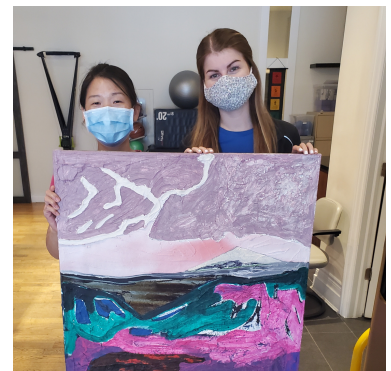


BIST

Brain Injury Society of Toronto

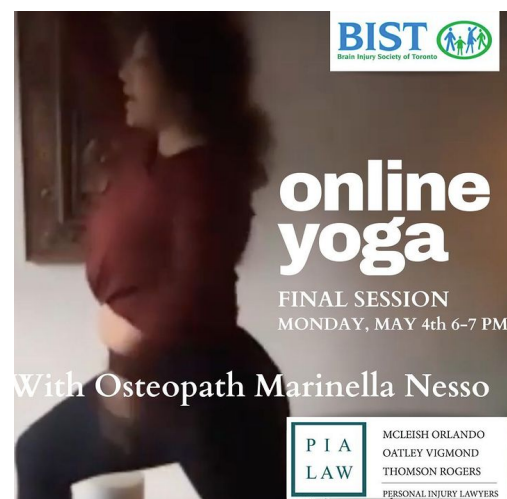
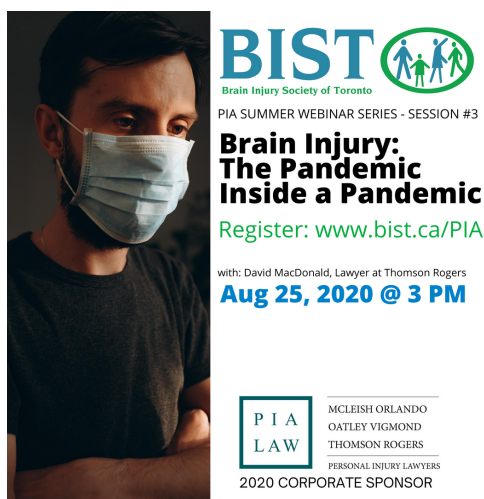


ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors ...	pg. 2
Executive Director's Report ...	pg. 4
Programs Report ...	pg. 12
BIST / OBIA Peer Support Program ...	pg. 16
Financial Report ...	pg. 17
Transitional Support Coordinator ...	pg. 18
Violence Impact Coordinator ...	pg. 19
Social Media Reach ...	pg. 21
Brain Injury Awareness Month Committee ...	pg. 26
Volunteer of the Year Winners ...	pg. 28
2020 Corporate Sponsors ...	pg. 29
Nix the Mix...	pg. 30
Birdies for Brain Injury ...	pg. 31
5K Heroes Run, Walk or Roll ...	pg. 32
Third Party Fundraisers ...	pg. 34
BIST Board of Directors ...	pg. 35



Promotion from some of BIST's online programs - tax clinic, PIA Webinar Series & yoga.

MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BIST BOARD



Jordan Assaraf

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto, I am pleased to offer this Message from the Chair in support of the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021.

This year's message is particularly sentimental for me, knowing that my seven years on the BIST Board is coming to an end. Over the past seven years, I have had the pleasure of watching BIST grow from a small, local organization which had won multiple awards in Ontario, to a larger organization, working alongside other brain injury organizations on a national scale. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of an organization that has had such a significant impact on both our community and on our members. Throughout my time with BIST, I have met with some extraordinary and inspiring members, including those who have shown remarkable resilience when sharing their stories, and those who have made incredible strides in their recovery process.

Although our ability to host in-person events has been limited by the global pandemic, BIST has been successful in its transition to virtual meetings and events for our members. Our ability to continue to offer a virtual platform for our members has allowed BIST to expand its presence in the community and has helped the organization reach individuals who may not have been reached before.

BIST has hosted many important events this year, but I wanted to highlight some events that were particularly meaningful to me. This year, BIST put on a Virtual Expressive Art Show, featuring the works of over 30 talented artists living with the effects of brain injury across North America. This art show had an incredible impact and left a lasting impression on me as it provided our members with a wonderful forum to tell their inspirational stories through art. BIST also hosted the annual Birdies for Brain Injury Golf Tournament, which had a great turnout and raised \$47,000. Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped make these events successful. We are looking forward to our upcoming annual Heroes 5k Run, Walk or Roll in October!

This year, BIST launched a functional support initiative for those living with brain injuries and who are involved in the criminal justice system: the Brain Injury Criminal Justice program. This program was shared with lawyers across Ontario, and gained traction with our Brain Injury partners Canada-wide. The program was designed to help vulnerable individuals with ABI increase their ability to access the justice system, which is a long-standing issue that BIST had decided to tackle.

I would like to extend a big thank you to Melissa Vigar, Katie Manikas, and all of the other volunteers who had donated their time to work on this much-needed initiative.

