



Brain Injury **Alliance**

Alliance Annual Report

2023 - 2024

President's Message

As we reflect on another impactful year, it's an honor to mark a decade of service and growth at the Brain Injury Alliance. Over the past ten years, the Alliance has worked with brain injury societies to transform the lives of individuals and families affected by brain injuries across British Columbia. This milestone is a testament to the dedication of our member agencies, the trust of the communities they serve, and the unwavering support of the BC government.

The 2023-2024 fiscal year has been one of innovation, expansion, and deeper collaboration. With funding stability secured, brain injury societies have enhanced services to meet the evolving needs of clients. These efforts include targeted programs addressing housing instability, employment, and the intersections of mental health and brain injuries, while maintaining our focus on culturally safe, trauma-informed care.

This year, member brain injury societies reached over 47,000 community members through education and prevention initiatives and supported over 5,700 individuals living with acquired brain injuries. These numbers reflect not only the demand for our services but also the resilience and determination of our clients. Through targeted interventions, we have reduced reliance on healthcare and justice systems, creating meaningful, measurable impacts in the lives of those we serve.

Looking ahead, we are committed to furthering our mission. We aim to strengthen partnerships, expand access to specialized services, and advocate for sustainable solutions to the challenges facing individuals with brain injuries. Together, we will continue to build on our shared vision of a more inclusive, supportive future for all.

Thank you to our government partners, member agencies, and every individual who contributes to this life-changing work. Your support is the foundation of our success and the reason we are able to make a difference.

Sincerely,



Dr. John Higenbottam
President, Brain Injury Alliance
Clinical Professor, Psychiatry, UBC

Executive Summary

The 2023-2024 fiscal year marked a significant milestone for the Brain Injury Alliance as it celebrated 10 years of supporting community based brain injury agencies that provide essential services to brain injury survivors across British Columbia. This report highlights the Alliance's successes, key metrics, and the impact of sustained government funding. Over the past decade, the Alliance has grown into a vital provincial network, supporting individuals with brain injuries and distributing millions in grants to community organizations.

The continued collaboration with the BC government, community partners, and member organizations has enabled the Alliance to expand its services, address emerging issues such as the housing crisis, and enhance support for mental health and substance use challenges. The data presented showcases the Alliance's ability to deliver cost-effective programs that improve client outcomes and reduce reliance on health and justice systems.

Funding highlights.

The three-year funding increase announced by BC Premier David Eby in 2022 has been instrumental in expanding services. Long-term funding stability allowed the Alliance to:

- Enhance staff retention and increase training opportunities, with 140 staff members trained in Indigenous cultural competencies and 99 in trauma-informed care.
- Expand peer support and life skills programs, ensuring clients receive consistent and effective support.
- Invest in infrastructure for member agencies to improve service delivery and accessibility.

Notable Achievements (2023-2024)

- **1,624 Individuals Screened:** Demonstrates the high demand for brain injury services.
- **1,097 New Clients Accepted:** Over 67% of screened individuals received services, showcasing efficient program delivery.
- **563 additional people with brain injury and concurrent disorders are being served:** Underscoring the importance of trauma-informed care initiatives.
- **Reductions in Emergency Services:** Effective case management led to **172 avoided hospital admissions and 314 minimized emergency visits**, generating significant cost savings.
- **Housing Stability:** Support programs helped **259 clients** maintain housing, and an additional **123 clients** successfully secured stable housing.
- **Employment Success:** Employment assistance initiatives supported **97 clients** in gaining jobs, with **36 clients** maintaining employment for six months or more.

About the Brain Injury Alliance

Established in 2014, the Brain Injury Alliance (the Alliance) was created to address the growing need for accessible brain injury services across British Columbia. The Alliance works to promote and support the work of non-profit brain injury organizations throughout the province. By advocating for provincial funding and establishing a stable financial base for its member societies, the Alliance ensures that community-led organizations can continue to deliver essential services to individuals living with acquired brain injuries.

The Alliance's role is to provide financial and strategic support to these member organizations, enabling them to focus on direct service delivery to their communities. This includes receiving and distributing funds, gifts, and bequests, as well as securing provincial funding to sustain and expand brain injury services.

Expanding Mandate

The Alliance has broadened its focus to address the complex needs of individuals facing mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and homelessness. Efforts include improving access to culturally safe, trauma-informed services for Indigenous communities and supporting member organizations in managing concurrent disorders. Stable funding and provincial support have positioned the Alliance to continue meeting these demands, with a commitment to expanding community-led services and ensuring care for all brain injury survivors in British Columbia.

10 years of impact

As the Brain Injury Alliance celebrates its 10th anniversary, the organization reflects on a decade of significant achievements. Over the past 10 years, the Alliance has played a critical role in supporting British Columbians with brain injuries by funding and sustaining non-profit organizations that deliver direct services to those in need. Through the administration of the Brain Injury Fund, the Alliance has distributed millions in grants.

Since its founding, the funding has helped agencies:

- Reduce healthcare system strain by lowering emergency visits and hospital admissions for clients.
- Establish culturally sensitive services and integrated support for Indigenous communities.
- Adapt to meet complex needs such as mental health and substance use disorders, ensuring clients receive holistic, community-based care.

1. Impact of Long-Term Funding: Stability, Staff Retention, and Service Continuity Benefits

The three-year funding commitment from the BC government has significantly enhanced program stability, allowing member agencies to plan and deliver services with greater confidence and continuity.

A. Enhanced Stability and Service Planning:

- **Consistency in Service Delivery:** Agencies noted that the long-term funding allowed them to avoid service disruptions that previously occurred due to annual funding uncertainties. This stability has led to improved client outcomes as programs can be offered continuously throughout the year.
- **Scalability of Services:** With secure funding over multiple years, member agencies have been able to expand program offerings, such as increasing peer support groups and outreach activities. BrainTrust Canada, Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association, and South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society expanded services to new clients, while others, such as Victoria Brain Injury Society, achieved deeper community engagement through enhanced programming.

B. Staff Retention and Capacity Building:

Improved Staff Retention: Long-term funding has directly contributed to improved staff retention, as agencies are now able to offer more competitive salaries and stable employment contracts. For instance, Kamloops Brain Injury Association and Northern Brain Injury Association reported better staff retention rates, reducing turnover and allowing for consistent client support.

- **Increased Training Opportunities:** Agencies have invested in staff training, such as trauma-informed care and cultural sensitivity workshops. Comox Valley Head Injury Society and Cowichan Valley Brain Injury Society emphasized that these efforts not only enhanced staff skills but also boosted job satisfaction and professional development.

C. Service Continuity and Improved Outcomes:

- **Service Continuity:** The guaranteed funding has meant that programs, particularly those addressing urgent needs like housing and mental health, can operate year-round. Powell River Brain Injury Society, Nanaimo Brain Injury Society, and Prince George Brain Injured Group have reported stronger client engagement and outcomes due to uninterrupted services.
- **Enhanced Outcomes:** As a result of sustained services and stable staffing, agencies observed improved client outcomes, such as higher rates of housing stability and employment success. Kootenay Brain Injury Association highlighted housing stability for many clients, while Campbell River Head Injury Support Society reported greater community integration among participants.

