



contact@braininjuryalliance.ca www.braininjuryalliance.ca

Brain Injury Alliance Interim Report

July 2021 to December 2021

While continuing to deal with the additional pressures of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Brain Injury Societies in British Columbia continue to make a difference in their communities. Agencies have been flexible, creative and able to pivot as Public Health Orders and safety requirements change to successfully meet the needs of people with brain injuries.

The Impact of COVID, continues to permeate every aspect of service delivery.

“Clients served have remained constant despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Northern Brain Injury Association

“Working with client's goals, the impact of covid, health issues, and advocating with other agencies. The current global situation has made it more difficult for some to cope as easily. The group (members) have been supporting each other and it has been a challenging time as some members/family are vaccinated and some (are) not. “

Campbell River Brain Injury Society

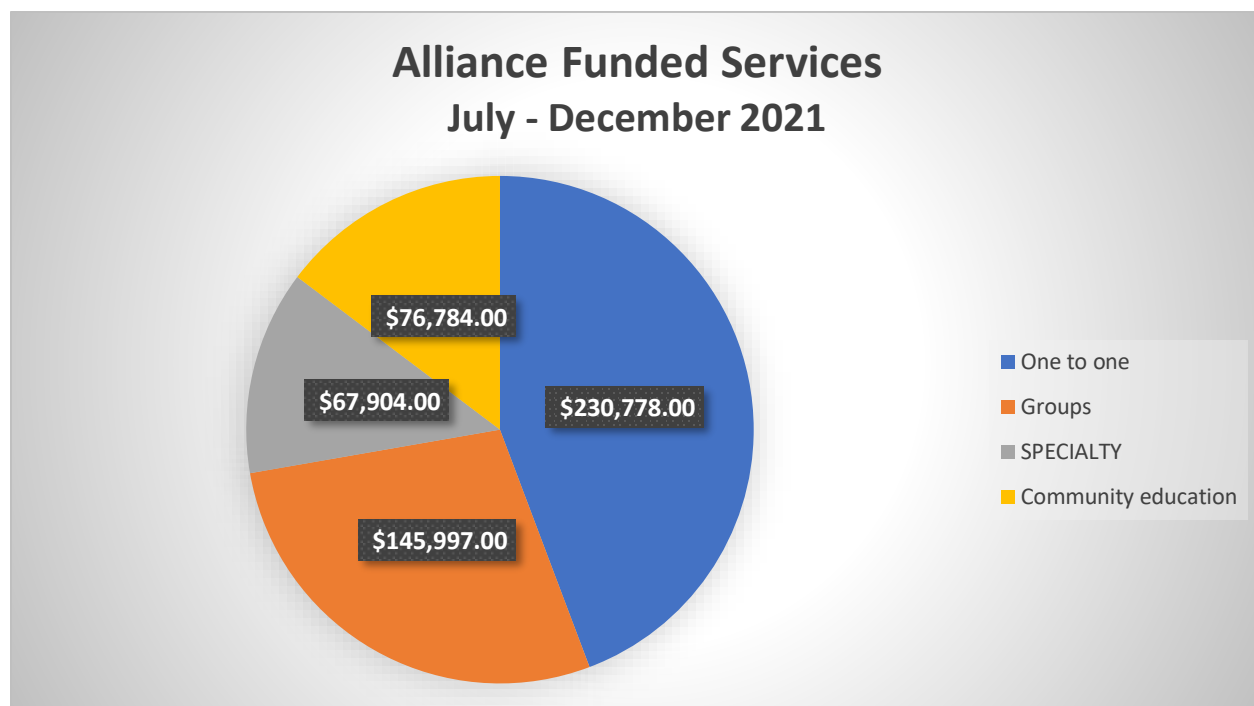


“We are seeing more ‘remote’ and more vulnerable clients (not eligible for interior health services, no transportation, no family members, living in rural/remote locations)”

Kootenay Brain Injury Association

Direct Services to People Living with an Acquired Brain Injury

Services to people living with a brain injury continue to be a priority for brain injury societies in British Columbia.



One to One Services:

Services range from one-to-one case management and one-to-one life skills programs to both educational and life skills group services and then the three specialty services: employment, corrections programs, and professional counseling.

Agencies are seeing an increase in referrals, as well as a rise in the complexity of the cases being served.