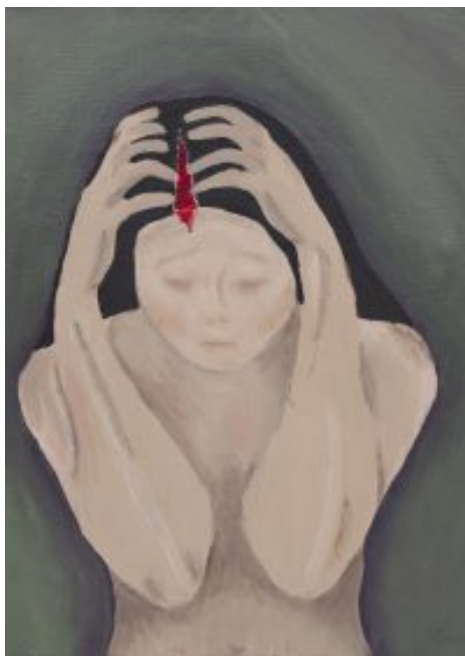
BIST prides itself on equity and being able to support each and every member in our community. In order to show our support for our diverse membership, BIST formally introduced various drop-in social events to help members connect. Some of these drop-in events included specific events for LGBTQ2S and for South Asian / East Indian Community members with brain injuries. Thank you to those volunteers who have put in considerable time and effort in establishing and running these wonderful events.

BIST's programming is funded by our generous corporate sponsors, third party fundraisers and the government grants secured by our hardworking team. Without this funding, BIST would be a small voice in a community that requires a loud presence. We want to thank our corporate sponsors for their continued financial support, which has allowed BIST to enhance the quality of life for people in the City of Toronto living with the effects of acquired brain injuries.

To conclude this report, I wanted to thank those Board Members who will be departing in their Board term, but who will continue to support BIST. Thank you to Erik Joffe and Rick Manesa for all of their hard work and dedication to this amazing organization. Although my time on the BIST Board is coming to an end, I am happy to report that Alex Piotti will be taking over as the Chair, and will be helping BIST grow beyond our expectations. I look forward to continuing to help support BIST, and to continue to be part of such a meaningful organization.

Thank you to our amazing employees and volunteers for everything you do for BIST. Wishing everyone the best and stay Safe and Healthy during this time.

SINCERELY, JORDAN ASSARAF



Selections from the 2021 Virtual Expressive Art Show (L-R), 'The Rats In My Brain' - Mel Wilkinson; 'Languishing' - Emily Noelle Causi; 'She's Ok' - Hilary

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



This past year has been the most challenging year in the history of BIST - as BIST staff and volunteers strive to meet the needs of our community within the restrictions placed on us by the Covid-19 Pandemic. BIST appreciates the hardwork of the staff and our Board of Directors who have adapted supports and services to best meet the needs of our members.

As I reflect on BIST and the projects of the past year, it is clear that there is much more work to be done, and BIST will remain on the front lines to provide direct support and advocacy to service those with brain injuries in our community.

Highlights of the achievements of BIST over this past year include:

LEAP (Legal Education Awareness Project)

Development of this project, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, began in January 2020. Led by myself, Communications Manager, Meri Perra and Project Consultant, Katie Manikas, the goal of the initiative was to create a web-based toolkit that the legal and ABI community could use to access information on brain injury and the justice system.

The Abijustice.org website was launched in November 2020 and was presented at the ABI Network Provincial Conference and the International Conference of Law Enforcement and Public Health with a combined total of 1037 attendees. BIST also presented at 21 virtual training sessions across the province for Legal Professionals, Support Workers, Caregivers and Persons with Lived Experience in which a total of 504 persons attended. The website was audited throughout the development process by 5 persons with lived experience to provide insights and revisions to address accessibility and understanding of the information.

Are you in **LEGAL TROUBLE?**
Do you live with the effects of
Brain Injury?
WWW.ABIJUSTICE.ORG

ABI JUSTICE
Your resource for
HELP & INFORMATION
The Law Foundation of Ontario
Project Funder
BIST



Chances are, you already represent clients who live with brain injury.
But they might not even know it.
One Ontario study found that men and women who sustained a brain injury were about 2.5 times more likely to be incarcerated.
Get the facts.
WWW.ABIJUSTICE.ORG

ABI JUSTICE
The **FIRST & ONLY** resource in **ONTARIO** which aims to decrease common barriers for persons with brain injury in the legal system.
The Law Foundation of Ontario
Project Funder
BIST



Are you in **LEGAL TROUBLE?**
Do you live with a **COGNITIVE CHALLENGE** such as
Brain Injury?
WWW.ABIJUSTICE.ORG

ABI JUSTICE
Your resource for
HELP & INFORMATION
The Law Foundation of Ontario
Project Funder
BIST



Social Media Promotion of www.abijustice.org

Additionally, feedback was provided through multiple sessions with various professionals which resulted in adapting the website to be accessible in 22 different languages. Within 5 months of its launch, abijustice.org had over 100,000 views and 18,000 downloads.

Abijustice.org continues to be promoted on multiple social media platforms such as facebook, instagram, Tik Tok and more reaching at a total of 370k. Moreover, abstracts have been submitted to present the toolkit to The Ontario Brain Injury Association Conference in November 2021 and The World Congress on Probation and Parole, recently rescheduled (due to Covid-19) for Fall 2022.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many have shared that this toolkit will be extremely beneficial in the work that they do and allows for a greater understanding of ABI. Individuals with lived experience have shared that the toolkit allows for self navigation and self-advocacy along with educating others on the challenges related to the invisible symptoms and struggles of ABI.

BIST would like to acknowledge and thank contributors to this project: Dr. Carolyn Lemsky (CHIRS), Catherine Wiseman Hakes (Speech-language Pathologist and Clinical Neuroscientist), Robert Ben (Thomson Rogers), Matthew Eaton-Kent (Barrister), Jordan Assaraf (Gluckstein), Erik Joffe (Neinstein) and John Groe (Accessible Daily Living).