“A new central location increased inquiries for services, as well as, drop-in requests, and easy access to other agencies and for staff to provide community outreach & injury prevention programs.”
- Cowichan Valley Brain Injury Society

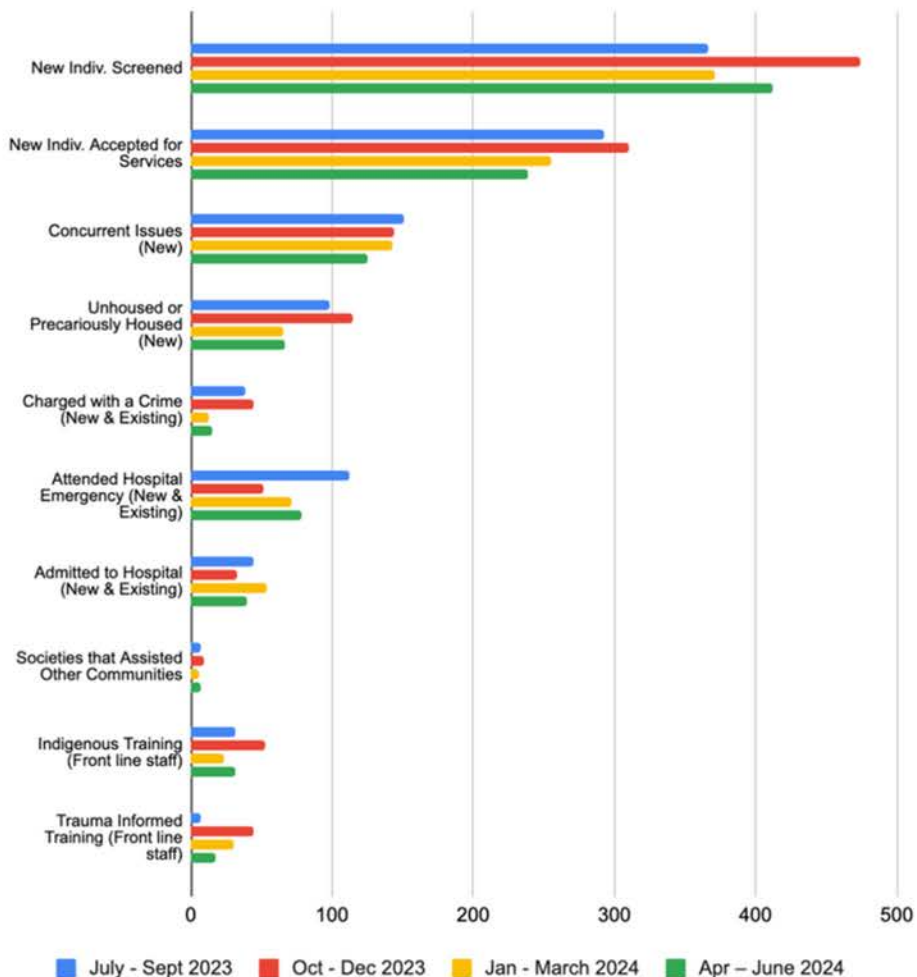
Key Metrics: The Impact of Strategic Government Funding on Brain Injury Support Services

Key Metrics Demonstrating Program Reach and Efficacy:

- **1,624 New Individuals Screened:** This reflects the high and consistent demand for brain injury services throughout the year.
- **1,097 New Individuals Accepted for Services:** Despite the challenges posed by concurrent issues and limited resources, over 67% of those screened were accepted into programs, demonstrating the ability to maximize reach and impact.

- **346 New Clients Facing Housing Instability:** The prevalence of precarious housing among clients continues to be a significant challenge. This year’s data underscores the ongoing housing crisis and highlights the essential role of funding, and providing necessary housing support to maintain stability.
- **563 New Clients with Concurrent Issues:** The data reveals that many clients present with dual diagnoses. This further emphasizes the need for integrated, trauma-informed care.

Alliance Quarterly Report Summary July 1 2023 - June 30 2024



2. Key Trends and Emerging Issues

Over the past year, the Brain Injury Alliance and its member agencies have increasingly shifted focus from traditional rehabilitation services to addressing immediate survival needs, particularly related to housing, mental health, and substance use. This trend is driven by the urgent requirements of clients who face a multitude of complex issues beyond brain injuries.

The shift to survival-focused programming marks a critical evolution in the Alliance's service approach, responding directly to the immediate and complex needs of clients facing a rapidly changing socio-economic environment.

A. Survival vs. Rehabilitation: Addressing Immediate Needs:

- Member agencies have increasingly prioritized housing, food security, and mental health over traditional rehabilitation services. Housing and mental health challenges, often exacerbated by the toxic drug crisis, have driven this shift. Trauma-informed care models and integrated approaches now support individuals with dual diagnoses, ensuring comprehensive care and improved client outcomes.

B. Housing Crisis and Homelessness

- The housing crisis remains a critical challenge for clients, with many facing precarious living conditions. Member agencies have secured stable housing for clients and maintained accommodations for others through housing stability programs and partnerships with local shelters and housing authorities. By integrating mental health, employment, and substance use support into housing services, agencies have improved retention rates and overall client well-being.

C. Indigenous Community Outreach

- The Alliance has expanded culturally sensitive services for Indigenous populations, building trust and increasing accessibility. Engagement activities, cultural safety training, and collaborations with Indigenous health organizations have ensured that programs are adapted to cultural needs and reach underserved communities. These efforts have strengthened relationships and enhanced service delivery in remote and rural areas.

D. Mental Health and Substance Use

- The toxic drug crisis has significantly impacted clients, many of whom experience concurrent disorders. Member agencies have implemented trauma-informed care and culturally sensitive interventions to address these dual diagnoses. These efforts have reduced emergency healthcare reliance and improved client stability, reflecting a more holistic, cost-effective approach to care.

3. 2023-2024 Programs and Services

The Brain Injury Alliance funded a total of **50 programs** across its 13 member agencies, delivering diverse and impactful services. These programs addressed immediate survival needs, rehabilitation, and community engagement, reflecting the Alliance’s holistic approach to brain injury support.

Supported 5,707 clients through case management services, connecting them to vital resources such as medical care, housing, and education.

Types of Services Funded:

- **One-to-One Services:** Personalized client support, including case management, navigation, and life skills coaching.
- **Group Services:** Support, educational workshops, and life skills development.
- **Specialty Services:** Professional counselling, employment assistance, and correctional system support.
- **Community Programs:** Education and injury prevention initiatives aimed at reducing the incidence of brain injuries and raising community awareness.

The total cost per client for case management and navigation programs averaged \$209 per year, reflecting efficient use of resources facilitated by stable funding.

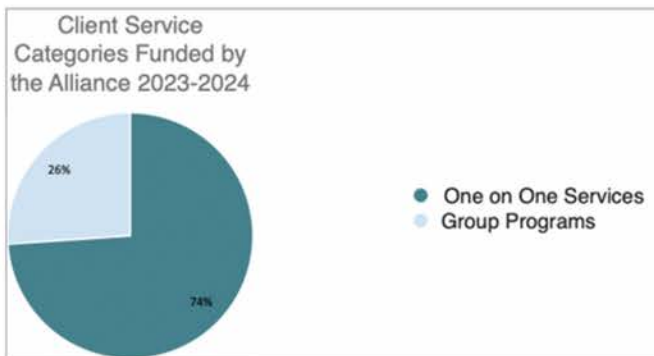
Key Services and Program Metrics Summary

Service Category	Clients Served	Average Cost per Client
Overall	5,707	\$209
One-toOne	3,106	\$624
Groups	1,393	\$388
Counseling	158	\$341
Employment Assistance	172	\$153
Community Education and Injury Prevention	47,168	\$4

One-to-One Services

One-to-one services are critical for providing individualized support, and they include case management, navigation, and life skills coaching.