Utilizing 85% of Alliance grants, member agencies were able to significantly enhance funds available to provide these services to people with brain injury and their families.

Alliance funds are not to replace funding from health authorities or to provide support for individuals with third party funding.

“We continue to notice a rise in more complex cases, and thus more time spent with these individuals. Increasing mental health challenges have also been a factor during this time frame.”

Nanaimo Brain Injury Society

“During this reporting period PG BIG facilitated 86 educational sessions which reached 183 participants. Additionally, we facilitated 33 supportive programs which hosted 107 participants. We continue to adhere to COVID 19 restrictions and guidelines and were happy to be able to open up during the summer months of 2022 and host in person classes”.

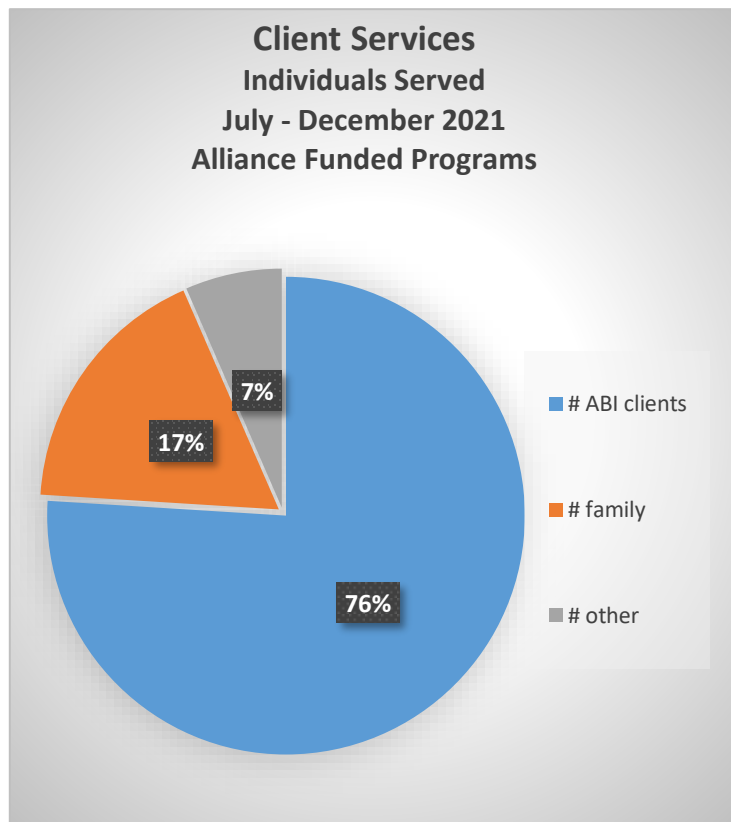
Prince George Brain Injured Group

The total number of individuals served is calculated only once annually. Most individuals require services over more than one period and the labour of calculating accurate client numbers over a six-month period adds unnecessarily to the administrative burden of small, cash-strapped agencies.

Services to individuals are the backbone of what member agencies do and show considerable depth and span of services provided to people with brain injury, family members and friends as well as other community members such as employers, health care professionals etc.

“Case managers worked with clients to resolve issues with income assistance, disability tax credits, medical assistance in dying, finding a therapist, accessing MySelfServe, PWD applications, vaccine passports, navigating hospital systems, sourcing food options, BIP applications, employment, BC Housing info and applications, WorkSafe reports, insurance forms.”

Victoria Brain Injury Society



“A change of staff early in the year went well. The new staff member has strong brain injury experience, so was able to rapidly fit in with the existing caseload.”

Kamloops Brain Injury Association

Group Services

Serving people in groups has many advantages including cost effectiveness and peer learning, however most clients that benefit from group programs also require one to one service.

Though no data has been maintained or research done it appears that people that access group services tend to ‘move out of services’ more quickly than those that receive only one to one service. If this assumption is correct, then this would indicate a significant increase in effectiveness, efficiency, and cost containment.



Specialty Programs

The Alliance is only able to provide funding to ‘top-up’ other regional funding. These programs are not offered in all parts of the province, in part because they all require considerable resources and require a good deal of focus, grant development and fundraising from the brain injury society. Specialty programs are usually dependent on community relationships, innovation and sometimes simply being in the right place at the right time.



“Individuals learn and improve skills in a variety of areas such as health, relationship building, problem solving, memory, finances. Support is based on individual goals and aims to build self-confidence and fosters independence.”