Brain Injury & The Law

The Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of North Bay and Area (BIANBA) collaborated on a short-term catalyst grant funded by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation to provide functional support to individuals with brain injuries who are involved within the Criminal Justice system.

The partnership aimed to address challenges within accessibility of systems in both urban and rural areas. This program also aimed to increase education to legal professionals on the challenges and barriers faced by this population.

This project engaged, trained, and supervised Bachelor of Social Work students to deliver virtual support across Ontario. As part of the project, the students created a webinar training and manual for new students in both Toronto and North bay to provide support direction, tools and strategies for persons with ABI in their respective communities.

The webinar and manual are available for on-going training and is being provided to agencies who are interested in adopting any future programming. Moreover, materials created from this project will live on the www.bist.ca website and bianba.ca and both BIST and BIANBA will continue to host Social Work students while implementing support for persons with ABI involved in the justice system.

By March 2021 the following progress had been made:

- 4 service users provided with ABI Identification cards provided
- 6 service users assisted with referrals to Legal Aid
- 2 service users supported at court proceedings
- 2 service users assisted with transportation support
- 7 service users received organization, scheduling and reminders support.



BIST Virtual Tax Clinic

BIST offered a free virtual income tax assistance service in February and March of 2021 which served 26 people. Many were thankful for the service and said that it was very helpful in completing their taxes as the representatives were kind, patient, knowledgeable, and informative. Appointments were done virtually and many were pleased with their one-on-one experiences. 87% of service users found that BIST's income tax assistance services made the process more accessible to them.

Beyond Barriers

This project funded by Canada Service Corps Rising Youth Grant was spearheaded by Jasmine Sihra, who partnered with BIST to lead a group of youth to create a total of seven instructional videos for brain injury survivors on how to access technology such as: signing up and participating in virtual platforms, how to create a Google Drive, and create and use a gmail account. The program also launched a device drive which allowed BIST to collect and distribute used cell phones, laptops and tablets to members who could not afford to purchase them on their own. To learn more about this initiative and watch the videos visit www.bist.ca/technology-tips-and-tricks-video-series/

Brain Injury Community Connection

This project was funded by the United Way's Covid-19 Emergency Community Support Fund. BIST received two rounds of funding for this project, the first to support persons with ABI with Case Management services specifically around increasing access to technology, resources and programs to increase functionality, health and community access. The second grant, aimed to provide the same services, but specifically for victims of intimate partner violence.

The program ran from August 1, 2020 until March 31, 2021. In total the program supported 73 persons with ABI with 2,745 service interactions. The program allowed BIST staff to provide donated technology to BIST members along with 1:1 instruction on how to use and navigate virtual platforms, which increased access to: BIST programming and support groups, court appointments, education, medical supports, counselling and financial programs.

BIST staff increased access to food security by assisting with connecting to food banks, and food delivery services, navigating the new food bank systems, helping purchase and deliver groceries and acquiring and delivering donated grocery cards - or helping them use cards for online purchases.

BIST also partnered with a psychology clinic to provide 10 members free counselling sessions, with BIST staff providing the clients with the tech support needed to attend these virtual sessions.



United Way
Greater Toronto

BIST Ontario Brain Injury Awards of Excellence Nominee

BIST was nominated in 2020 for Community Brain Injury Association of the year which was presented by Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA) and PIA Law.

BIST members, Professionals and Community Partners took time to provide testimonies on BIST's supports and services. Through these testimonies, it was shared that BIST has helped them recover from concussions, brain haemorrhage, and the overall effects of brain injuries through individual and group support, community events, all while providing endless support and compassion. The program and services that are provided continue to vary and truly meet the many gaps and needs of the ABI community. Many expressed their gratitude for the staff members at BIST as they provide a strong level of dedication, respect, and compassion towards the community while providing excellent resources and value within their programs.



LIFE Skills Group

This is a grant that was approved by a private foundation to create a life skills group for youth dealing with the effects of ABI. Funding for this program was provided in December 2019, and a program was developed, and outreach efforts were made to schools across the city in early 2020.

Unfortunately, as the pandemic hit, this program had to be transferred online, and with the changes in school and difficulty connecting with the youth base, the numbers for the program were lower than expected.

The BIST team took what they learned from this experience and re-submitted a proposal to sustain current groups (moved to a virtual platform) and introduce new WRAP programs (Wellness, Recover, Action, Plan).

This grant was approved and allowed us to form these groups, including a group new to BIST, specifically for the LGBTQ2 community (a first of its kind in the province). Attendance at these groups has been highly successful in the first quarter (see Programs Report for further information).

Right to Basic Virtual Support

In the winter of 2021, BIST was proud to be part of an advocacy campaign with other provincial brain injury associations asking for a benefit that would allow those on OW and ODSP to afford basic internet – something we believe is a necessity especially during Pandemic times. Following meetings and email exchanges regarding this petition, on March 25, 2021 the motion was presented on the house floor by the incredible Dr. Jill Andrew, MPP.

You can watch the clip here: <https://bist.ca/projects-advocacy/past-advocacy-campaigns/>

Toronto Police Disability Community Consultative Committee

I am pleased to continue to be the Civilian Co-chair on this important committee comprised of community agencies that are working with the Toronto Police to spread awareness on the challenges people with various abilities face, especially when dealing with law enforcement and EMS.

The mandate of the committee is to assist Toronto Police Services in identifying, prioritizing and working towards solutions to issues in policing. During the course of the fiscal year, BIST provided input during monthly meetings on a variety of topics affecting our community, including how to improve access to the Vulnerable Persons Registry.