- Supported **3,106 clients** through case management services, connecting them to vital resources such as medical care, housing, and education.
- Key Metric:** The total cost per client for case management and navigation programs averaged **\$624 per year**, reflecting efficient use of resources facilitated by stable funding.



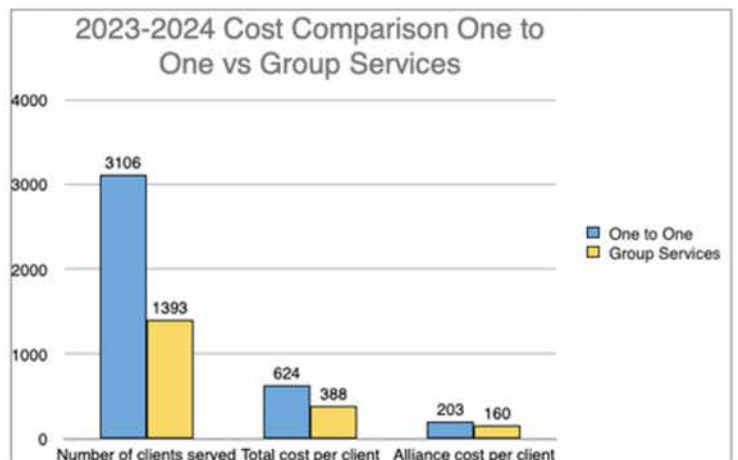
Group Services

Group services foster community connections and provide collective learning opportunities essential for long-term recovery and social integration.

- Engaged **1393 clients** in peer-led support groups. Agencies like FVBIA and Nanaimo Brain Injury Society noted that peer support contributed to a **20% reduction in emergency healthcare** use among regular participants.
- Key Metric:** The cost per participant in peer support groups averaged **\$388**, making it one of the most efficient services in terms of cost per client.

"[Clients] have indicated that being involved with KBIA is the highlight of their week, and the outreach workers and myself really appreciate hearing those positive responses."
 - Kootenay Brain Injury Association

"By the end of the program, 82% of clients reported a decrease in feelings of isolation, and 85% reported increased social interactions, exceeding our targets and significantly improving well-being."
 - Victoria Brain Injury Society



Specialty Services

Specialty services address targeted client needs, offering professional support that goes beyond general rehabilitation.

A. Employment Assistance:

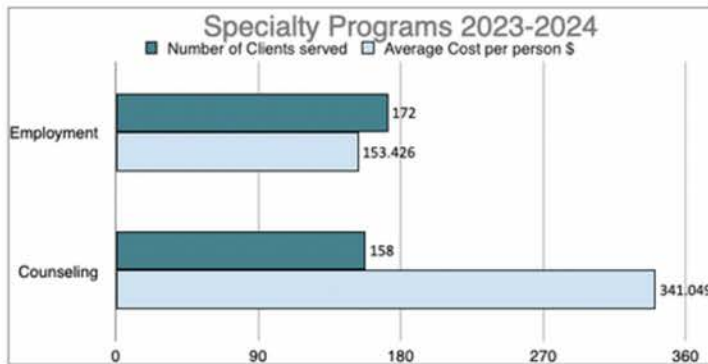
- Assisted **158 clients** in securing employment and maintaining job stability.
- Key Metric:** The cost per client for employment services was **\$153**, underscoring the investment in fostering long-term independence.

B. counselling:

- Delivered professional counselling services to **158 clients**. counselling focused on trauma recovery and mental health management, with **78% of clients reporting improved emotional well-being** after sessions.
- Key Metric:** The average cost per client for counselling services was **\$341**, reflecting the intensive, individualized nature of these interventions.

C. Corrections Support:

- Provided interventions for **461 clients** involved with the criminal justice system, reducing recidivism and supporting reintegration.



Community Programs

Community education and injury prevention initiatives play a crucial role in reducing the incidence of brain injuries and raising public awareness.

Education and Injury Prevention Initiatives:

- Engaged over **47,168 community members** through educational workshops and school-based injury prevention sessions.
- Key Metric:** The Alliance invested **\$4 per participant** in these community education efforts, making it an efficient and impactful program area.

“Over the past year, our Community Education and Injury Prevention programs have experienced remarkable growth and expansion, particularly during the summer months. The NBIA has successfully extended its reach beyond our core service areas, delivering valuable services to a broader range of communities.”
- Northern Brain Injury Association

4. Financial Summary

Use of Funds: Allocation by Category

The Brain Injury Alliance’s financial management focuses on efficient fund allocation to maximize program impact while maintaining sustainability. In 2023-2024, funds were distributed across four primary categories:

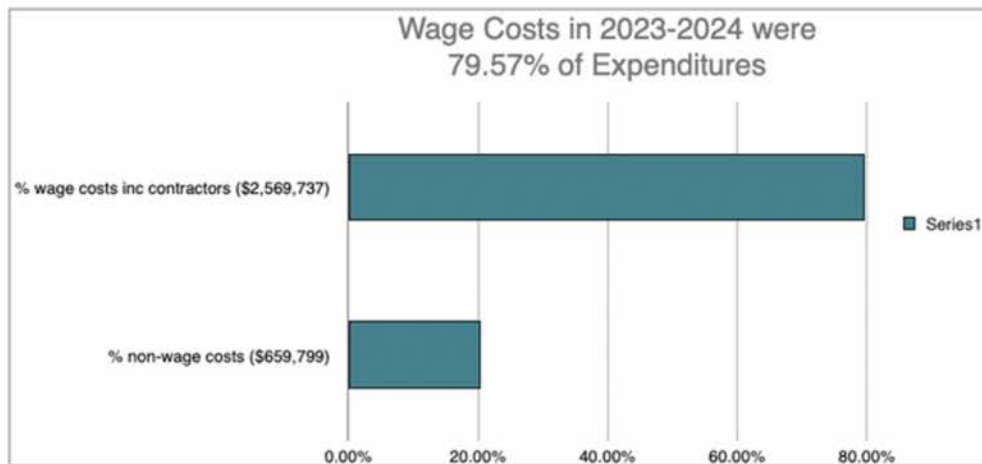
- Investment in personnel was crucial for the implementation of trauma-informed and culturally sensitive training for **140 staff members**, ensuring program quality and client satisfaction.

A. Personnel:

- A significant portion of funding was allocated to **personnel costs**, which included wages for staff, contractors, and program facilitators. Personnel expenses accounted for 79% of total expenditures, ensuring that services were staffed with qualified professionals, such as case managers, counselors, and life skills coaches.

B. Program Costs:

- 19%** of funds were dedicated to direct program costs, covering materials, transportation, and client support services. This funding supported essential components like housing support materials, life skills development kits, and peer group activities.



"100% of our ABI and stroke volunteers are feeling a sense of purpose by volunteering. They assist with organizing events, making friendly phone calls to other survivors and caregivers, doing community presentations, and paying friendly visits to the hospital rehab ward together with a staff person."

