various reasons.

The Kamloops Brain Injury Association (KBIA) knew a fair number of these people, as we work with people with challenges arising from brain injuries. Because we receive funding from the Brain Injury Alliance of BC, we were able to devote time to a phone and personal campaign to reach out to the membership of KBIA and engage with them about vaccination. Many had already gotten vaccinated, but others had not.

We talked to them respectfully, using relationships developed over our 35-year existence, exploring why they hadn't been vaccinated and what could help them get vaccinated. Then we did our best to provide that help.

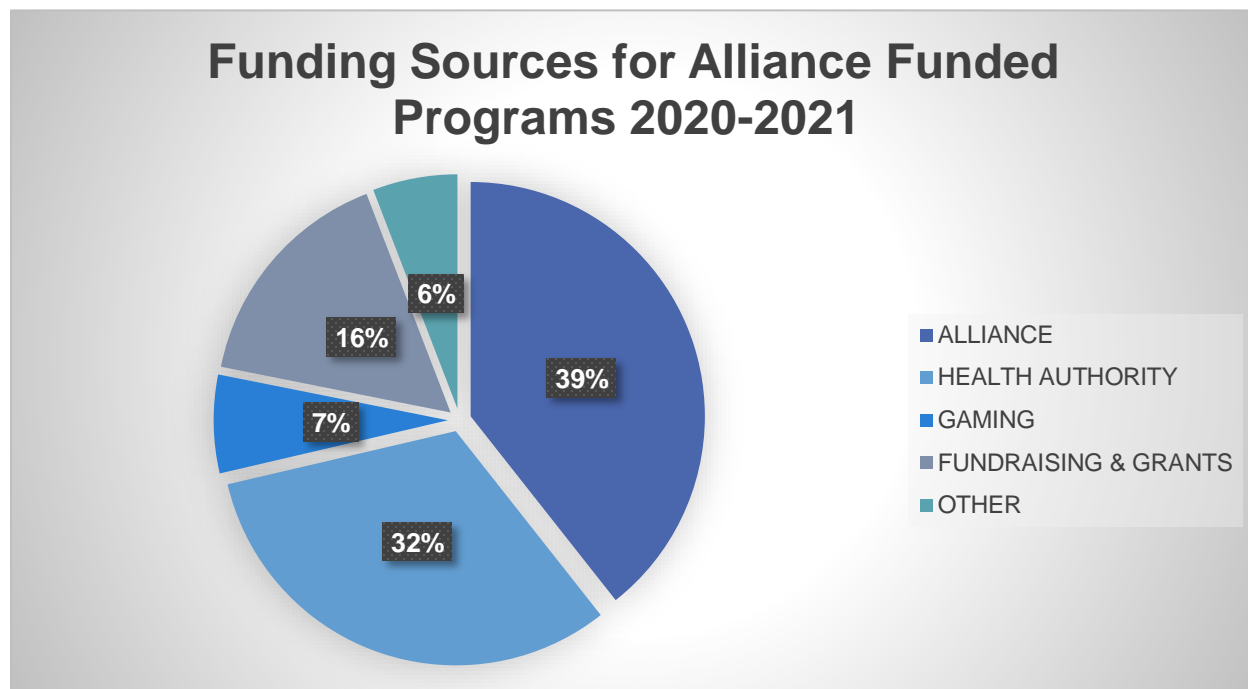
Sometimes it was simply booking an appointment for them, sometimes it was driving them to the local vaccination centers and standing in line with them. And sometimes, it was quite a few chats, addressing fears and misinformation.

Once, it was mentioning they wouldn't be able to see their beloved Kamloops Blazers play in person until they were vaccinated!"

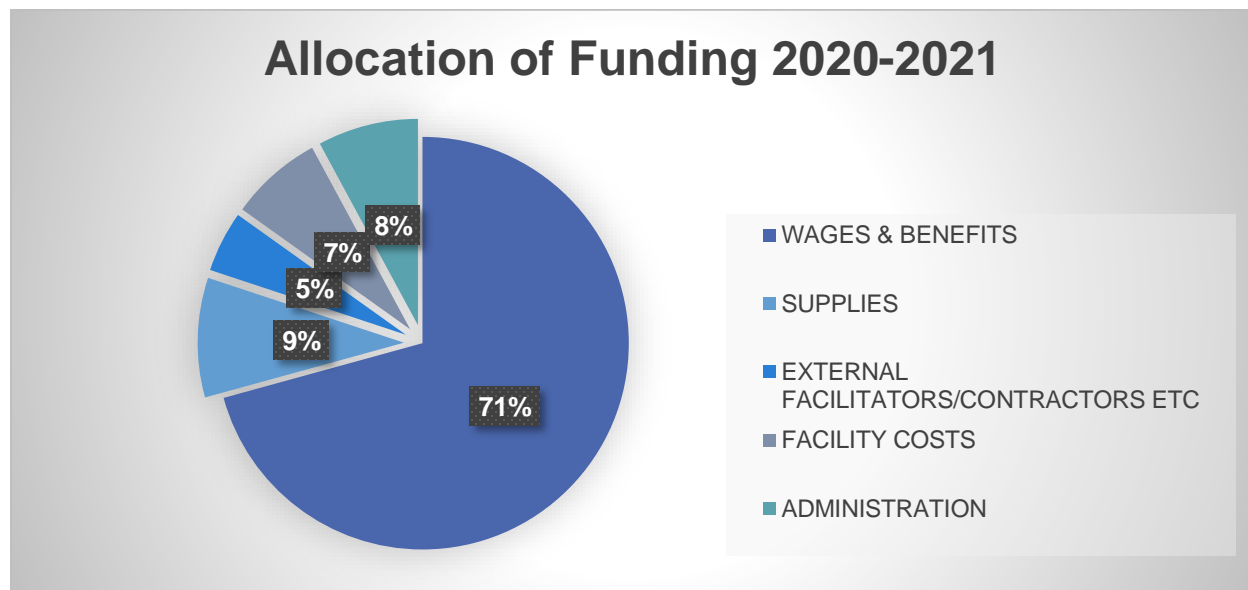
Kamloops Brain Injury Association

2020-2021 Funding for Brain Injury Programs

British Columbia brain injury associations are currently funded through donations, grants, fees for services, Health Authorities, charitable gaming, fundraising and from 2015 to 2021, through the Brain Injury Alliance. They also utilize Alliance grant funding to leverage funds from other sources.



The bulk of funding that agencies use is for wages and benefits. Alliance member agencies spend only 8% on administration.





The Alliance funding has increased the stability of community brain injury organizations and supports the growth of programs and services by leveraging of other grants, and fundraising dollars. Data collected from brain injury organizations illustrate the importance of the Brain Injury Fund to the provision of services to individuals with acquired brain injuries throughout BC.