FOCUS Toronto

Isabelle Rivaletto, BIST's Violence Impact Coordinator, has joined two Toronto Focus tables, to provide brain injury information and representation at these groups. Focus Tables are a City of Toronto, United Way Toronto and Toronto Police Service initiative that aims to reduce risk, harm, crime, victimization and improve community resiliency and wellbeing.

Vulnerable Road Users Coalition

This coalition created by Bike Law Canada is working to advocate for penalties for drivers who violate any provision of the Highway Traffic Act that results in injury or death of a vulnerable road user. BIST is proud to lend its voice to this group and help advocate for safer streets and reduced risk of injury or death.

Toronto ABI Network Advisory Committee

BIST is proud to sit on this committee with inpatient and outpatient brain injury services across the City. The Toronto ABI Network is focused on supporting efficient transitions from hospital to community and improving knowledge of and access to publicly funded ABI community services.

Ontario Brain Injury Association Advisory Committee

I am thrilled to continuing co-chairing this committee made up of brain injury associations across the province.



Intimate Partner Violence & Traumatic Brain Injury National Summit

On November 17th and December 8th 2020, BIST presented at and participated in a National Summit on Brain Injury and Intimate Partner Violence. As one of the first agencies addressing the parallel needs of persons with ABI resulting from IPV, we were asked to submit a video presentation on our Intimate Partner Violence program.

The aim of the summit was to co-develop capabilities to identify relevant COVID-19 related impacts, needs, priorities, facilitators, and barriers to healthcare and support services, and to develop resources and principles for identification, clinical care and support for healthcare practitioners who treat women exposed to IPV and TBI. Clinicians who specialize in TBI, IPV and persons with Lived Experience contributed to the event.

Covid specific findings from this summit will be published in the Journal *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*.

Media

Part of BIST's mandate is to raise awareness on brain injury and the issues facing our community, as such, we engage with a variety of professionals and media outlets to advocate for our causes.

Media appearances this past fiscal year include:

Podcasts:

Gluckstein, Butters, A Truly Canadian Podcast, November 27, 2020

Oatley Vigmond's Exhibit A, August 25, 2020

I Love You, June 17, 2020 and July 2nd, 2020

Global TV, June 10, 2020 -Introducing Brain Injury Awareness Month and our Virtual Expressive Art Show

Toronto Star, September 26, 2020 "Technology Enhances Accessibility for People with Brain Injuries"

The Disability Network, December 23, 2020, The Unstoppable Tracy Schmitt Show

You can see all of BIST's media spotlights on www.bist.ca/about/media/



Jennifer Valentyne announces BIST Brain Injury Awareness Month Virtual Events on Global TV.

School Partnerships

BIST continues to welcome the opportunity to have students from a range of programs complete their placements at our organization. During this report period, BIST supervised students from the following programs:

- Ryerson University, Bachelor School of Social Work
- York Seneca Rehabilitation Program
- Wilfred Laurier University, Masters of Social Work
- Mohawk College, Brain Disorders Management Program
- Dalhousie University, Masters of Social Work
- George Brown, Social Service Worker Program
- Humber College, Social Service Worker Program

Throughout the upcoming year, BIST will continue to be committed to improving the lives of individuals with ABI and their families.

We are excited to pursue new opportunities, for advocacy, awareness, education and support. We are grateful for the support of our Board of Directors, our members and the community at large.

Feedback on our programs, services and supports are always welcomed.

SINCERELY, MELISSA VIGAR



PROGRAMS REPORT

**MELISSA FORREST, PROGRAMS & PEER SUPPORT COORDINATOR
& MADISON CHONG, PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

The 2020/2021 fiscal year saw several changes in programs and personnel.

Our incredible Programs Coordinator, Ryan Natale has waved a fond farewell as he moved on to new endeavors. The BIST team wants to acknowledge and thank Ryan for his work over the last year. His knowledge and efforts as the Program's Coordinator produced dynamic activities for our members. He sought to ensure BIST programs offered an inclusive and safe environment for each member, and quickly settled into a virtual service delivery model, including a well attended Men's Social Drop-In. He and his efforts will not soon be forgotten.

This year, the reoccurring COVID-19 lockdowns continued to bring changes to the way we deliver programs at BIST, as we moved primarily into a virtual service. This brought new challenges as barriers to access services became apparent.

BIST responded by developing the ABI Community Connections program over the summer of 2020. This program aimed to address the needs of our members by collecting donated phones, chargers, and cases. BIST was also able to purchase phone cards to ensure members had reliable connection to their phones and internet. This technology program allowed people to attend support groups, meetings, and appointments with service providers.

A few more changes developed, as new programs were introduced in 2020/2021. These programs have continued to grow and reach new members. The introduction of the South Asian and East Indian Community Social Drop-In group has seen a continued rise in interest, keeping to a small number of members engaged, while promoting a safe space to explore interests in a language most comfortable to its participants. Facilitators hold meetings in Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and English depending on the needs of the participants.

BIST also ran a variety of series of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) groups throughout the year, where members can learn and develop a wellness plan of healthy coping strategies to support their well-being. WRAP Groups have been largely popular with our members, and as a result we continue to develop and run more series.

The Men's Social Drop-In has continued to run with our new Facilitator, Shawayne Folkes who continues to hold monthly groups for members who identify as male or non-binary. Another largely popular program, Not So Blue Mondays - was put on hold due to the pandemic's restrictions; however we are looking forward to reintroducing this program in the near future.

4001

PEOPLE SERVED IN 2020/2021

The long-term COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and move to virtual planning resulted in a LESS than a 1% decrease in program growth. New programs and services offered by BIST resulted in an overall increase of members served as well as increased viewership of our online tools and webinars.