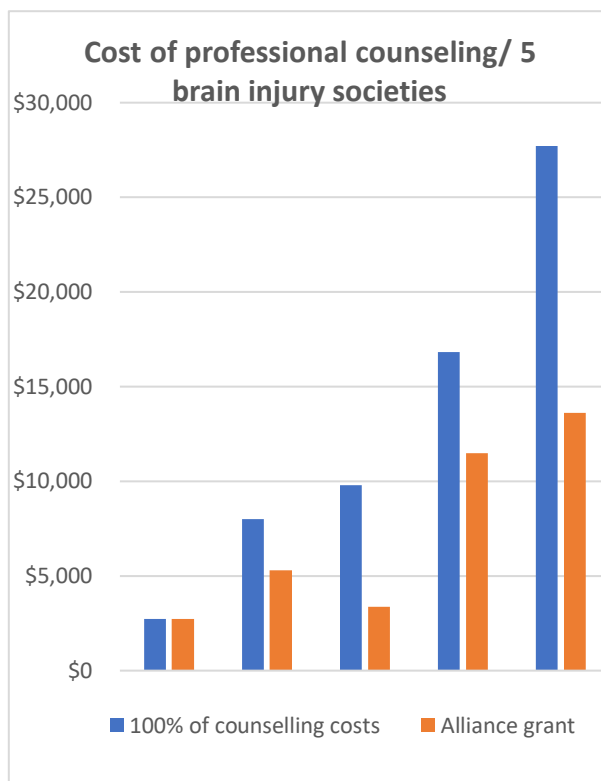
South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society

Professional counseling is a program in high demand however providing this expensive service requires ingenuity and community development to make it economically feasible. So far, 5 brain injury societies have currently ventured into this service option and the range of types and cost in service is wide.

One agency uses a qualified employee to provide this service, all others contract with private counselors at considerably less than the going rate. Some agencies provide only group counseling, others provide one to one to not only the client but also to family members.

Due to funding limitations, agencies need to cap services to a maximum determined by funding rather than need.

In the first half of the 2021-2022 fiscal year, 274 individuals participated in professional counseling through Alliance funded programs.



The cost per client ranged from \$67 to \$383 per client, noting of course the variation in number of sessions, approved and whether the service is partially or 100% group counseling.



“In January 2022, we unveiled our “rapid access” program which provides weekly, drop-in counselling sessions with a solution focused mandate. It has proven to be effective when working with those with frontal lobe dysfunction and we anticipate further success as our counselling program expands in 2022”.

BrainTrust

Corrections programming has decreased during the pandemic with provincial institutions eliminating or dramatically reducing community programming. In the 6-month period reported in this report period, the Alliance provided funding for two corrections programs.

The Alliance provided pilot project funding to the first corrections program. This program is now funded 100% by the Provincial Health Authority which has indicated the desire to see the program expand across the Province.

Employment services that focus on the challenges of people with acquired brain injury is the third specialty program type that the Alliance member agencies provide.

In this reporting period, two member agencies provided these services specifically with Alliance funds.

All of the agencies provided some employment interventions and supports to their clients, either with targeted funding or through regular one to one programming.

In this reporting period 90+ individuals were assisted to secure or maintain employment with the support of their local brain injury society.

"The space is increasing in size and power is being added for lights and funding is now being sought for a large year-round greenhouse operation. We are expecting a great growing season. Alliance funding will allow us to keep our client employees who love to garden and our client volunteers who love to cook."

Powell River Brain Injury Society

"We continue to assist individuals in all aspect of employment readiness, training, and supportive strategies for success. 17 were assisted in the competitive employment field; 11 were assisted with pre-employment skills and tasks; there were 16 participants in our trades exploration program as well as 12 volunteers were assisted."

Prince George Brain Injured Group



Community Education & Injury Prevention:

In the first 6 months of this granting period member agencies spent 17% of their Alliance grant funds on community education and injury prevention programs. This is identical to the 17% spent in the previous year, when agencies had to pivot to pandemic restrictions.