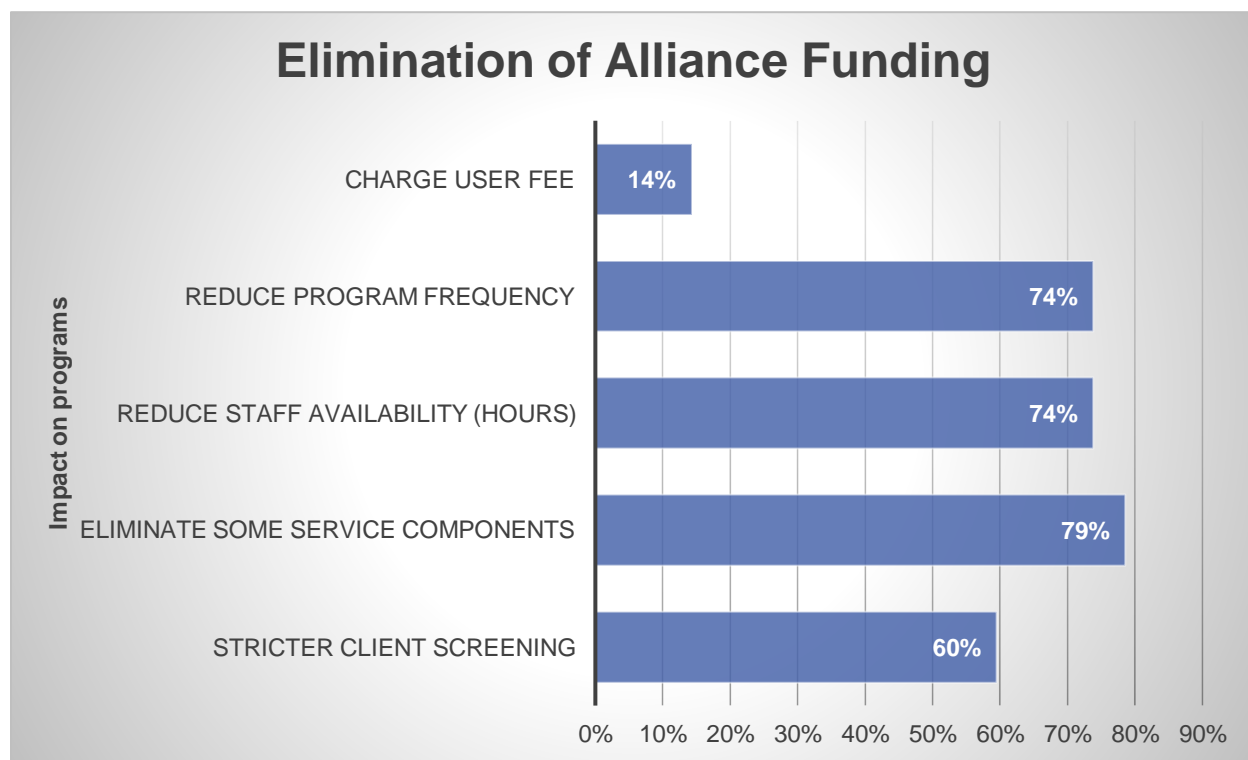
“The (Alliance) funding allowed for the Northern Brain Injury Association (NBIA) to provide case management services to over 25 communities in northern BC.”

Northern Brain Injury Association

When brain injury organizations were asked whether they would be able to offer their current programs without Alliance funding, of the 42 programs funded, 33% would be eliminated.

Closure of these programs would leave more than 1095 clients without these services.

If Alliance funding was discontinued, 60% of programs would need to implement stricter client screening, 79% would have to eliminate some service components, 74% would have to reduce staff availability (hours), 74% would have to reduce program frequency and 14% would have to start charging a user fee.⁶



⁶ figures extrapolated from data received from the Alliance September 2021 Final Program Reports

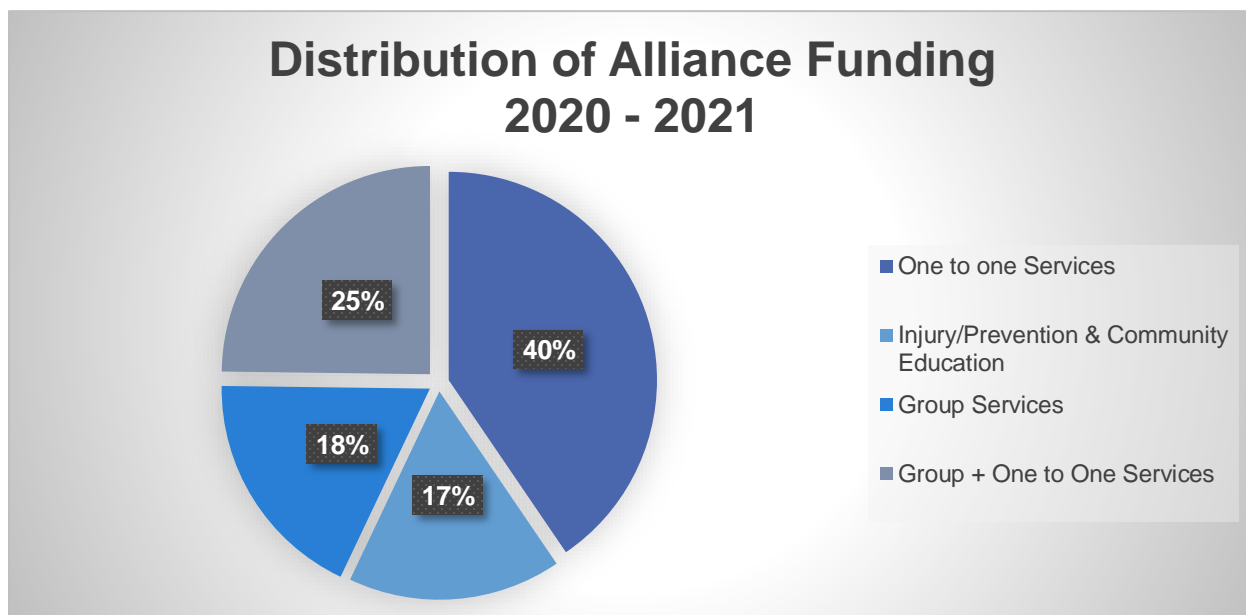


Breakdown of Service Domains Funded by the Alliance

Costs per Program in 2020-2021

Program Category	Actual Clients/Community Members Served	Total Cost	Cost per Client/Community Member	Percentage of Program Funding
One to One Services	1,930	\$ 390,676.39	\$ 202.42	40%
Injury/Prevention & Community Education	32,174	\$ 159,898.00	\$ 4.97	17%
Group Services	888	\$ 175,147.03	\$ 197.24	18%
Group + One to One Services	1,067	\$ 239,261.44	\$ 224.24	25%
Total	36,059	\$ 964,982.86		

The majority of Alliance funding was used for One to One Services (40%), Group Services (18%) and a combination of Group + One to One Services (25%).⁷



⁷ figures extrapolated from data received from the Alliance September 2021 Final Program Reports



“We saw an increased need for 1-1 supports and more sessions with a registered clinical counselor became even more important to not only help with 'regular' brain injury issues such as acceptance, dealing with changes, etc. but with further isolation, and more instances of distancing themselves from others, confusion around health orders, masks and being in public spaces.”