Women's Support Group:

This group is meant for individuals who identify as women with ABI. Sessions are held on a bi-monthly basis and are facilitated by a Registered Social Worker, a BIST staff member, a placement student and/or volunteer. This group provides peer support with shared discussion on issues related to ABI. Despite the transition of groups being held on a virtual platform; numbers in attendance have continued to grow.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 169 (42.6% GROWTH)

Peer-led Caregiver Group:

This group offers support to other ABI caregivers and family members. The group is led by a trained Peer Facilitator who assists to provide members with a supportive social educational space where members share experiences and learn from one another.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 28 (37.8% DECLINE)

NEW - Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Group:

This acronym "WRAP" stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan. The WRAP Group was formally introduced in March 2020, but due to the pandemic did not officially begin sessions until June 2020. These groups are held as a six session series, and are facilitated by our BIST staff member, Isabelle Rivaletto and WRAP Co-Facilitators: Fozia Murtaza and Wayne O'Brien. Members learn, implement and create a wellness plan of personalized coping strategies to support their mental health. The WRAP Group has been largely popular amongst BIST members, in which growing attendance numbers reflect this popularity.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 182

ABI Support Group:

This support group is facilitated by a Registered Social Worker, a BIST staff member and a placement student and/or volunteer. The group continues to serve individuals with mild to moderate brain injury, providing a supportive group setting for individuals to connect and share their experiences, challenges, successes and coping strategies in an inclusive safe space.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 217 (4.8% DECLINE)

Men's Social Drop-In:

This social drop-in is for individuals who identify as men with ABI and are looking to connect with others. The drop-ins occur monthly and are facilitated by a Registered Social Worker.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 51 (32% DECLINE)

Social Drop-In: Members of the South Asian & East Indian Communities

This social drop-in beginning in March 2020 was launched as a pilot project in partnership with our Sponsor: Singer Kwinter in February 2021. The drop-in is designed to create an inclusive space for the South Asian & East Indian communities who live with brain injury. As BIST is committed to diversity and inclusion; this is the first ever BIST program to be run in a second language other than English.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 1

Community Outings (Virtual Innings):

This program is designed to provide free social outings with BIST staff and members. Normally, members have the opportunity to do an outside activity eg. visit attractions, such as the AGO. Afterwards, members are welcome to meet for a social coffee or tea. Due to the pandemic's social-distancing restrictions, in-person outings were not permitted and this program transitioned temporarily to "Virtual Innings." Particularly for this in-person program design, transitioning to virtual decreased program attendance. As a result, BIST Community Outings are on hold until further notice.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 98 (63.4% DECLINE)

Community Meetings:

Community Meetings are regularly held on a monthly basis, usually at the end of the month. Meetings feature a guest speaker who presents a topic related to ABI with time for Q & A. The community shares stories, tips and information with other people living with ABI. Meetings are open to anyone, and are held on a drop-in basis. These monthly meetings also serve as a community social gathering, as well as a educational workshop experience.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 346



LGBTQ2S
& Brain Injury Support Group
Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)



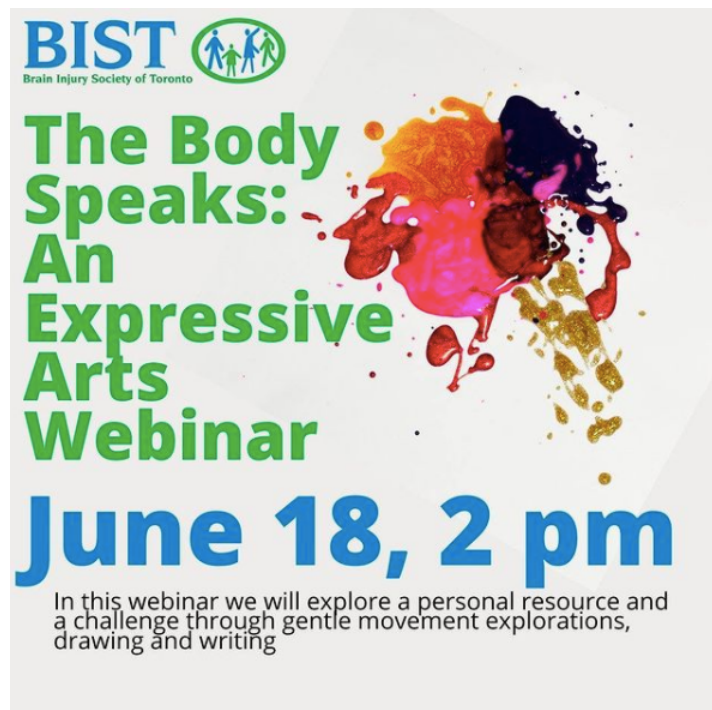
Online Mental Health
Support Group
Runs Weekly for 6
Sessions
Begins April 12, 12-2 PM