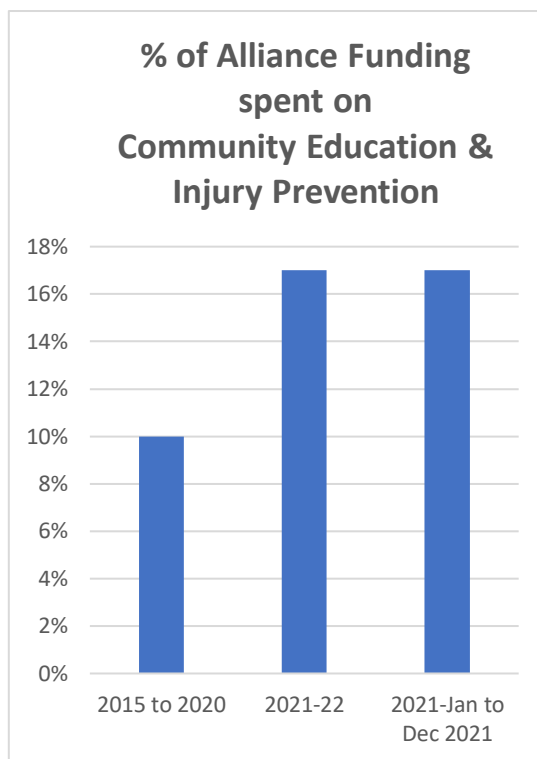
Spending on Community Education increased as agencies began providing more services on-line. In many instances, more available to the general public as well as to actual and potential clients and family members as well as to members of the public in general.

Statistics for on-line services do not break down by population, meaning that in many instances, services that the Alliance member agencies would previously have categorized as group services to clients could not be confirmed as such. As a result, these services have fallen into the category of Community Education.

Injury Prevention programs have reduced during the pandemic as schools have reduced the number of community services provided within the education system.

We anticipate that statistics in this entire category will change once the pandemic restrictions end, perhaps in the 2022-2023 granting year.

In the first five years of Alliance grants, there was a drop in the percentage of funds spent on similar services. The following is a quote from that five-year Summary Report: *“Across all agencies, the amount spent for community education and injury prevention decreased from 16% in 2015 to 10% of in 2020. This 6% shift went directly from injury prevention programs to client service programs. This change in focus is often a sign that client service needs are increasing and that funds are being diverted to serve individuals in need.”*¹

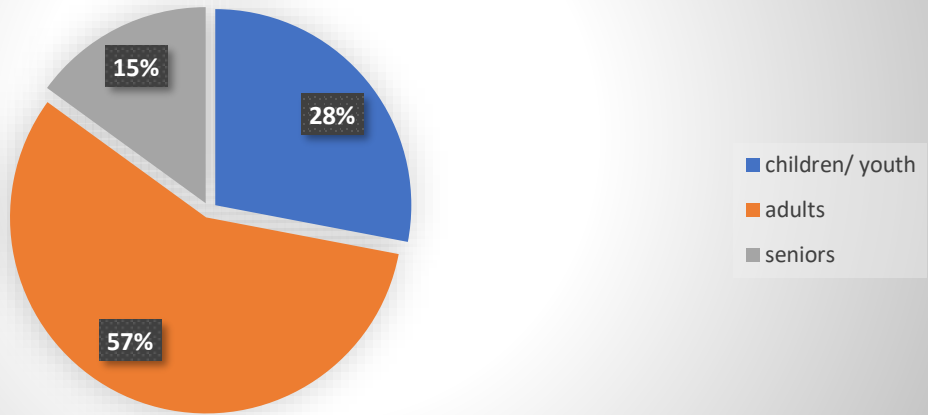


FVBIA participated in the Chilliwack Safety Fair in the fall of 2021, a drive thru event with Chilliwack Safer Cities, Chilliwack Fire Department, etc. We are contracting with a social media manager to increase our online presence/ prevention promotions and will be more involved with in-person events in the spring and summer of 2022.

Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association

¹ BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE REPORT 2015-2020 Grant Agreements dated March 27, 2015 and March 31, 2017.

**Community Prevention & Education
Individuals Served July - December 2021
Alliance Funded Programs**



Social Impact of Alliance Funding

Community-based services for people with acquired brain injury provide a benefit for the Province of BC. Alliance Member Agency reports on the Social Impact of Alliance Funding are on trend to more than double from 2020-2021.

This change has been brought about in part by systemic improvements to the way Alliance Member agencies collect data as well as by an increase in demand for the services made available across the province.