- South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society

5. Impact Assessment

Health and Justice System Savings

The Brain Injury Alliance's funding of programs has significantly contributed to reducing the burden on both the healthcare and criminal justice systems. Through effective interventions and preventive measures, member agencies have helped decrease hospital admissions, emergency visits, and justice system involvement for clients.

A. Reductions in Hospital Admissions and Emergency Visits:

- **Hospital Admissions:** Across all member organizations, interventions resulted in **2,553 avoided hospital admissions** during the 2023-2024 period. This reduction is linked to proactive health management and timely support provided through one-to-one and group services.

B. Decrease in Criminal Justice Involvement:

- Member agencies supported clients with justice system involvement, resulting in **461 interventions that reduced justice system involvement**. Members specifically provided case management for clients with criminal records, helping individuals avoid further interactions with the justice system through structured support plans.

"We observed a significant reduction in the number of visits to 'critical care' medical services by our clients, indicating effective diversion from the ER and into our established urban clinics, reducing strain on the acute healthcare system".
- BrainTrust Canada

Analysis

The cost savings from these reductions are substantial. By reducing hospital admissions and emergency visits, the Alliance saved significant healthcare costs. Justice system savings were also notable, as avoiding criminal justice involvement reduces direct costs related to law enforcement and court systems while also lowering long-term expenses associated with incarceration.

"Positively the best overall experience of my life being here. I haven't needed health services like counselling since participating in the group sessions."
- Nanaimo Brain Injury Society

Employment and Housing Outcomes

A critical focus for the Alliance's programs is stabilizing clients' lives through employment and housing support, two areas that directly impact clients' independence and long-term well-being.

A. Employment Outcomes:

- **153 clients** gained employment through employment assistance programs offered by member organizations. These programs focused on job readiness, skill development, and placement support.
- Of those employed, **182 clients** maintained their jobs throughout the year, demonstrating the effectiveness of ongoing support in ensuring job stability and financial independence.

"Housing issues remain substantial and we have seen a number of people come to us with brain injuries who are only interested in housing help."
- Kamloops Brain Injury Association

B. Housing Stability:

- Housing programs assisted clients facing precarious housing conditions, enabling **259 clients** to maintain stable housing and **123 clients** to secure new housing during the year. Member agencies played vital roles in this success, leveraging partnerships with local housing authorities.

"100% of responding participants expressed that the employment program is meeting their needs, with 75% reporting a significant increase in confidence."
- Comox Valley Head Injury Society

Analysis

The employment and housing outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of the Alliance's integrated support model. By focusing on these key areas, member agencies help clients achieve greater independence, reducing long-term dependency on government assistance and other social services. Securing employment and stable housing has broader economic and social benefits, including improved mental health outcomes, reduced emergency service use, and enhanced community integration.

Crisis Interventions

The Brain Injury Alliance's members have effectively minimized the use of crisis services through proactive case management and support strategies, leading to a measurable decrease in the need for emergency and crisis services.

A. Reduced Reliance on Crisis Services:

- **2,553 healthcare interactions** were avoided through navigation and case management services that provided clients with early support upon discharge from hospital care.
- Crisis interventions through peer support and trauma-informed case management reduced emergency calls and crisis center admissions for clients. Member agencies highlighted their coordinated, responsive approaches, which allowed them to de-escalate situations before they escalated to crises.

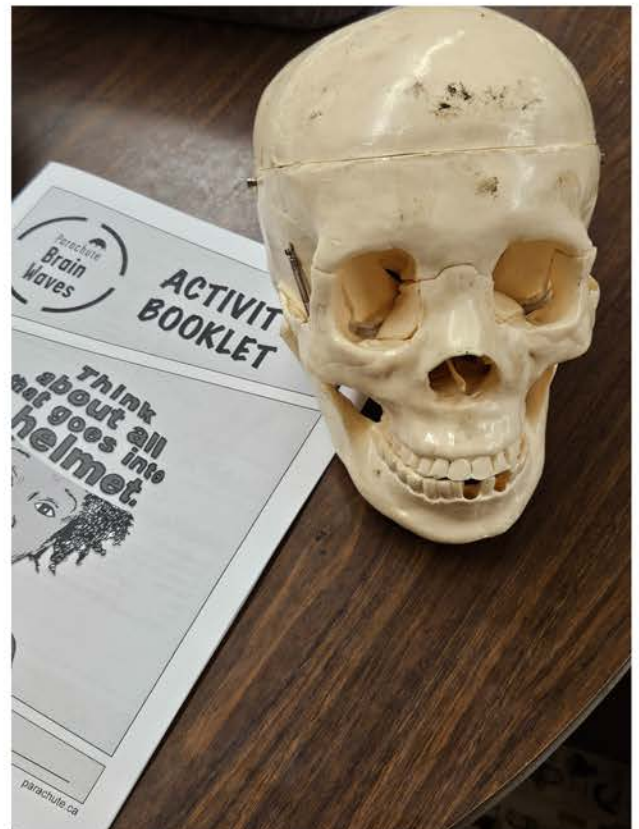
B. Efficiency in Case Management:

- The proactive, comprehensive approach has allowed member agencies to manage larger caseloads while improving service outcomes. The average cost per crisis intervention was **\$263**, significantly lower than the cost of a single emergency room visit, highlighting the cost-effectiveness of early and proactive interventions.

55 % of Participants have reported that at least 2 tools learned has enhanced their quality of life.
- Campbell River Head Injury Support Society

Analysis

By reducing crisis service reliance, Alliance member agencies have not only provided more stable and continuous support for clients but also realized significant cost savings for the healthcare system. Early interventions have proven to be both effective and economically advantageous, ensuring that resources are used efficiently.



Community Reach

Community education and prevention programs are central to the Alliance's strategy for reducing the incidence of brain injuries and raising awareness about brain injury prevention.

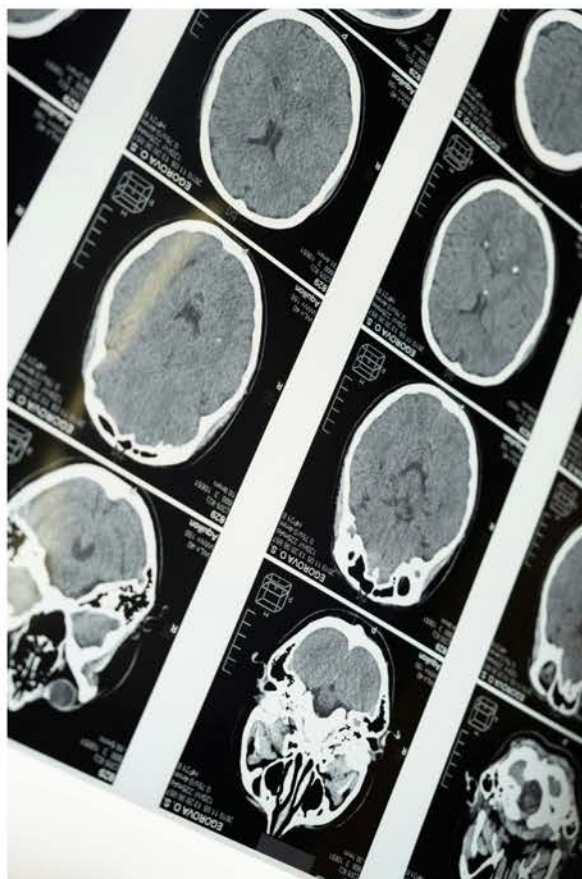
A. Community Education and Injury Prevention Initiatives:

- **47,168 community members** were engaged through educational workshops, including school-based injury prevention sessions led by agencies. These workshops covered topics like helmet safety, concussion management, and strategies to prevent brain injuries from accidents and sports.