BIST 
Brain Injury Society of Toronto

Register at:
www.bist.ca/WRAP

THANKS TO OUR AMAZING PRESENTERS

- Kataryna Patsak and Danijela Novic, BELL Canada - *Making Technology Accessible*
- Jeff Chartier, Director of ACCESSolve - *Fraud & Financial Abuse Prevention with COVID-19 Updates*
- Marinella Nesso, Osteopath - *Online Yoga Series*
- Dr. Stuart Phillips, Director of (PACE) at McMaster University - *Surviving and Thriving in a Pandemic*
- Dr. Linda MacDonald - *Mindfulness for Dealing With COVID-19*
- Dr. Harry Kovelman, Vice-President, Medical Affairs at Helius Medical Technologies Inc., Alicia Baertsoen, Media and Public Relations Strategist at Helius Medical Technologies Inc, Beth Foster, Former PoNS™ Patient, Advantage 4 Athlete - *What is PoNS Treatment?*
- Laura Bassett, Lawyer at Oatley Vigmond - *Keeping The Train On Track: Legal Representation During a Pandemic*
- Lindsay Charles and Nick Todorovic, Lawyers at McLeish Orlando - *Get the Ans to the Most Frequently Asked Personal Injury Law Qs*
- David MacDonald, Stacey Stevens, Matthew Sutton, Dr. Joanna Hamilton, Leigh Craney, Keith Lindsay - *Brain Injury The Pandemic Inside a Pandemic*
- Gazal Kukreja, Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator, (OBIA) and Steve Gregory of After ABI Rehab Book - "The Journey Continues"- *Brain Injury Speaks Network*
- Jasmine Sihra - *Instructional Video Series*
- Shawn Gargoum, Colleen Worsley, Ayushi Dhingra, Complex Injury Rehab Team - *The Concussion Series*
- Dr. Bojana Budisin, Hailey Steyaert, Matthew Sutton, Lara Fitzgerald-Husek, Lindsay Charles, Dr. Carolyn Lemsky, Robert Ben, Dr. Liesel-Ann Meusel, Kyle Whaley, Hoong Phang, Dr. Chanth Seyone, Troy Lehman - *The ABI Info Series*



Weekly Member Phone & Email Support:

BIST staff, placement students and volunteers remain dedicated in providing regular communication support via telecommunications (Warm Line) and through e-mail support eg. info@bist.ca and connections@bist.ca. Members are provided with resources, educational information and social support.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **1710** (42% GROWTH)

Weekly One-on-One Member Support (Student Support):

This program offers the opportunity for placements students eg. Ryerson University, Social Work Students to have direct experience in assisting members with tasks, such as completing application forms (Wheeltrans, ABI Network, Access 2 Card). Students also assist members with paperwork and calendar scheduling.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **72** (33.3% GROWTH)

Workshops:

In 2020/2021, BIST continues to provide multifaceted workshops that are creative, educational, supportive and forward-thinking, and are designed to specifically respond to the unprecedented challenges of navigating a brain injury during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CIR Concussion Series and ABI Info Series continue to provide practical coping strategies and information of navigating an ABI.

Additional workshops included a weekly yoga series, an interactive paint nite, and strategies to cope with mental health and isolation during Covid-19.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **1879** (70% GROWTH)

BIST/OBIA Peer Support Program

The Peer Support Program connects trained Mentors with lived ABI experience, with partners seeking support following an ABI. This program is delivered in collaboration with BIA's across the province and in partnership with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA).

2020/2021 Peer Support Program	
Category	Number Served
Number of Trainings	1
Number of Current Active Matches	12
Number of Partner Intakes	22
Number of Mentor Intakes	2
Number of BIST Mentors Matched	4
Number of Matches Completed	3
<i>Total Number Served</i>	44

2020/2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

CDN\$				Year Ended March 31st, 2021	Year Ended March 31st, 2020
Revenue					
	Fundraising Revenue			\$ 93,381.72	\$ 207,833.89
	Grant Revenue			\$ 328,952.45	\$ 205,886.45
	Other Revenue			\$ 101,810.13	\$ 68,772.01
Total Revenue				\$ 524,144.30	\$ 482,492.35
Expenses					
	Contractor Fees & Program Expenses			\$ 30,090.80	\$ 138,977.47
	Fundraising Event Expenses			\$ 31,098.35	\$ 46,786.47
	OTF Grant Expenses			\$ 330,857.34	\$ 209,496.36
	Admin and Other Expenses			\$ 23,367.37	\$ 31,337.47
Total Expenses				\$ 415,413.86	\$ 426,597.77
Surplus (Deficit)				\$ 108,730.44	\$ 55,894.58
CDN\$					
Assets					
	Cash			\$ 81,964.47	\$ 222,161.07
	HST Receivable			\$ 22,526.15	\$ 11,024.31
	Accounts Receivable			\$ 77,472.52	\$ 36,113.20
	Prepaid Expenses			\$ 2,185.23	\$ 4,685.23
	Investments			\$ 218,361.03	\$ 62,781.07
Total Assets				\$ 402,509.40	\$ 336,764.88
Liabilities & Equity					
	Accounts Payable			\$ 38,868.75	\$ 32,630.76
	Deferred Revenue			\$ 114,079.83	\$ 163,303.74
	Retained Earnings			\$ 249,560.82	\$ 140,830.38
Total Liabilities and Equity				\$ 402,509.40	\$ 336,764.88

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR PROGRAM

LAURA BELLON, TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR

During the March 2020 to March 2021 year, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, three-year Grow Grant for the Transitional Support Coordinator Program (TSC) concluded on January 8, 2021. **This Program ran since February 5, 2018 servicing a total of 87 individuals, exceeding the requirement of 75 participants.**

The Transitional Support Coordinator Program offered adults in the Toronto area who identify as having a Brain Injury and/or cognitive issues, application support in stabilizing their financial needs with a more appropriate level of social assistance. Participants were supported in the acquisition and completion of the Disability Determination Package for the Ontario Disability Support Program. Participants were also supported in the completion of the Disability Tax Credit, Registered Disability Savings Plan account initiation, Canadian Pension Plan – Disability application, transition from ODSP to Old Age Security and/or Guaranteed Income Supplement, Survivors Pension where applicable, as well as Personal Income Tax support. Further support was given by way of connecting participants to other financial relief programs and loans, such as the Housing Stabilization Fund, Criminal Injury and Compensation Board, Jewish Family Loan Service, Toronto Parks and Recreation Access, and equipment funding.