Social Impacts of Alliance Funding (# of Client/Incidents)			
	Obtained Employment	Reduced Client Involvement with Medical/ Hospital Services	Reduced Client Involvement with Justice System
July 1, 2020 - June 31, 2021 (12 months)	101	294	70
July 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021 (6 months)	195	364	90

Stories

Mike Warren – Comox Valley Head Injury Society

www.cvhis.org

On January 2, 2000, Mike Warren was driving to work when he thought he might be having a heart attack so he pulled over to flag a car down for help and the next thing he remembers is waking up in the hospital. He later discovered that he had a grand mal seizure and that he had a brain tumor the size of a small grapefruit that had pushed the right side of his brain to the left side. He would require 13 hours of surgery.

Six years later, Mike was experiencing blurring in his eye and was referred to a neuro ophthalmologist who discovered he had another brain tumor, again on the right side and would need immediate surgery. Unfortunately, during the process of removing the tumor they detached an optic nerve on his right eye which has left Mike blind in one eye ever since.

Another 13 years went by until Mike had 2 seizures on the same night back in 2019 and has now had a total of 5 grand mal seizures. Mike was still in denial that these seizures had affected him too much until he was shown that he had had a partial temporal lobectomy which resulted in memory loss. He now undergoes an MRI every year.

After his last seizures, he was referred to the CVHIS by his neurologist. Mike says 'I can't believe how I hesitated in the past but now that I have participated in CVHIS activities and see how it has benefited me I jump on everything I can'.

Mike participates in CVHIS programs supported through the Brain Injury Alliance funding such as wellness activities (yoga, mindfulness, journaling), and has recently become a peer supporter and regular volunteer. He also held a one-man Mike's Miles walkathon fundraiser for CVHIS in Sept. 2021!

Mike says "I want to give back to the society that has helped me so much. I'm happy with my life now, I have become a better person, and a lot of that comes from CVHIS. I am amazed at what staff do, and how they do it so well, I take advantage of as much as I can."



Randy - Powell River Brain Injury Society

www.braininjurysociety.com

Randy attends our centre every day and utilizes the services of our Peer Support worker and other staff. He has overcome many hurdles. He has learned how to navigate the changing terrain of his life since his brain injury from a fall at work.

He says that he loves coming to a judgement free space where he can communicate with people who are living, for the most part, the same issues as he has. He has learned how to take things slowly and to accept the way he is. He says that he is learning how to listen to his body, when to take a break, what triggers to avoid, and that he is finding the positives of living with an abi.

Randy is a great help to our society as well, taking on the task of recycling, bringing everything to the depot, and he is our go to fix it guy. Randy has attended the centre for many years, and since Covid he has taken on many tasks here. By no fault of his own, he is not able to obtain regular employment, however, he found purposeful and meaningful volunteer tasks here at our drop in centre.

We are very happy that Randy attends and Randy has said that he is very grateful that this centre is here to provide the support and services required to all the clients.

Sandi – Victoria Brain Injury Society

www.vbis.ca

My name is Sandi. Last November 10th, 2021 my life changed forever. On that day my head exploded. It felt like a 2x4 piece of lumber was rammed into the back of my head. The pain was so severe, like nothing I've ever felt before. As it moved to the top of my head I wanted to die.

I was rushed to the Victoria General Hospital, where it was determined I had a brain bleed. I had none of the risk factors. I was not overweight, I don't smoke, I rarely drink, and I don't do drugs. There is no family history. There was no reason for this to happen.

I have super-sensitive hearing. I'm desperately thirsty all the time. I wear sunglasses everywhere to block out light, even on rainy days. I don't leave the house without sunglasses, water, and earplugs.

I believed going back to work would help me get better faster. I threw myself back into my job and quickly realized how fast I became exhausted! After working 4 hours I would sleep right through the entire next day. I was so exhausted that when people spoke to me, I couldn't understand them. It was scary and humiliating to watch people form words that made no sense.

I found the Victoria Brain Injury Society (VBIS) online. I immediately signed up for the Acquired Brain Injury 101 class, where I learned about neurons and synapses and most importantly why my brain is sucking up all my energy. And I took the Coping Skills class. After only a few sessions I felt the benefits of learning strategies that make life easier and less challenging.

For the first 2 years after my brain bleed, I felt like I was going crazy. I wasn't back to my old self, and I wondered what I was doing wrong.