Comox Valley Head Injury Society

One to One Services

One to one programming is the primary service model used by societies, utilizing 40% of all Alliance funding.

One to one includes life skills one to one, counselling and case management/ navigation programs for a total of \$390,676.39 or \$202.42 per client per year.

Many of the societies reported that they needed to increase the amount of one to one support they provided due to the restrictions on group activities because of the Pandemic.

People with brain injuries are not always able to participate in online groups due to a lack of access to technology, so while they may have participated in group activities with minimal support pre-COVID, that isn't always possible right now.

Providing additional one to one support required additional resources and stretched the capacity of the already over-burdened brain injury services throughout BC during the Pandemic.

One to One Services

“This program would not be able to serve the increased need we are seeing without the Alliance funds. Not only are we serving more people on average, but the types of in-depth services and time required to assist individuals has increased as well.”

Prince George
Brain Injured Group

“The Community ABI Navigator Program helps people affected by ABI by developing a personalized recovery and action plan with strategies to set goals, access community resources, fill information gaps and help build community and social networks.”

Nanaimo Brain Injury Society

Group Services

Group programs include:

- Group Life Skills
- Peer Supports
- ABI education programs for survivors

In 2020 - 2021 the Alliance provided funding for group services totaling \$175,147.03, which is \$197.24 per client and 18% of Alliance grants.

Group programs enable member agencies to connect with individuals with brain injuries more frequently and support the development of natural support networks.

Group + One to One Services

Group and One to One programs include group and individual lifeskills, peer support, counselling, health and nutrition and brain injury education for inmates for a total of \$239,261.44 or \$224.24 per client per year.

These services were 25% of Alliance grants distributed in 2020-2021.

Group Services

"Whether it is Chair Yoga classes, Ladies' Group, Family Focus for spouses & parents, support groups focussed on brain injury education and health, outdoor walks or educational sessions on zoom, the groups are well-attended and clients report that they have a significant impact on their lives."

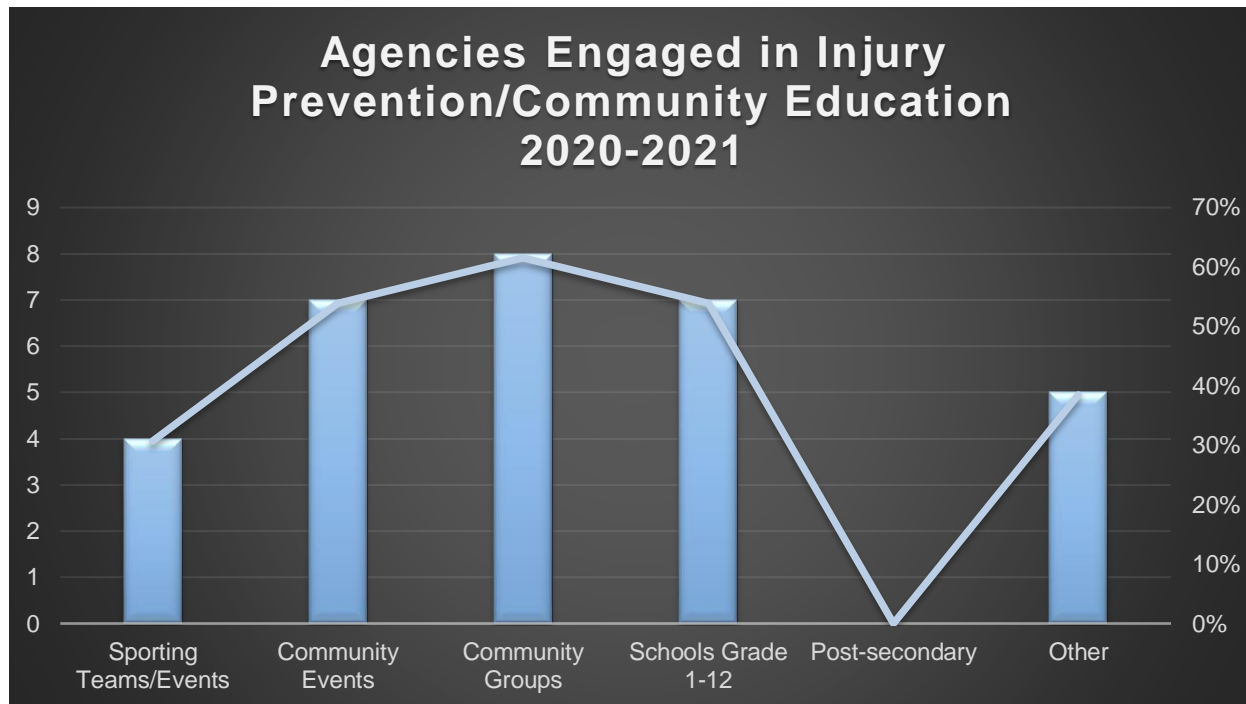
Fraser Valley Brain
Injury Association





Injury Prevention & Community Education Programs

The Injury In Review: Spotlight on Traumatic Injuries Across the Life Course (2020)⁸ outlined several causal areas where traumatic brain injuries had decreased over time that were linked to prevention initiatives. Understanding causation and implementing prevention measures such as education/awareness along with other initiatives are essential in order to reduce the incidence of brain injuries.



Of the 13 member agencies, 61% utilized Alliance funding for Injury Prevention and Community Education programs through sporting teams/events, community events, community groups, schools (grade 1-12, and post-secondary institutions). Policies for post-secondary institutions during COVID-19 would have limited programming for this category.

Alliance grants for these programs accounted for 17% of Alliance grant distribution.