The program continued its support with other initiatives to stabilize participants such as: finding Family Physicians and other specialists (Neurologists, Pain Specialists, Orthotics and appliance specialists, Psychotherapists, and Social Workers). As well, several applications were made to various long-term supports for ongoing case management specific to the Toronto Area such as: Access Point Referral, The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Network, and COTA. Many clients also had support with accessing CAMH, Barbara Schilfer Clinic, Legal Aid, Court Diversion Programs, WSIB, and Wheel-trans. As well, some clients were supported during transition to other community supports after moving to other communities such as: Peel, and Kitchener/Waterloo. This reach helped transition the client to: Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program offices, Brain Injury Societies and programs, mental health and concurrent disorder programs as well as transit support in their new communities.

As of March 2020, COVID-19 became a major factor in the way support was given to clients. During this time, all support was moved to phone or virtual support. 26% of the program participants during the three year grant, had difficulty with access to technology, and efforts were made to support them with the acquisition of technology through a further funded grant for technology support. Many of the TSC clients were entered into the technology program for access to a phone or payment of bills to allow for continued connectivity for access to care.

Support was given during this time to help with access to the Discretionary Benefit through OW and ODSP. Support was also given to complete the ODSP applications necessary for the program. Although met with challenges during this last year of the grant, 96% of the participants who had a DDP package released were approved for ODSP. Of the individuals who did not meet the eligibility requirement, support was given to help stabilize them in other ways.

At the end of the Transitional Support Coordinator Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, a further need was identified to help support individuals in the Toronto Area with ongoing housing needs. An application was submitted and approved by the Ontario Trillium Foundation for a three year Homeless Prevention Program Grant. This grant began in January of this 2021. The aim of this grant is to provide support to individuals in the stabilization of and/or finding of appropriate housing in order to prevent homelessness. This grant aims to support 75 adults within the Toronto area who identify with having a Brain Injury and/or cognitive issues. To date there are 41 persons being supported by this program.

VIOLENCE IMPACT COORDINATOR PROGRAM

ISABELLE RIVALETTO, VIOLENCE IMPACT COORDINATOR & COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

The one-year SEED grant funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation ran from October 2019 - October 2020. The grant proposal target was to support 30 participants throughout its duration. Due to the high need and our ability to manage capacity, BIST served a total of 43 people. The program supported individuals with finding various community supports, such as: Family Physicians, Access to Housing Lists, Support Groups, Psychiatrists, Legal Aid, Psychotherapists, Social Workers and Case Managers. It also provided cognitive compensatory and coping strategies to the participants. Participants also utilized other BIST programming, such as our Women and Brain Injury Support Group.

Our program findings can be found here: <https://bist.ca/ipv/>

As a result of the findings of this program, BIST was able to receive additional funds to support this program through the Community Connection Program funded by the United Way (see page 5). Additionally, other brain injury associations have used our model to submit their own grants and create similar programs to address this need.



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

ALLISON FOO, CO CHAIR

The new Advocacy Committee was formed to support BIST in its goals of reducing vulnerability in the brain injury community with a focus on self-advocacy. The committee held their first official meeting on December 14, 2020 and currently consists of 10 members. Since then, members of the Advocacy Committee have spread awareness about brain injury and advocated for survivors in various ways, including, but not limited to:

- Sharing various brain injury and ODSP-related petitions and surveys
- Representing BIST and its members at community meetings such as SafeTO Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan and Public Consultation of Toronto Police Hiring New Chief

The Advocacy Committee is currently working on developing a survey to better understand survivors', family members' and caregivers' needs that will help BIST and the Advocacy Committee develop future programming.



**SOCIAL DROP-IN FOR MEMBERS OF THE
SOUTH ASIAN / EAST INDIAN COMMUNITIES**
Who live with Brain Injury
LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, 6:30 - 8 PM

Languages Spoken:
Punjabi, Urdu Gujarati, English

REGISTER HERE:
www.bist.ca/south-asian



SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

MERI PERRA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

BIST reached and engaged over one million people online in the period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. Across all platforms, BIST has 9,710 followers.

<i>BIST Social Media & Online April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021</i>			
Platform	Reach	Engagement	Followers
Blog	13, 473	9,177	2092
Twitter	337,328	9,019	3453
Facebook	459,029	19,154	1791
Instagram	64,134	67,873	1670
Linked In	1981	30,667	638
YouTube	32,263	2857	66
TikTok	2,904	n/a	
TOTAL	897,639	138,747	9710
Bist.ca	37,262	100,812	
abijustice.org	106, 374	926,169	
TOTAL	1,041,275	1,165,728	9710

Brain Injury Blog TORONTO

The following is a monthly breakdown of analytics from the blog, which currently has 2092 followers. 28 posts were published during this period.

Most Popular Post: Post Concussion Syndrome: Why Giving Up Screen Time is Part of the Solution & Problem
By: Colin Harding, Posted October 17, 2017 - **5545 lifetime views.** .

Brain Injury Blog TORONTO - April 2020 - March 31, 2021				
Month	# of Posts	Views	Visitors	Likes
April	4	895	556	5
May	3	1240	855	4
June	4	1081	705	12
July	6	967	658	5
August	2	1051	663	6
September	2	1045	735	3
October	0	1476	960	0
November	0	1439	1063	0
December	2	1089	793	2
January	4	947	685	1
February	0	1036	723	0
March	1	1207	781	6
TOTAL	28	13, 473	9177	44

THANK YOU BLOG WRITERS!