Analysis

Community education programs not only enhance public safety but also create long-term savings by reducing the need for intensive brain injury rehabilitation services. The cost per community member served in these programs was \$4, reflecting a highly efficient and scalable model for prevention.

“A young man who experienced limited mobility in his gait and movements after injury, decreased hand/eye coordination, very slow and halted movements as well as decreases in strength and stamina. He participates in all three of our physical literacy programs and there have been improvements noted across the board. This young man rarely shuffles and trips any longer, his ability to serve the ping pong and play has drastically increased (to the point that many other members line up to play against him) and that his strength, stamina and coordination improvement are also seen in our yoga classes.”
- Prince George Brain Injured Group



6. Capacity Building and Training

Trauma-Informed Practices

Member organizations across British Columbia participated in trauma-informed care workshops aimed at equipping staff with strategies to better support clients experiencing crisis or long-term psychological effects from brain injuries. Key highlights include:

- Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association: Hosted 12 in-person sessions led by Indigenous Elders, exploring topics such as intergenerational trauma and traditional healing practices. These sessions deepened staff understanding of culturally sensitive trauma care.
- Nanaimo Brain Injury Society: Conducted a one-day interactive workshop focusing on building a "Culture of Strength" through trauma-informed approaches, which enhanced both staff confidence and client engagement.
- Northern Brain Injury Association: Organized a two-day event combining trauma-informed care with self-care strategies, ensuring staff could support clients while maintaining their well-being.

Cultural Competency and Indigenous Awareness

Building cultural competency remained a central theme for many training initiatives. Several agencies embraced programs designed to foster Indigenous allyship and understanding:

- Victoria Brain Injury Society: Offered San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training, focusing on the history and ongoing impacts of colonization and strategies for creating equitable healthcare environments.
- Kamloops Brain Injury Association: Partnered with a local consultant to host workshops on cultural humility, emphasizing relationship-building with Indigenous and immigrant communities.

Impact of Training Programs

1. **Enhanced Service Delivery:** Staff across member agencies report increased confidence and competency in handling complex client needs.
2. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Greater awareness and integration of Indigenous practices and trauma-informed care approaches into daily operations.
3. **Team Cohesion and Growth:** Improved communication and reduced turnover, fostering stronger, more collaborative teams.

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

To address the increasing mental health needs of clients, member agencies invested in specialized training programs:

- Comox Valley Head Injury Society: Enrolled staff in the LivingWorks Start program, which provides an interactive guide to suicide prevention, equipping participants with practical skills to support at-risk individuals.
- Prince George Brain Injured Group: Delivered in-person training on mental health and brain injury intersections, offering actionable strategies for staff to navigate complex client situations.
- Campbell River Head Injury Support Society: Completed online mental health first aid courses, enhancing the team's ability to recognize and respond to common mental health conditions.

Communication and Conflict Resolution

Several member organizations focused on building communication skills to improve team dynamics and client interactions:

- BrainTrust Canada: Implemented the Compassionate Communication workshop, rooted in Indigenous approaches to non-violent communication. This training provided tools for empathy, boundary-setting, and emotional responsibility.
- Powell River Brain Injury Society: Offered a workshop on effective communication strategies within diverse team environments, ensuring staff could handle challenging conversations with sensitivity and professionalism.

Crisis Intervention and Emergency Response

Agencies also emphasized training in crisis intervention to prepare staff for urgent client situations:

- South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society: Partnered with Medi-Pro First Aid to provide staff with high-quality emergency response training tailored to brain injury contexts.
- Victoria Brain Injury Society: Organized crisis intervention skills workshops, equipping staff with tools to de-escalate situations and create actionable short-term coping plans for clients.

Celebrating 10 Years of the Brain Injury Alliance

A Decade of Service: Reflection on Key Achievements Since the Organization's Founding in 2014

Since its founding in 2014, the Brain Injury Alliance has been a pillar of support for thousands of British Columbians living with the effects of acquired brain injuries. Over the past decade, the Alliance has played a vital role in building a stable network of brain injury services across the province. What began as a response to the urgent need for more robust, localized brain injury services has grown into a province-wide initiative that has touched the lives of thousands of individuals with brain injuries and their families in BC.

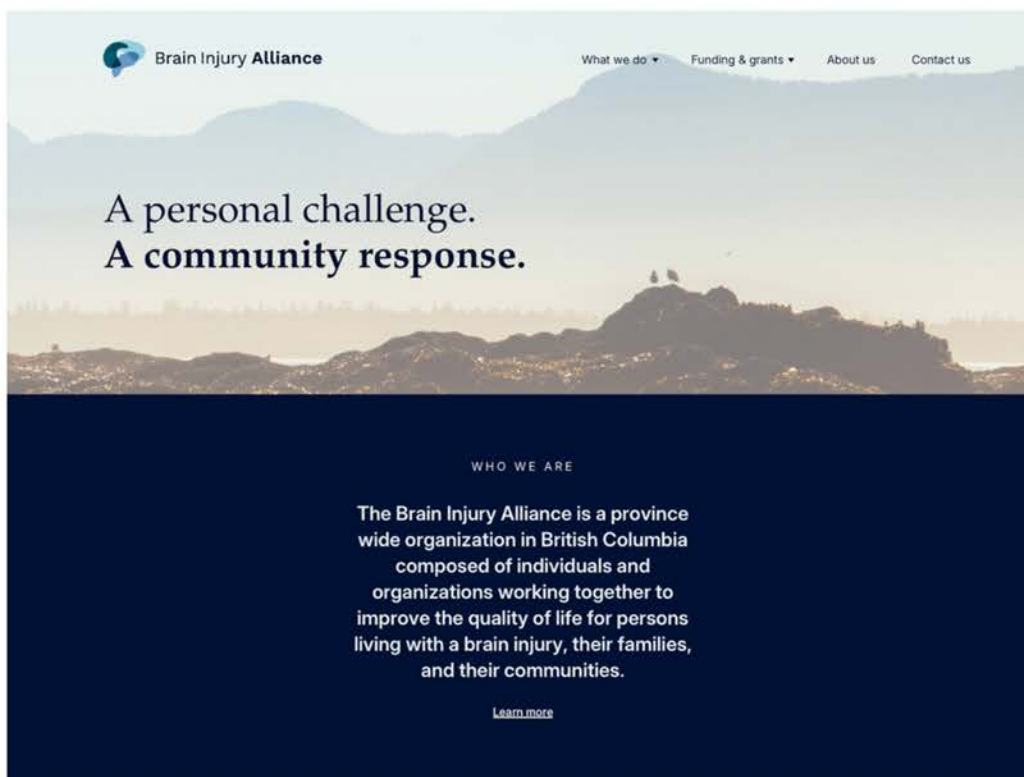
This restructuring has improved FVBIA's ability to meet at least some of the needs of those individuals that aren't eligible for our programs. Requests for support, brain injury information and direction to other services has increased over the past year, particularly from individuals outside of FVBIA's catchment area. (Vancouver, Surrey, North Vancouver etc.).
- Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association

Key achievements include:

- **Financial Support:** The Alliance has administered millions in provincial funds to help sustain 13 non-profit member organizations, providing them with needed resources to continue delivering services to local communities.
- **Service Expansion:** The number of brain injury survivors served by Alliance Member agencies each year has steadily increased, with more than 4,000 individuals benefiting from one-on-one services, life skills programs, group sessions, and counselling in 2024 alone.
- **Impact on Public Systems:** By funding programs that focus on prevention, rehabilitation, and recovery, the Alliance has helped reduce client involvement in the health and justice systems, cutting down on emergency room visits and court appearances.
- **Focus on Complex Needs:** In recent years, the Alliance has expanded its focus to better support individuals with concurrent mental health, substance use issues, and housing instability, aligning its services with provincial priorities and the evolving needs of its clients.