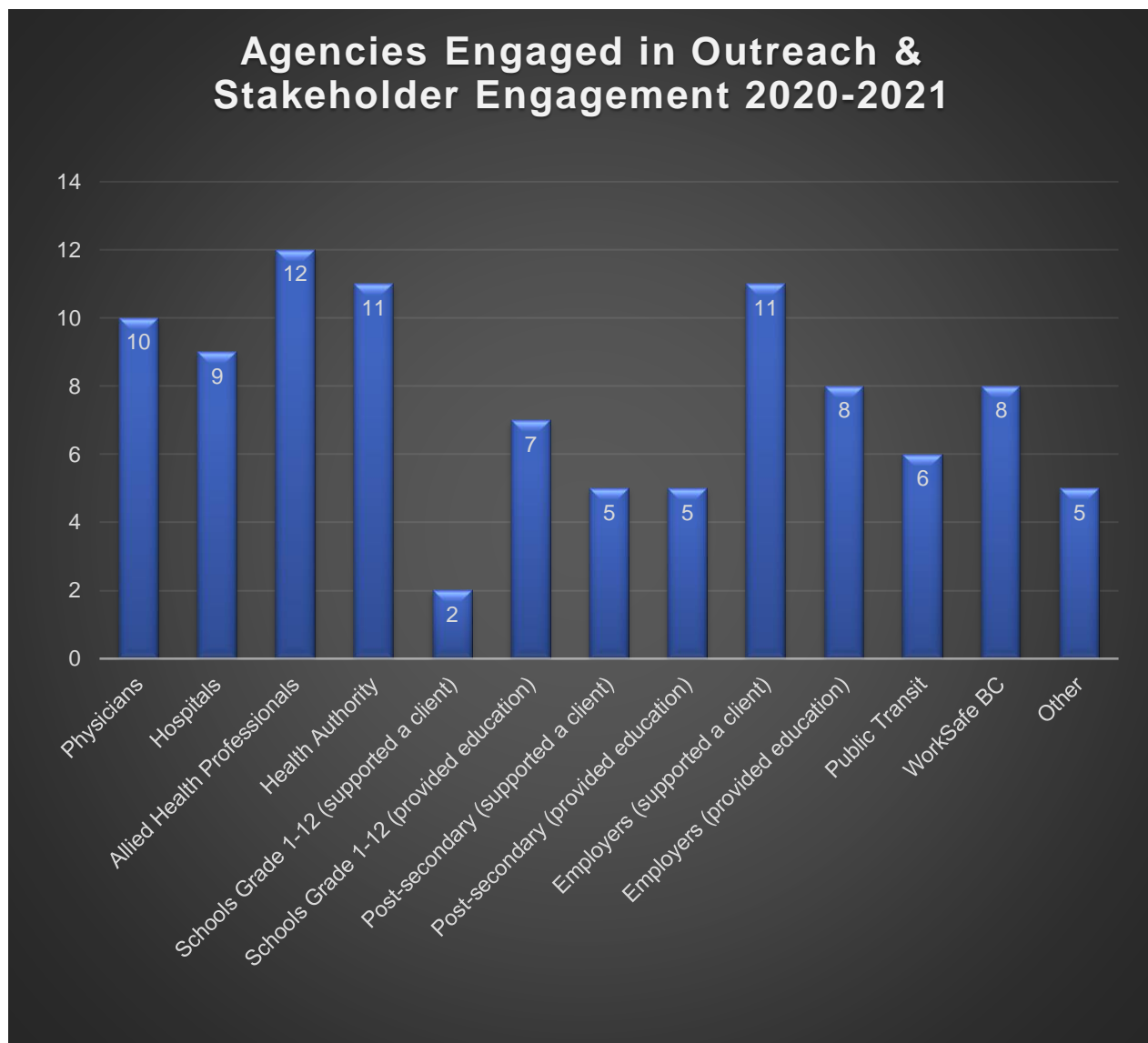
COMMUNITY EDUCATION & INJURY PREVENTION		
# Community Members	Total Cost	Cost/Participant
32,174	\$159,898	\$ 4.97

⁸ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/injury-prevention/canadian-hospitals-injury-reporting-prevention-program/injury-reports/2020-spotlight-traumatic-brain-injuries-life-course.html#a1>



Community Engagement

For people with an acquired brain injury, it can be impossible to navigate health and social services. Brain Injury societies partner with dozens or more community organizations and community professionals to ensure the best services that they can for the people served.



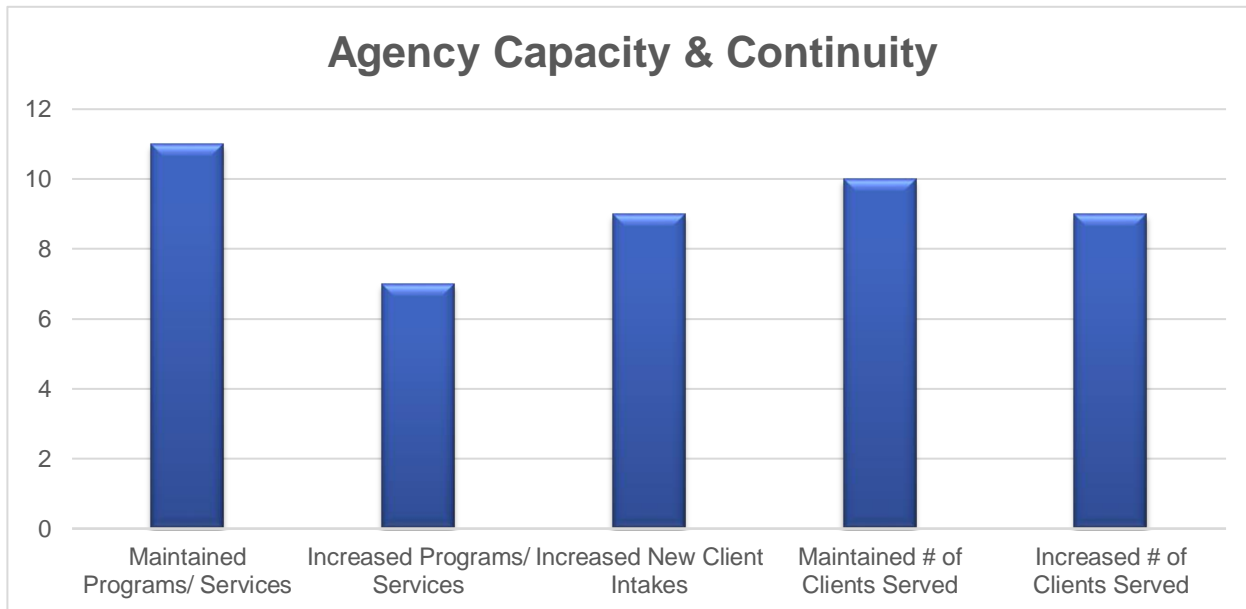
“Housing is still a huge issue that so far, has no light at the end of the tunnel. Our staff have been invited to join the poverty reduction and housing committee for the city and region and will be working closely with many professionals over the coming years to attempt to alleviate this growing concern.”