At VBIS, other brain injury survivors have given me a gift. They've helped me to feel 'normal' and although our brain injuries all differ, many of us share similar symptoms. There is comfort in knowing I'm not the only one.

I am so grateful to VBIS for giving me a safe place to learn about my 'new' brain and for providing a place where people can meet and share experiences and ideas for making life better. VBIS is the middle part between the person I was and the person I am today. VBIS is a gift in the lives of brain injury survivors.

Lorraine – South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society

www2.sosbis.com

Lorraine became part of the South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society (SOSBIS) in 2019, the year that she had her stroke. "Initially I didn't think that I needed brain injury services, but all I can say now is how grateful I am for the support".

With funding from the Brain Injury Alliance, SOSBIS runs a variety of programs which has provided Lorraine with an opportunity to meet other people and form new relationships. Group participation plays a big role in Lorraine's life and during the Covid19 pandemic she was determined to learn how to join the online meetings.

With support from SOSBIS but more importantly, with patience and commitment she learned how to use a tablet which opened up a whole new world. It allowed her to connect with her friends and support team in a safe manner. And she was ready to learn more.



As a result of her stroke, Lorraine has difficulty understanding written information. Proudly she shows the 'text-to-speech' tool and instead of reading her friend's emails, she can now listen to it. While she may not be able to read a book, she highly enjoys the online Audiobooks that are available for free through the library.

"I tell all my friends about it and you know what the best thing is? You can't forget to return the books on time, that happens automatically". Lorraine's recovery hasn't stopped three years after her stroke. She loves sharing her story, knowledge, and her successes with other stroke-survivors in the hopes that it will benefit them as much as it has her.

Joseph – Kootenay Brain Injury Association

www.kootenaybia.ca

Joseph was referred by his physician; he was age-ineligible for Interior Health Authority (IHA) services and considered "high-risk".

The physician scheduled appointments for Joseph, but he would forget, didn't have transportation and he would forget how to take the bus and/or didn't have the money to take the bus. It was also noted Joseph did not have enough food. A safe-care plan was set up between the physician and KBIA to ensure Joseph's basic needs were met. KBIA began transporting Joseph to all physician appointments. Staff was able to share information with the physician and support Joseph's needs, get his prescriptions and transport him home safely.

Joseph was at-risk of being homeless due to not paying bills for several months after injury. Staff and Joseph sorted months of bills, set up payment plans and automatic payments, ensuring Joseph's housing was no longer at risk. Like many other individuals affected by ABI, Joseph lives beneath the poverty line, post-injury. Staff connected with the local food bank to facilitate picking up a food box each month and taking it to Joseph. After each weekly "group session" in Joseph's community, the

staff drops off a meal or two from the lunch we cook or provide. Joseph was only a few small steps away from being homeless, or worse, due to not being able to access medical appointments, prescriptions, food, and the basic task of paying bills. Alliance funding fills the many gaps for many individuals who are "ineligible", who are also immobile and at-risk for a variety of reasons.

Fran – Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association

www.fvbia.org

“Throwing me a Lifeline. COVID-19 has changed our world in so many ways: some good, some not so good. We all have to learn to adapt to change, accept what is happening and then find new ways to cope and to incorporate these changes into our lives. It’s easier said than done, isn’t it?”

As brain injury survivors, much of how we learn to cope and to positively function is by utilizing the three Rs – routine, repetition and “riting” it down (yes, I spelled that word wrongly but it sounds like an “R”).

Then COVID-19 comes along and turns our world upside down. No more face-to-face group meetings; limited social interaction with family and friends; heightened fear, panic and anxiety for many of us who suffer from these residual pests. A whole lifestyle change that is difficult for everyone, let alone if you are a brain injury survivor. And, as COVID-19 isn’t going away any time soon, we must continue to adapt.

I am a survivor of over 16 years. In a second, a woman speeding through a red light changed my life from a globally-recognized author and speaker to not. A lifetime of work lost. It’s been a grueling path back with a decade of grieving for the lost me before I learned a powerful lesson: you don’t heal unless you can be positive. To heal, our brain requires that we don’t function in continual negativity and stress.