Timeline of Major Milestones:

- **2014:** Founding of the Brain Injury Alliance. The Alliance is established to provide support and funding to non-profit brain injury organizations throughout BC.
- **2015:** The Brain Injury Fund is launched with \$3 million in provincial funding, aimed at stabilizing and expanding services for brain injury survivors across BC.
- **2017:** Introduction of the Dr. Gur Singh Memorial Education Fund, offering grants to brain injury survivors for educational and employment opportunities.
- **2020:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Alliance and its member organizations adapt by expanding virtual services, allowing survivors to access vital support online. Despite the challenges, service delivery remains uninterrupted.
- **2022:** Premier David Eby announces a three-year funding increase for the Alliance, ensuring stability for brain injury societies and expanding services to individuals with complex needs, including mental health and substance use disorders.
- **2024:** The Alliance celebrates 10 years of service, having supported thousands of individuals, and focuses on expanding services to underserved communities, including Indigenous populations and those affected by the housing crisis. The Alliance hired an Executive Director to ensure success of the program and launched a new brand.



The screenshot shows the Brain Injury Alliance website homepage. At the top left is the logo and name "Brain Injury Alliance". To the right are navigation links: "What we do", "Funding & grants", "About us", and "Contact us". The main content area features a background image of a cityscape with mountains. The text reads: "A personal challenge. A community response." Below this is a dark blue section with the heading "WHO WE ARE" and the following text: "The Brain Injury Alliance is a province wide organization in British Columbia composed of individuals and organizations working together to improve the quality of life for persons living with a brain injury, their families, and their communities." At the bottom of this section is a "Learn more" link.

7. Recommendations and Calls to Action

For the Provincial Government: Enhancing Support

- **Expand Housing Programs:** Increase funding for long-term supportive housing tailored to brain injury survivors, integrating mental health and addiction support to address rising homelessness.
- **Integrate Mental Health and Substance Use Services:** Develop programs combining brain injury rehabilitation with mental health and substance use treatment to improve outcomes for individuals with complex needs.
- **Improve Rural and Remote Access:** Invest in mobile health units and telehealth services, ensuring equitable access to culturally safe care for rural and Indigenous communities.

As the Brain Injury Alliance moves into its second decade, the organization is committed to further expanding its reach and impact:

- Increasing Outreach to Underserved Communities
- Expanding Specialized Services
- Data-Driven Improvements
- Sustainability and Growth

For Member Organizations: Service Expansion and Innovation

- **Boost Employment Programs:** Expand vocational training and job placement initiatives with peer mentorship and ongoing support to enhance employment stability.
- **Adopt Hybrid Service Models:** Leverage digital and in-person programs to increase reach, particularly for rural clients, while maintaining cost-effectiveness.
- **Enhance Cultural Relevance:** Collaborate with Indigenous communities to co-develop culturally tailored programs and increase staff training in cultural competency.

For the Community: Supporting Brain Injury Survivors

- **Volunteer and Mentor:** Join peer support programs to reduce isolation and improve outcomes for survivors.
- **Promote Injury Prevention:** Advocate for and participate in safety campaigns to raise awareness about helmet use, substance safety, and injury prevention.
- **Fundraise and Donate:** Support local brain injury organizations through donations and events, directly enhancing programs like housing assistance and life skills training.

“Clients who frequent the centre and access services on a regular basis know our team and recommend our peer support to new and current clients alike.”
- Powell River Brain Injury Society

Acknowledgments

Member Organizations

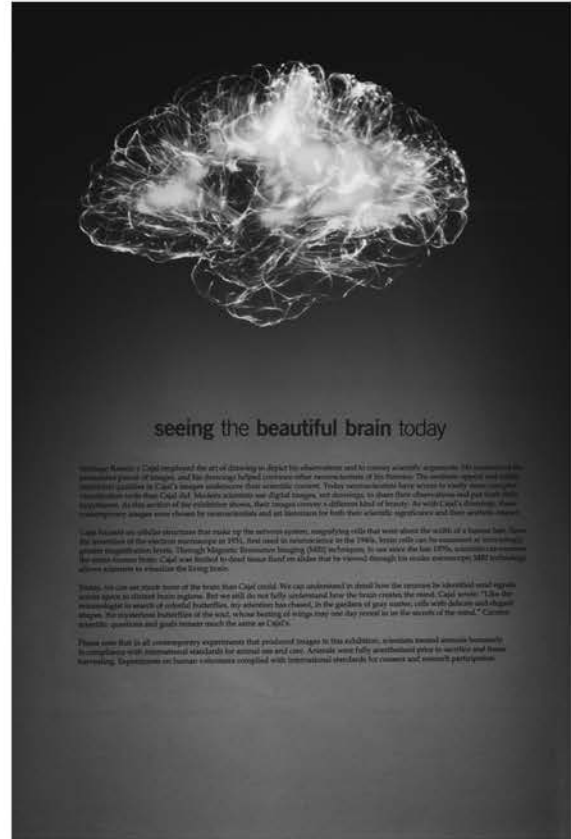
The Brain Injury Alliance is proud to work alongside 13 dedicated non-profit brain injury organizations across British Columbia. Each organization plays a vital role in providing community-based services to individuals living with acquired brain injuries, helping them lead more independent and fulfilling lives:

- **BrainTrust Canada**, based in Kelowna, BrainTrust Canada provides brain injury prevention, education, and rehabilitation services for survivors and their families. www.braintrustcanada.com
- **Campbell River Head Injury Support Society**, serving the Campbell River area, this society offers counselling, life skills, and peer support to individuals recovering from brain injury. www.crhis.ca
- **Comox Valley Head Injury Society**, this society offers support programs, wellness activities, and peer support services to brain injury survivors in the Comox Valley area. <http://www.cvhis.org>
- **Cowichan Valley Brain Injury Society**, this society provides critical support services, including advocacy and rehabilitation, to brain injury survivors in the Cowichan Valley. www.cvbis.ca
- **Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association**, serving the Fraser Valley, this organization provides case management, peer support, and education for brain injury survivors and their families. www.fvbia.org
- **Kamloops Brain Injury Association**, located in Kamloops, this association offers services including life skills, counselling, and group programs to help brain injury survivors integrate back into the community. www.kbia.ca
- **Kootenay Brain Injury Association**, this organization supports survivors throughout the Kootenays by offering one-on-one case management, peer support, and community reintegration services. www.kootenaybia.ca
- **Nanaimo Brain Injury Society**, providing life skills, group programs, and employment services, this society helps survivors in Nanaimo navigate life post-injury. www.nbis.ca
- **Northern Brain Injury Association**, serving the northern regions of BC, this association offers support and education for survivors and their families in remote and rural communities. www.nbia.ca
- **Powell River Brain Injury Society**, located in Powell River, this society provides a range of services including peer support, rehabilitation programs, and life skills training. www.braininjurysociety.com
- **Prince George Brain Injured Group**, offering a variety of services such as case management, educational and supportive programs and employment services, this organization supports brain injury survivors in Prince George. www.pgbig.ca
- **South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society**, this society provides support groups, counselling, and life skills programs to survivors in the South Okanagan region. www.sosbis.com
- **Victoria Brain Injury Society**, based in Victoria, this organization helps survivors with case management, peer support, and life skills education to promote recovery and independence. www.vbis.ca

Funding Partners

The Brain Injury Alliance would like to extend its deepest gratitude to the Province of British Columbia who has made this work possible. Continued support ensures that brain injury survivors across British Columbia have access to the vital services they need.

We are also grateful for the support towards our members from private donors, foundations, and local communities whose contributions have been instrumental in enhancing the scope and quality of brain injury services across British Columbia. Your generosity has directly impacted the lives of thousands, and we look forward to continuing this journey together.



Land Acknowledgement

The Brain Injury Alliance recognizes the territories of First Nations around B.C. and is grateful to carry out our work on these lands.

Appendix A: Stories of Community Brain Injury Societies

BrainTrust Canada

Devon's life was irrevocably altered at the age of 20 when he sustained the first of over a dozen traumatic brain injuries after being assaulted with a pistol. This brutal introduction to a series of injuries that included a subsequent assault with a baseball bat left him in a coma for four months and set the stage for years of profound challenges.

Following these traumatic events, Devon experienced extreme emotional fluctuations and significant memory loss, which he describes vividly: "I began having intense highs and lows; I'd be very happy one moment and very angry the next. I couldn't remember anything." These cognitive and emotional struggles led to years of homelessness and addiction, culminating in a suicide attempt. Devon has been deemed "too complex" for health authority brain injury services.

It was at this critical juncture that Devon found BrainTrust Canada, an organization that marked a turning point in his life. BrainTrust Canada offered him something invaluable—understanding and acceptance without judgment. For the first time, Devon was able to comprehend the extent of his injuries and accept that the drastic changes in his life were not his fault. "That knowing changed everything," he recalls. With the support of BrainTrust, he started meeting with a support worker twice a week, obtained identification, secured disability funding, and found affordable housing.

Devon's journey has not been without its complications. His interactions with law enforcement have been challenging, and in 2020, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia, a condition deemed "too complex" for conventional brain injury health services. Yet again, BrainTrust Canada stood as his steadfast ally when no other organization would. "Even when I was in jail, they still supported me with weekly calls and video sessions, it helped me control my moods and avoid issues".

BrainTrust has helped Devon navigate and overcome the criminal justice system and, for the first time in 20 years, Devon is no longer a part of it. They also connected him to forensic mental health services, where he now meets with a team of professionals dedicated to helping him manage his mental health outcomes.

Despite these hurdles, Devon has made remarkable strides. He has returned to school, embarked on a career in songwriting and rap, and held several jobs in construction. His need for support from BrainTrust has evolved from twice weekly to sometimes just once a month, but the knowledge that they are always there for him provides a continuous source of comfort and stability.

Devon's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the critical role of tailored, barrier free support services in recovery from traumatic brain injuries. "Knowing that my file is there and they understand and accept me, makes me feel human again," he shares, a statement that underscores the transformation impact of BrainTrust Canada was able to have on his life, thanks to the funding of the Province and BC Brain Injury Alliance. Devon's journey is not only a personal victory but also a powerful reminder of the importance of compassion and support in overcoming life's most daunting challenges.

Comox Valley Head Injury Society

Sarah is a survivor that has been working under our Volunteer Incentive Program guiding an art program with peers: "It has been a very good experience and I look forward to it every week. I love the program and being able to connect with people in art when I otherwise wouldn't have. Seeing other survivors enjoying the experience is great and helps my confidence! It also helps me pay for things like bills and rent that I would not have been able to. I feel lucky to be part of the program."

Fraser Valley Brain Injury Society

FVBIA and BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) teamed up to present Brain Waves from Parachute Canada in several Chilliwack schools in May 2024. Brain Waves is a fun and educational program for students in Grades 4 to 6. Students learn about the structure and function of the nervous system through experiments and interactive lessons, and about the importance of protecting the brain and spinal cord from injury.

The Fraser Valley Brain Waves Program is a science lesson taught by trained staff from the BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU). This project team is working closely with Indigenous consultants to ensure the content of the program is culturally relevant for schools with a higher proportion of Indigenous students. Monthly meetings were held to review and update materials, and discuss logistics for the planned Spring 2024 presentations. The project team engaged an Indigenous consultant to review the Brain Waves resources, including the slide show presentation, activity booklet, interactive activities, and the presentation layout. All materials were presented to the consultant in a discussion formation. Feedback was received both through the discussions and written feedback, and updates to the resources have been made accordingly.

Schools in the Chilliwack area were made aware of the partnership between the Fraser Valley Brain Injury Association and the Brain Waves Program through an electronic poster that was circulated in the community, with a few selected schools contacted directly via email or phone. Reaching approximately 235 students, 5 presentations, lasting up to two hours divided into 30-minute segments alternating between slide presentations and interactive activities were provided. Student engagement was high, with many students eagerly participating and sharing answers. Popular props and demonstrations included an egg-drop helmet demo, the Jell-O brain, and presenting a model of a human skull.

Learn more at: parachute.ca/en/program/brainwaves/ Brain Waves Project is funded by Brain Injury Alliance www.braininjuryalliance.ca/

Kamloops Brain Injury Association

Franco's greatest joy is making other people smile. He has had a brain injury for 48 years and has seen BC before the Alliance started supporting survivors and after. In Kamloops, the Alliance supports our outreach and Franco loves to meet new survivors. His goal is to bring them into the association and make them smile, letting them know that they are part of a family.

Franco is passionate volunteer for our Education program. The Alliance "gives us the ammunition to keep going out to the schools." He states "If we could go to the schools every day from September to June, I would be there! Within five minutes, the kids know I am going to be the guy laughing and having fun with them. But just because you have a brain injury, you can still be number one. And there is help out there, in more ways than you think. Not financial, but being treated as a human being. And that is important."

"When I ask the kids if they think I have a brain injury, most of them say no. But I tell them I do and it is something that is not seen. Not too many people will pass the word along, but we need to be part of things and continue." Most kids are in awe when they hear how long he has been living with the brain injury.

Kootenay Brain Injury Association

Allan was in need of transportation, social connections and the support with everyday life needs.

The support plan was a combined effort, we knew that depression was in the for front. We were able to use alliance funding to support taking Allan to the local SPCA for him to socialize the kittens. The smile that we see on Allan's face during and after taking him there is truly heart warming.