Powell River Brain Injury Society

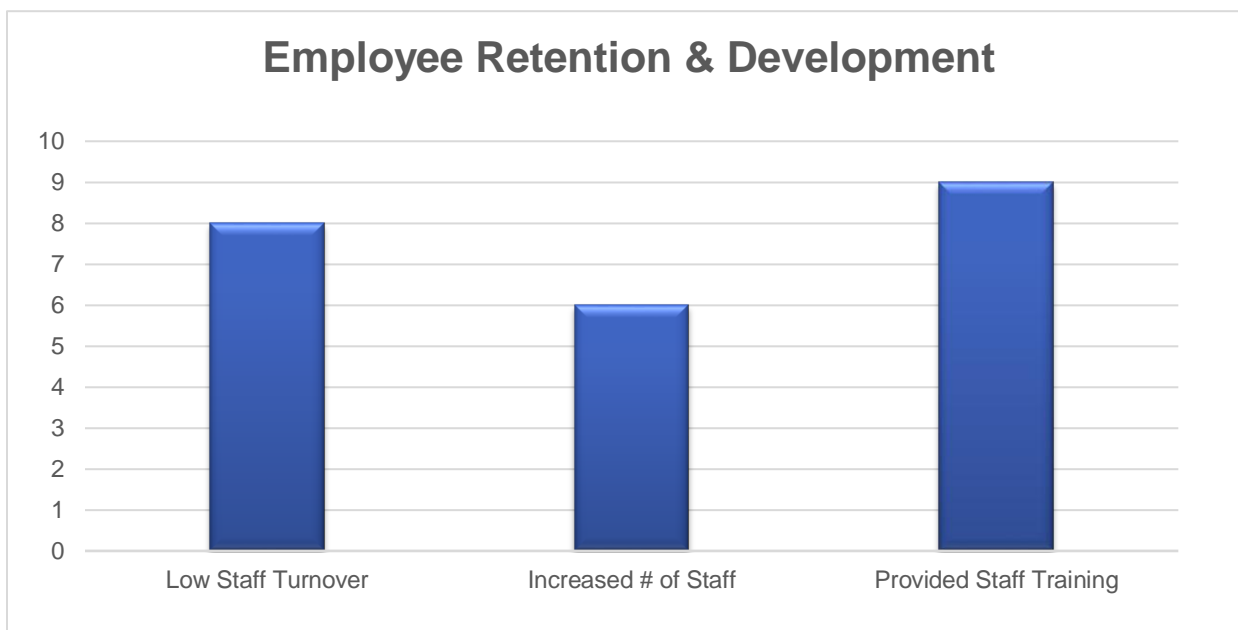


Brain Injury Society Capacity, Continuity and Stability

Alliance funding in 2020 - 2021 continued to positively influence society stability and capacity. Even through the Pandemic, 70% of agencies reported that they increased the number of new client intakes.



Alliance funding allows for staff training which is essential for ongoing professional development in this ever-evolving field. The majority of agencies (70%) reported providing staff training, and 50% of agencies, reported increasing staff numbers and lowered staff turnover. However, with the low wages often associated with employment in this field, the sector continues to have higher than desirable turnover.



2021 Brain Injury Legacy Award Recipients

The Brain Injury Alliance was created in 2014 by a group of individuals who were committed to the right of people with brain injury to access comprehensive, professional, community-led brain injury services in the community where they live.

Recognizing that many brain injury societies had collapsed or were at risk of collapse due to inadequate funding, these individuals committed to working with government to bring additional financial resources to brain injury societies and build a strong and stable network of brain injury societies in communities across British Columbia.

It took considerable effort but in less than a year the newly formed Alliance received government funding which was distributed to brain injury societies across the province and has secured over \$8 M of funding for local, community-based associations all over BC.

The success achieved by the Alliance has been due to a great extent on the lifetime contributions of some of the founding members, on their personal and professional credibility as well as on their commitment to the principles espoused by the Alliance and on sheer hard work.

The ALLIANCE BRAIN INJURY LEGACY AWARD is an honorary designation conferred by the board of the Alliance.

This year's recipients are John Simpson, Henry Harder and David Marr, three of the founding board members of the 2014 Brain Injury Alliance who have tirelessly served the brain injury community in different capacities over many years.

The Alliance is proud to present each of them with a beautiful stained glass Brain Injury Alliance logo created by a member of the Kamloops Brain Injury Association, the very talented James Passmore.

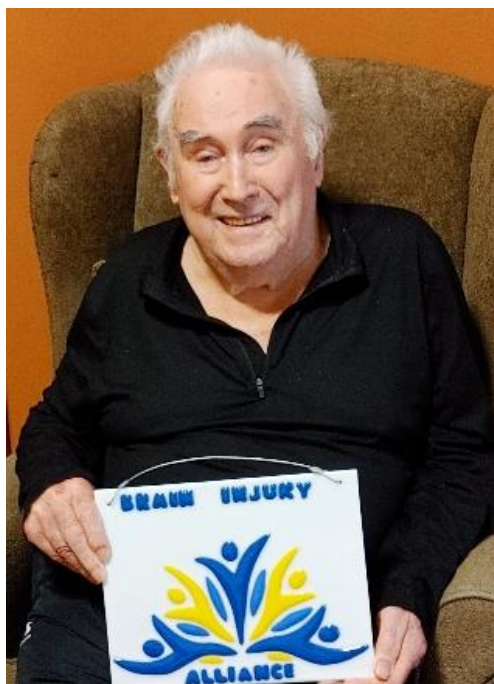


John Simpson

John Simpson, A lifetime of volunteerism and leadership:

John Simpson has been a leader in the development of services for people with acquired brain injury in the Province of British Columbia for decades.

John Simpson was born and educated in Dublin, Ireland and became involved in rehabilitation in 1969 as an insurance adjuster. He was involved in the Rehabilitation Department of ICBC in 1979 and developed a keen interest in the area of brain injury. In 1981, he began providing case management services through his own company, Simpson Rehab Management.



John was a founding board member of the BC Head Injury Association in 1982 and has served on the boards of the Canadian Paraplegic Association and Cheshire Homes Society. He founded the Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association in 1997, and while he retired from case management in 2001, he continued to serve in a variety of volunteer and consultant roles with the organization until 2020.

John became a founding Director of the Brain Injury Alliance in 2014, a provincial organization with a mandate to secure funding for brain injury services across the province of BC.

Mr. Simpson recognized how important it was for people who are often cognitively compromised to receive help with housing, finances and community resources etc., so he provided free, individualized support to thousands of people when no such support existed. He continually built community connections and advocated for services with agencies that didn't include brain injury in their mandates.

John worked tirelessly to further brain injury awareness and volunteered thousands of hours to help individuals with brain injuries live with dignity and support and has been recognized Provincially and Nationally for his volunteerism.

In 2015, he was recognized with the BC Medal of Good Citizenship given to someone who has "served their community with the greatest humility and without expectation of reward or recognition". He also received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in 2016 for his work with the brain injury community.

John is also a recipient of the 2021 Brain Injury Legacy Award from the Brain Injury Alliance.

Henry Harder

Henry Harder, a lifetime of service:

Henry's influence extends from the local to the provincial and to the national level and has ranged from direct service to academic to national advisement.

In his early years, as a Worksafe Rehab Consultant, then as a Clinical Psychologist and expert witness to the courts Henry was on the front line of service to people with brain injury and other disabling conditions.



In 2001 Henry was invited to create Canada's first graduate level program in Disability Management at the University of Northern BC, a career move that allowed him to engage in extensive research into brain injury, mental wellness and mental illness across the north.

Almost immediately after arriving in northern BC, Henry became involved with the Prince George Brain Injured Group and was subsequently one of the founders of the Northern Brain Injury Association which now serves people with brain injury across northern BC; he continues as a director on the NBIA board.

In 2014 Henry was one of the founding directors of the Brain Injury Alliance and from 2014 to 2021, he was the chair. The Alliance is a provincial association with a mandate to secure funding for brain injury services across the province of BC.

Henry's influence is also felt on a national level as a member of the Canadian Institute for Health Research National Institutional Advisory Board, a group that advises the CIHR on research funding for issues related to brain injury, other neuroscience disorders, mental health and addiction.

Henry is a recipient of the 2021 Brain Injury Legacy Award from the Brain Injury Alliance.