I reached out again to Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association in 2017, when a traumatic event emotionally set me back. I was desperate for help to re-balance and move forward. This started a great healing and educational period for me. A case manager came to my house, listened, guided, helped me to set goals and even inspired me to start writing again! I then attended the weekly coffee group, meeting some awesome, amazing, caring and talented survivors. It was great to see how they supported each other and formed friendships, which I have also done. And they “get it” when we do or say things that may seem a little odd to others. Although I’ve had a few case managers, each one has been empathetic, caring and able to help me take those daily baby steps.

As you all know, some days are not as productive as others. And then COVID-19 hit and our world spun upside down. We learned how to Zoom and meet each other online. I made more new friends, some of whom I visit and keep in touch almost daily. The weekly sessions have become my lifeline to sanity. Something to look forward to, friendly faces and tools to help us heal and stay positive in an often negative, world.

In 2020 and 2021, FVBIA employed the services of a Registered Professional Counsellor and Master Practitioner in Clinical Counselling. She delivered many educational sessions to teach us how to better cope with trauma, negativity and life challenges. An empathetic and caring counsellor, her sessions were invaluable to many of us, and we hope that she will return with more online gems.

Now we have weekly online wellness sessions with another professional. I schedule these into my diary as “not to be missed” events. These professionals have just developed a great online bi-monthly FIT program. As a registered kinesiologist, Taryn is a goldmine of information and Jill an incredible and creative, inspiring, knowledgeable long-standing member of the organization.

The executive director of FVBIA, Carol, Paetkeu, is an innovative, caring and incredible woman who faces the challenges of our changing environment head-on to ensure that her clients are cared for. Thank you, ladies! It takes a lot of work to put these programs together for FVBIA clients. I strongly encourage any member to log on to these sessions to help themselves and to support the organization. They cannot help you if you don't attend. They have been – and still are – a lifeline for me.

I am now 71 years old, home alone a lot and immune-compromised to some degree. FVBIA threw me a lifeline and I tell you; I am not ever letting go of it. I hope that I see you too online – and maybe soon in person!"

Dean – BrainTrust

www.braintrustcanada.com

Working as a heavy-duty parts mechanic prior to his brain injury, Dean was always busy multitasking and socializing to get his job done. He thoroughly enjoyed this work as he thrived in the hectic environment and was enthusiastic about his career.

After his brain injury in 2018, his life immensely changed as he was unable to work anymore and faced a new reality of living with a brain injury. Dean describes this change as losing his sense of purpose due to the lack of passion and fulfillment with life, and a diminish to his elevated level of executive functioning became a hurdle.

It was not until October of 2021 that Dean began receiving services at Brain Trust Canada funded by Brain Injury Alliance, and since t

Through education of his brain injury and creating a supportive and nurturing community, BrainTrust has helped Dean recover his sense of purpose in life that he had been living without. Dean described one of his greatest realizations as understanding that he is not the only one, and that gives him the drive to continue his recovery journey. Dean has managed to create consistency in his life by accessing one to one service to help with navigating life with disability, attending group programs to meet others, creating a community, and accessing counselling services to better his mental health.

Sylvia – Northern Brain Injury Association

www.nbia.com

Sylvia is 82 years young, and she had recently moved to Terrace from Prince George to be closer to her family. She lives alone and is very independent and proactive about her overall health.

She experienced a mild traumatic brain injury in in 2014 when she hit her head on a towel bar. She still suffers with some post concussive effects, including poor balance and coordination at times. Silvia lives alone and does not drive, so her only means of transportation had been by walking. She uses a cane on occasion. This winter Terrace has been especially hazardous for pedestrians due to icy conditions, and uneven surfaces from snowfalls. These last couple of months have been particularly hard for Sylvia to get around and she had taken several falls.

Tekah, her Case Manager, was quite concerned about her, so she contacted Volunteer Terrace and Better at Home Services. They agreed to provide free taxi rides, and a volunteer driver whenever she needs it for essential trips. Sylvia also took the initiative to get a Handy Dart Application that Tekah

helped her with. That application was accepted, so now Sylvia can have door-to-door pick-up and drop-off transportation during the winter months.

Also, NBIA purchased a set of cleats for Sylvia's boots to further help her prevent falls, which can result in serious injuries and hospital visits. Sylvia says, she could not have done these things without the assistance and support of NBIA.

This success story would not have been possible without the funding from the Alliance.

This report was compiled using the content of interim reports provided by Brain Injury Societies. A full report including statistical information will be compiled at the end of this granting cycle.

The Brain Injury Alliance
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