We are also able to provide transportation for Allan to attend his scheduled Dr visits and his physio therapy pool sessions to assist with mobility.

Like many other individuals affected by ABI, Allan lives beneath the poverty line, post injury. After each weekly Group Session in Allan's community, the staff drops off a meal or two from lunch we provide or cook. Alliance funding fills the many gaps for many individuals who are ineligible or who are immobile and at risk for a variety of reasons.

Sadly Allan passed away Spring of 2024 surrounded by current and past outreach staff who supported him through his journey. Our groups remember him in our movement classes where they have names a specific movement, 'The AI'.

Nanaimo Brain Injury Society

As a Peer Support Volunteer with Nanaimo Brain Injury Society, I have been incredibly fortunate to be a part of an encouraging and compassionate community built on our shared experience of a brain injury. I first began attending the Social Program at NBIS following my brain injury. Because of the compassionate peer support I received, I felt compelled to become a peer volunteer myself. At 22 years of age, I felt my life flip upside-down and inside-out with a brain injury. With the Peer Support Program and the community at NBIS, I have been able to find a way out and up. Being able to support, share a laugh, offer a listening ear, provide encouragement, and be someone others can lean on has given me so much more than I could even hope to give in return. Whether volunteering in the NBIS office, with the Social Program, Virtual Peer Support, Educational events, or on the Rehabilitation Unit at NRGH, I am incredibly fortunate for the positivity that I have found despite the otherwise negative event of a Brain Injury.

Northern Brain Injury Association

Bulkley Valley Client Success Story: NBIA Case Managers were able to assist a client in successfully being approved for a Persons with Disability designation. By working closely with the client's family physician and the local Friendship Center our client felt supported and safe. The application for PWD can be tremendously challenging to complete for anyone, and persons with acquired brain injury often have difficulties with completing this application. The application can take several weeks to fill in, and often months to be processed, so NBIA staff stayed connected to the client often and found ways to support them during the whole process.

2023-24 Success Story: NBIA Case Manager was able to assist a client from a culturally appropriate, and trauma informed centered approach. Client has severe flooding and perseveration issues that, (in his words), prevent him from being able to meet for longer than a few minutes and leave him frustrated feeling like he can't move forward or get anything done successfully in appointments as he "shuts down within minutes from overwhelming emotions and thoughts". We were able to talk about the 7Rs and coach through them over 4 weeks. Client still having issues with flooding.

NBIA staff was able to research and find a video recording of sound - from his original Clan House and his First Nation (his words) childhood land, home, territory and area he grew up on, which had current members of his house clan in full regalia, performing a drum circle, chanting/ singing and a prayer. Client and staff watched and then did a breathing and mindfulness mediation session for 5 minutes having client put his hand on his heart, closing his eyes, feel the drumbeats of his clan in time with his heartbeat and slow his breathing to match the rhythm of the drums with a 4 in, 4 hold, 4 out box breathing exercise. Client stated he felt so much calmer and will now be using this to help when he recognises, he is flooding and / or getting overwhelmed, he will retreat either physically or mentally and use this mediation to relax.

Client called and updated that he was successful at using this strategy 3 different times to be able to calmly say he just needed a minute, close his eyes, imagine the drums, his clan, his home, his connection to the earth and the creator, take a few minutes to breathe and then was able to resume the appointment without having to leave or start yelling and smacking his head.

Prince George Brain Injury Group

The Alliance funding has provided a vital financial base for the services we provide. As I have articulated in this final report, PG BIG faced significant short falls regarding staffing our Case Management team this year (2 unexpected departures - one in February and one in May). This provided us with challenges regarding service delivery on the Case Management side of things. It was imperative that we were able to act and pivot quickly to ensure members were supported. This meant a shift in how we served our members and moved towards enhancing our Groups Programs.

This shift provided our members with more and longer avenues to connect in sharing their lives and experiences which drastically decreased their levels of depression, isolation, anxiety and withdrawal:

"I have always liked coming to BIG but now with Ping Pong and games being longer, I don't have to choose between that and Yoga - I get to do both!" -Member

"My husband and I thought Introduction to Brain Injury was a great program but didn't know if we would be able to take it again. It was really beneficial that they are being run so frequently that I was able to take it another time which helped our injured son" -Family member

"I take Toolbox every second month when it available. Being able to take it over and over again so close together has really kept me on track" -Member

"I don't know where I would be without BIG...probably at home alone doing something stupid....but here I walk in and it is like home and I get to hug my family every day if I wanted to..." - Member

Powell River Brain Injury Society

Richard has been a client for twelve years, we have been through many ups and downs with him during this time. By no fault of his own, Richard recently suffered a pretty debilitating fall resulting in many injuries ranging from broken ribs, cracked lower back bones, and a brain bleed.

Through perseverance and with a lot of support from our entire team with the vast majority of that being done through our outreach worker, Richard was able to make a solid recovery. He certainly still struggles as these injuries will impact him life long, however he is back in the centre daily, connecting with his peers and living life all full of smiles.

Richard is a prideful man, it was tough for him to accept help but he recognizes now the importance of our role in his recovery. In the early days of recovery Richard was in hospital, but as his strength improved and wounds healed, he was transferred home. Due to many factors Richard was not able to get to the grocery store, or pharmacy for medication. Our team stepped up and provided full wrap around supports for him, ensuring his recovery would go as smooth as possible.

We are so pleased to have Richard back and in his seat at the table. He is one of the many regular clients we see five days a week and it just wasn't the same without him around.

South Okanagan Similkameen Brain Injury Society

The Funding from the Brain Injury Alliance helps our organization to say “Yes” to offering supports to people who often get turned away from services offered at our Health Authority. Many people in the interior region are required to fit inside an age limit of “under age 65” or who get turned away because they have an open ICBC or Worksafe claim. Some people get turned away because of their housing status if they are currently unhoused because it is challenging to keep appointments or know where to meet them in the community without an address.

The funding from the Brain Injury Alliance allows people to have direct access to a Case Manager who can act as an advocate to support people who are not able to self-advocate. We can also help them get reconsidered for funding support through the Health Authority once we can get them into some type of temporary or longer-term housing.

Many of our clients face challenges that are difficult to navigate at the best of times and even harder with a cognitive difficulty. Aspects of their injury such as mental fatigue or aphasia also complicate their ability to seek support.

Our team is familiar with the many challenges brain injury survivors face and can help them at the speed that they are able to proceed to reach their goals. We love the flexibility this funding allows us in meeting the unique needs of clients.

Victoria Brain Injury Society

Sarah is a brain injury survivor who greatly benefited from the VBIS Intake and Navigation program.

After a car accident left Sarah with a traumatic brain injury, she struggled with memory loss, confusion, and overwhelming fatigue. Feeling isolated and unsure of where to turn, she reached out to VBIS. Within 48 hours, Sarah was connected with an Intake Coordinator who listened to her story and guided her to the right resources. The program's quick response allowed Sarah to start her recovery journey without delay.

Through the program, Sarah accessed cognitive rehabilitation therapy, peer support groups, and counselling, which helped her regain confidence and rebuild her life. Today, Sarah is an advocate for others with brain injuries, encouraging them to seek the support that VBIS offers. Sarah's story is a powerful example of how timely and compassionate care can help survivors reclaim their lives and find hope for the future.



braininjuryalliance.ca