David Marr

David Marr, a lifetime of fighting for those who can't:

Dave's lifetime work saw him directly speaking for brain injury survivors in court and ensuring there was a well-rounded support system in place for them outside the court house.

He began work as a lawyer in the 1980's and soon found his heart touched by the impacts of brain injury on both the individual and the family.

He specialized his legal practice in the area of brain injury and would help many survivors of brain injury get well heard in court.



However, he felt that more was needed for survivors in the community and started setting up meetings for family members to help them learn about the relatively unknown issues of brain injury.

Seeing the immediate positive impacts of this, he worked with Norma Bruce to found the Kamloops Brain Injury Association in 1986. His work in the early decades of the organization was instrumental in bringing awareness of brain injury to the Kamloops region.

Dave later became active in Provincial advocacy efforts around brain injury. Concerned about the loss of several community-based brain injury associations, he actively searched for funding options to ensure services were available for people with brain injuries that were without insurance.

In 2014, Dave was one of the founding directors of the Brain Injury Alliance and he is a recipient of the 2021 Brain Injury Legacy Award from the Brain Injury Alliance.

Recommendations

1. Increased Funding to Brain Injury Societies

- Brain injury is a distinct disability with distinct service needs geared to rebuilding a life after injury.
- Even when there are concurrent disorders, treatment for the brain injury is often the primary need.
- Brain injury societies are motivated to provide service and/or liaise with mental health and/or addictions specialists but are often challenged financially.
- Brain injury societies are the primary and most cost-effective service delivery option for people with brain injury in BC.
- Services are provided at no cost to the person.
- Brain injury services are chronically underfunded on a per capita basis.

2. The Brain Injury Fund continues to be managed by the Brain Injury Alliance.

- The Brain Injury Alliance has a 6-year track record of distributing funding to brain injury societies.

3. Brain Injury Societies be included in any changes to current systems

- Community-led brain injury societies need to be part of any plan for ongoing services.





Appendix A: Benefits of Community Brain Injury Societies

BrainTrust

Gary is an indigenous, young male originally from Prince George. He sustained an acquired brain injury (ABI) during a workplace accident and was initially able to access work safe funding for support services in Prince George. The funding eventually ran out however, Gary was still suffering from the impacts of the ABI.

At that time, he decided to move to Kelowna. Upon arrival to Kelowna, Gary contacted BrainTrust. He had no funding to support him to access services. It took some time for BrainTrust to gather the information needed to assist in Gary's care but we eventually obtained documentation. Gary suffers from aphasia, which impedes his ability to communicate his thoughts and feelings.

To support Gary, BrainTrust delivered 1:1 supports while also advocating for access to other sources of funding to support him longer term. BrainTrust staff successfully advocated for Gary to receive Interior Health Authority (IHA) funded supports. Once those supports were confirmed, he was transitioned to services funded by IHA.

Gary is now living in community housing and attends BrainTrust groups where he can connect with peers and work on language and pronunciation. Without the support of the Brain Injury Alliance funding, Gary would not be where he is today.

“Over the past ten years of working for BrainTrust Canada, it has become very clear that access to services for all was not always going to be the case for small non-profits, without Brain Injury Alliance funding. As a result of the Brain Injury Alliance funding, BrainTrust has been able to expand our standards of care to all demographics and we ensure equal access to services for the most vulnerable members of our community.”

Brain Injury Alliance funding allows us to service clients who have no funding sources attached and whom we would not otherwise be able to serve. Brain Injury Alliance funds vital services. It allows BrainTrust to help clients when many other doors have been closed. The funding is critical for meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.”

Amanda McFarlan, BrainTrust

Comox Valley Head Injury Society



Arabella has been a participant with the Comox Valley Head Injury Society since 2012. She originally came to CVHIS as the caregiver to her late husband, who at the time, had suffered a stroke.

Under the duress of supporting her husband, Arabella herself suffered a stroke in 2016. Later that year, she fell and suffered an impact injury, (an example of the increased likelihood for survivors to experience a follow up head injury)

In 2017, she was diagnosed with “mild cognitive impairment”, again, a diagnosis more common in head injury survivors, and in her own words, “a springboard into possible dementia down the road.”

Arabella works diligently to manage her MCI, and has shared that in many ways, the services provided by the CVHIS, and funded by the Brain Injury Alliance, have been instrumental in this.

She regularly attends programming such as counseling, yoga, mindfulness meditation, art therapy, and music therapy.

Arabella states that each of these programs are key factors to stress reduction and the ongoing management of her cognitive impairment.

She has discussed the benefits of social interaction with peers that know what it's like to live with a head injury, and attends the Tuesday lunch program not only for a balanced, nutritious meal, but also to see friends and have a chat. She appreciates the ability to get physical in programs like yoga, dragon boating and rock climbing, acknowledging the positive benefits of these activities on her mental and physical health.

The mental health focused programs like mindfulness, meditation, art, music and counseling, all contribute to her overall mental health stress management plan, and are yet another opportunity to interact with new people, and create inclusive connections in the community.

South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society



On May 25, 2020 I had a stroke. I did not go to the hospital until 24 hours later. I spent three days in the hospital, before being allowed to go home. I was very lucky but I was scared, I was alone after the recent death of my husband of 49 years, how was I going to survive?


In June of 2020 I got a call from SOSBIS. I joined the Stroke Recovery Group, held outside due to COVID. There I met several others that had gone through strokes/brain injuries and found out that I was not the only person going through this; I was not alone.

The group sessions, are a very vital part of my life and have helped me immensely through my recovery. Here I made new friends, learned how the stroke affects our brains and our bodies, as we learn how to cope with new limitations.

I would not be where I am at in my recovery if it not for the support of SOSBIS.

Dealing with the aftermath of a stroke is not easy. During COVID it is lonesome, without my best friend and soul mate who died shortly before my stroke. I realized that I had to develop coping skills and with the help of SOSBIS I have done so.

My days are busy now as I taken up some hobbies such as games on my tablet, reading, journaling, short walks and spending time with family and friends.

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping blue triangles of varying shades, pointing towards the right.

“During COVID it is lonesome, without my best friend and soul mate who diea shortly before my stroke. I realized that I had to develop coping skills and with the help of SOSBIS, I have done so.”

Y.C. - South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society



Northern Brain Injury Association

On May 23, 2021, I suffered a sharp blow to the left side of my head while riding a power mower. Late that same night I blanked out while returning to my bed from the washroom. I hit the floor hard and may have hit my head even harder. When I went to the ER in Hazelton Hospital, they did an Electro-Cardiogram and told me I was fine. I was not sent to Terrace or Smithers for CT but told by the doctor: “Don’t fall again.”

On June 8th, my family doctor, Megan McCoach, ordered a CT scan in Terrace after I told her of my increasing dizziness and weakness. The results showed a Subdural Hematoma, and I was scheduled for a follow-up CT four weeks later. (By which time I might have been dead). I was feeling worse all the time and requested another CT on June 14th. It showed the Hematoma getting larger, but it was left at that. I was feeling too weak to even walk 5 days later and went to the ER in Terrace. After a third CT scan, the doctor on duty immediately put me on the list for surgery and ordered the Air Ambulance.

After a 5-day wait in the hospital, I was finally flown to Vancouver on June 23rd and had surgery performed on June 24th. At that point I could barely raise my right leg and feared long-term neurological damage.

Quite by accident, Tekah Sabal gave me her card for the Northern Brain Injury Association on June 12 and offered to assist. When I returned to Terrace from my surgery on June 29th, Tekah started evaluating my recovery and making suggestions of how to speed my recovery. This was a Godsend as I had been asking the doctors in Vancouver questions about my post operation and all I got was a prescription for blood pressure.

I feel blessed to have recovered as well as I have the past 6 weeks and grateful for the help Tekah was able to offer. At age 72 and 8 months, I was told it might take 2 – 3 years to recover. Maybe it will, but I feel much more informed and confident in my recovery thanks to the assistance of NBIA.

Nanaimo Brain Injury Society

Bill* had difficulties managing his life after he incurred a concussion that resulted in a multitude of challenging symptoms. Due to his injury, he experienced homelessness, loss of employment, and strained relationships with those close to him.

When Bill first sought help from the Nanaimo Brain Injury Society (NBIS) he was living without a permanent residence.

Challenged by symptoms of his brain injury and declining mental health, Bill was able to access multiple supports at NBIS which provided him with strategies to better manage his brain injury symptoms. Group counselling offered through NBIS was also key to helping him to manage the mental health challenges brought on by the brain injury. Bill is currently experiencing a very positive recovery, has secured housing, and is working full-time with youth.

*Note: Name changed for anonymity

Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association

It is with great pleasure that I am writing about the service I have received from the Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association. My name is Belinda R. and I have been involved with the organization for a few years. I have received support through the Pay it Forward: Health and Wellness for ABI program as part of the "In the Now" group.

This group teaches people with brain injuries about brain injury and available resources. I have gained tools to copy and deal with the challenges I encounter in my life. It has helped me learn how to be assertive and has helped build my self confidence. I used to attend in-person but COVID has modified the way services had to be delivered and the group is now offered over zoom, but I still find the meetings beneficial.

Fraser Valley Brain Injury has also helped me get my First Aid and FoodSafe courses (through a grant from the Gur Singh Endowment fund) which has helped me re-enter the work force.

I was able to participate in chair yoga over Zoom and other services such as painting and writing are available if I choose to participate. I find the diversity of services helpful as it provides the opportunity to find what speaks to you. I am grateful for all the support I have received. Knowing I can have access to the services I need, has helped reduce my anxiety.

I want to thank the Alliance for providing funding for Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association. It has helped me tremendously in getting my life back on track. Thank you!





Victoria Brain Injury Society

The day that Eric M. realized that something was wrong with his brain started out like any other day.

As a child growing up in Alberta, Eric was diagnosed with ADHD. Then in 2007, after he had moved to BC, he was diagnosed with a bipolar disorder. But it wasn't until the day that Eric, working for UPS at the time, parked his truck one day and freaked out.

"I didn't know what it was but I knew something was wrong with my brain and I knew it was not bipolar."

Eric saw a doctor and for two days did a variety of brain testing. He was ready for what he discovered – that several concussions due to being thrown or dropped as a small child in addition to sports related incidents had left him with a brain injury.

In 2019, a doctor with the Cool Aid Society told him about VBIS. Out of work and living in a shelter, Eric attended ABI 101 at VBIS in November and what he learned changed his life.

"Thanks to VBIS, the biggest thing for me was learning that I'm not the only one."

After attending ABI 101, Eric started the Coping Strategies program in January 2020, and credits the group with providing him with a supportive network of like-minded people who understand what it's like to navigate the day-to-day life of a brain injury survivor.

"Brain injury is not always straight forward," he says. "VBIS taught me that my brain isn't the same and that's okay. It's what you do with that knowledge that counts."

Prince George Brain Injured Group Society

I started going to PG BIG in 2014 after my workplace accident. I had no idea what was going on. I fell from the scaffolding and hit my head and I have never been the same. I didn't know what to expect or how anyone could help me but as soon as I walked into the office, I was welcomed and felt safe.

I needed so much support after my injury (and sometimes I still do). My Case Manager worked with me almost every day, helping me take care of finances, house stuff, family stuff and trying to get back into the employment field. It took me way to long to realize I was not at the same capacity as I was before my brain injury and the staff helped guide me into a place of understanding and acceptance (although I still forget and will push myself too far).

I found the classes to also help with my understanding of brain injury, how it has affected me and things I need to do to feel ok most days. I have made life long connections because of those classes.

I am now trying to go to school and I wouldn't be able to do that without the support of PG BIG and my Case Manager. I never thought I would be able to get back any part of my life again and I am thankful that I am well enough to try.



Kootenay Brain Injury Association

Joan S. is a local Biologist (PhD), professor and writer. Joan experienced a stroke 4.5 years ago and was referred to Kootenay Brain Injury Association by her physician.


Joan states her value in life has always been her mind, her intellect, her career, which she loved and continued to "unofficially" work through the retirement phase. After Joan experienced the stroke, one of her greatest struggles was coming to terms with the fact that she isn't able to remember things. The detailed knowledge of plants, birds, animals, fungi, organisms she studied for over 60 years was no longer retrievable.

There hasn't been a day that Joan hasn't believed in a successful recovery and worked towards that. Joan is supported, on a weekly basis, by her Outreach Worker.

Joan states, some days she is depressed because she can't move well and can't remember things. Then, Alana (Outreach Worker) comes to the house, they start talking and she "she brings stuff out of my brain that I haven't thought of in years, we read together, we laugh, and we have such a good time"! Joan states, "there's no one else I can talk to about some stuff".

Joan attended the KBIA counselling program most of last year and says it really helped her to have a different outlook on things. Prior to this year, Joan also attended every art therapy session and other group sessions and workshops as well.

Joan is 91 and is currently working on the regular re-testing for her driver's license.



*"Alliance funds ensured individuals were supported successfully through the various recovery **"transitions"** - hospital to home, through all assessments, implementation of aids & safety guards, referral & initiation of other services (home support, meal programs, handy dart bus)."*

Kootenay Brain Injury Association



Powell River Brain Injury Society

Jim W. was our first choice and first to train as a Peer Support Worker. "Jimmy" has always had a friendly and level headed demeanor. The positive impact he has had is truly remarkable. We train our Peer Support workers with a program designed by Charles Drebing, PhD - Peer Support and Self-Help Groups, as well as the Peer Support Resource Manual from the BC Ministry of Health.

Jimmy is a long-time member of the Powell River Brain Injury Society, having been with us since 2003. He was the driver in a motor vehicle crash that left him with severe back injuries and a head injury.

We worked with his wife to help them with the inevitable challenges that come after a brain injury and theirs is a true success story of overcoming those challenges and having a successful marriage while living with acquired brain injury. Jimmy is always focused on acceptance and provides a judgment free atmosphere for the clients. He is well liked and often sought after for issues that are very personal to our clients.

Jimmy has been instrumental in creating the Unmasking Brain Injury Program, ensuring that all clients who want to participate get a chance to build a mask and have it be part of the display.

Lifting people up is Jimmy's forte, and subsequently it lifts him up too. Having the tools, and skill set to use those tools in assisting the staff and clients has been a wonderful asset to our team.

Jimmy was also instrumental in setting up group support. Twice a week, clients are encouraged to bring their stories, either challenges or successes to the group. The openness and acceptance has made this group popular and well attended.

Jimmy takes his role very seriously. He assists clients in other programming activities and is always there to lend a hand, whether it be to talk or clean a paint brush or pick out a weekly movie.

We are thrilled to have Jimmy on board and thank the Brain Injury Alliance for their assistance in providing funds to this program.



Appendix B: History of the Alliance

Brain Injury: A Personal Challenge – A Community Response

The Brain Injury Alliance is a non-profit organization formed in 2014 as a collaboration between four community brain injury associations to address the funding challenges faced by non-profit brain injury service agencies in the province.

In 2013-2014 alone, 3 brain injury societies in BC closed their doors permanently due to lack of funding, leaving wide gaps in services.

The Brain Injury Alliance is currently comprised of 12 charitable brain injury societies in British Columbia

In 2015, the Province of BC provided the Alliance with a grant of \$3 million for community based, direct services for people with brain injuries. In 2017, the Province provided a further \$3 million and replenished the Brain Injury Fund (BIF) in 2021 with an additional \$2 million.

With the assistance of these grants from the Government of BC, the Brain Injury Fund (BIF) was established to help support brain injury societies across the province for 1 million dollars/year over 8 years, all of which is supplemental funding, not to replace existing funding sources. The Alliance has a strong track record of providing this funding effectively and efficiently over 6 funding cycles. As of 2021, the Alliance has distributed/allocated over \$6 million to these agencies.

In addition to direct funding of brain injury societies, the Alliance administers the Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund established by the Province in 2015 with a \$1 million endowment. This fund is available to those individuals with an acquired brain injury who want to upgrade their education and job readiness and are sponsored by a local brain injury society.

Programs and services delivered with the aid of Brain Injury Fund monies have had a significant impact on the wellness of survivors and their families and are delivered at no charge.

The Alliance is only able to fund about 50% of the service and program needs applied for by member organizations.

The Brain Injury Fund is making a positive difference in the lives of British Columbians. Increased funding will provide additional supportive programs and services to meet the complex needs and concerns of the injured, assisting people to reach their full potential for decades to come.

Appendix C: What You Should Know about TBI/ABI

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) arises from traumatic insults to the brain and head (vehicle collisions, falls, sports injuries, assaults, electrocution).

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) includes TBI plus non-traumatic causes (stroke, aneurysm, arterial venous malformation, tumors, anoxic events, surgical mishaps, infections).

- TBI is estimated to occur at an annual rate of 5 per 1000 persons⁹
- Statistically, TBI occurs at a rate 100 times that of spinal cord injury¹⁰
- When ABI and TBI are included together, estimates suggest up to 1 in 25 persons in Canada may be living with some level of ongoing disability from a brain injury¹¹
- While awareness and diagnosis of TBI is improving, missed cases, misdiagnosis and misattribution are commonly reported in the relevant clinic literature¹²
- Post ABI, persons are seven times more likely to develop symptoms of mental illness¹³

The effect of brain injury is not limited to the health consequences for the victim. For example:

- Youth convicted of a crime are more likely to have suffered a pre-crime brain injury¹⁴
- It has been estimated that over 85% of incarcerated individuals have a brain injury¹⁵;
- A survey of Vancouver's homeless population found that 66% reported a brain injury and of those 77% were injured prior to becoming homeless¹⁶
- Estimates put the brain injury rate among indigenous persons at 4-5 times the rate in the non-indigenous population¹⁷;

⁹ Langois JA, Rutland-Brown W, Thomas KE, *Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States, Emergency Department Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths*. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control; 2006.

¹⁰ Won Hyung A. Ryu, Anthony Feinstein, Angela Colantonio, David L. Streiner, Deirdre R. Dawson, *Early Identification and Incidence of Mild TBI in Ontario*, *The Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences*, Volume 36, Number 4, 429 - 435, July 2009.

¹¹ http://www.vistacentre.ca/_files/statistics.pdf (4% figure); see also *Brain Disorders in Ontario: Prevalence, Incidence and Costs from Health Administrative Data, Ontario Brain Institute July 2015* at 148 (incidence of TBI alone approaching 2% of population in Ontario in April 2010 assessment).

¹² Silver, McAllister and Arcienegas, *Textbook of Traumatic Brain Injury*, 3rd ed. 2019; see also Zasler and Katz, *Brain Injury Medicine: Principles and Practice*, 2nd ed. 2012.

¹³ Jeffrey M. Rogers; Christina A. Read; *Psychiatric comorbidity following traumatic brain injury*. *Brain Injury*, Volume 21, Issue 13 & 14 December, pages 1321 - 1333, 2007.

¹⁴ Source: Silver, McAllister and Arcienegas, *Textbook of Traumatic Brain Injury*, 3rd ed. 2019; see also Zasler and Katz, *Brain Injury Medicine: Principles and Practice*, 2nd ed. 2012.

¹⁵ Source: Jeffrey M. Rogers; Christina A. Read; *Psychiatric comorbidity following traumatic brain injury*. *Brain Injury*, Volume 21, Issue 13 & 14 December, pages 1321 - 1333, 2007.

¹⁶ Williams WH, Chitsabesan P, Fazel S, et al. *Traumatic brain injury: a potential cause of violent crime? [Published correction appears in Lancet Psychiatry. 2018 Jul 17;]. Lancet Psychiatry. 2018;5(10):836–844. doi:10.1016/S2215-0366(18)30062-2.*

¹⁷ Slaughter B, Fann JR, Ehde D. *Traumatic brain injury in a county jail population: prevalence, neuropsychological functioning and psychiatric disorders*. *Brain Injury* 2003;17(9):731-41.

Appendix D: Brain Injury Alliance Member Organizations



[BrainTrust Canada](#)

[Campbell Valley Head Injury Society](#)

[Comox Valley Head Injury Society](#)

[Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association](#)

[Kamloops Brain Injury Association](#)

[Kootenay Brain Injury Association](#)

[South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society](#)

[Nanaimo Brain Injury Society](#)

[Northern Brain Injury Association](#)

[Powell River Brain Injury Society](#)

[Prince George Brain Injured Group](#)

[Victoria Brain Injury Society](#)

“Brain injury is forever. In order to ensure cost-effective and efficacious, evidence-based and outcome-driven services, and considering the complex needs of persons with brain injury, a variety of sources for services and supports must exist at the local level. This will require integrated planning, and establishing and sustaining broader partnerships with other partners in the community.”

Government of British Columbia, 2002