- Nathalin Roy
- Hilary Pearson
- Logan Jung-Richie
- Alison
- Josie Coloma
- Elizabeth McGregor
- Steven Edelman
- Shannon Schilling
- Stella Sloan
- Kim Vo
- Janet Craig
- Mark Koning
- Jaru
- Roseanne Carenza

Twitter @BrainInjuryTO

Our Twitter account continued to gain followers. June - Brain Injury Awareness Month - had the highest impressions and engagement.

Twitter - @BrainInjuryTO - April 2020 - March 31, 2021									
Month	Total Tweets	Impre-ssions	Engage-ment	Engage-ment Rate	Clicks	Retweets	Likes	Replies	Followers
May	54	40998	927	1.70%	132	132	209	1	3334
June	108	48665	1695	2.50%	148	148	525	17	3344
July	50	17280	711	2.12%	112	74	183	6	3343
Aug	49	15800	515	1.56%	66	62	172	7	3347
Sept	78	20806	608	2.46%	23	45	242	7	3337
Oct	73	17967	578	1.70%	31	31	182	4	3351
Nov	55	24359	747	1.80%	57	44	191	8	3372
Dec	67	29885	653	1.90%	76	24	175	5	3,382
Jan	79	29001	861	2.80%	87	75	244	9	3393
Feb	81	27742	669	2.20%	54	66	231	9	3409
March	55	20750	415	1.70%	64	41	141	7	3453
TOTAL	820	337328	9019	1.98%	913	827	2688	93	3453

Impressions: The times a user is served a Tweet in a timeline or search results

Link Clicks: Clicks on a URL or Card in the Tweet

Re-tweets: Times a user re-tweeted the Tweet

Likes: Times a user likes a Tweet

Facebook: @BrainInjurySocietyToronto

Our Facebook followers grew by 17% during this period. Here, February was the most successful month due to BIST's paid promotion of our abijustice.org project.

Facebook - @BrainInjurySocietyTO - April 2020 - March 31, 2021							
Month	Total Posts	Total Reach	Organic Reach	Paid Reach	Impressions	Engaged Users	Total Followers - Month End
April	48	18,802	11,614	7135	40,781	834	1,444
May	38	10,719	10,719	0	11,958	624	1,462
June	56	30,154	30,154	0	34,992	1601	1,515
July	42	11,500	11,500	0	13,566	674	1,561
Aug	41	10,752	10,752	0	12,345	707	1,590
Sept	40	12,346	12,346	0	13,318	774	1,605
Oct	57	11,907	11,907	0	13,605	932	1,605
Nov	30	28,712	8,500	20,212	9,696	1083	1,639
Dec	41	14,533	8,137	6,396	8,587	396	1,654
Jan	38	9,153	9,153	0	9,889	477	1,662
Feb	41	294,184	8,137	224,464	8,587	4,233	1,674
March	39	6,267	6,267	0	6,819	6,819	1,695
TOTAL	511	459,029	139,186	258,207	184,143	19,154	1,695

Impressions: The number of times a post is displayed. If a post appears on someone's newsfeed twice (via sharing for example) it counts as two impressions.

Reach: The number of people who received impressions of a Page post. For this reason impressions are higher than reach.

Instagram: @BrainInjuryToronto

Our followers increased by 25% during this period. Brain Injury Awareness Month in June was the most successful month on this platform.

Instagram - @BrainInjuryToronto - April 1 2020 - March 31, 2021								
Month	# of Posts	Likes	Comments	Saved	Impressions	Reach	Video views	Followers
April	13	261	13	28	4809	4163		1336
May	10	183	6	9	2682	2985		1374
June	21	784	27	186	8473	7648		1424
July	17	347	7	75	5927	5099		1449
August	19	376	10	40	5847	4936		1492
Sept	31	684	23	22	8028	9196	160	1545
Oct	19	508	13	38	5230	6155		1588
Nov	19	494	19	19	5731	5459		1602
Dec	13	417	13	57	4752	4210		1628
Jan	16	395	14	30	5531	4960		1639
Feb	20	489	15	30	6820	5851		1654
March	12	273	8	32	4043	3472		1670
TOTAL	210	5211	168	566	67,873	64,134	160	1670

Linked In: Brain Injury Society of Toronto

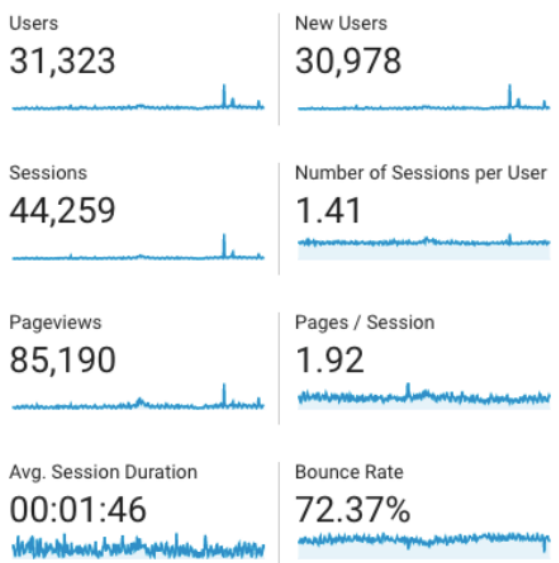
BIST's Linked In Account has a following of 638, an increase of 41% followers since the last period.

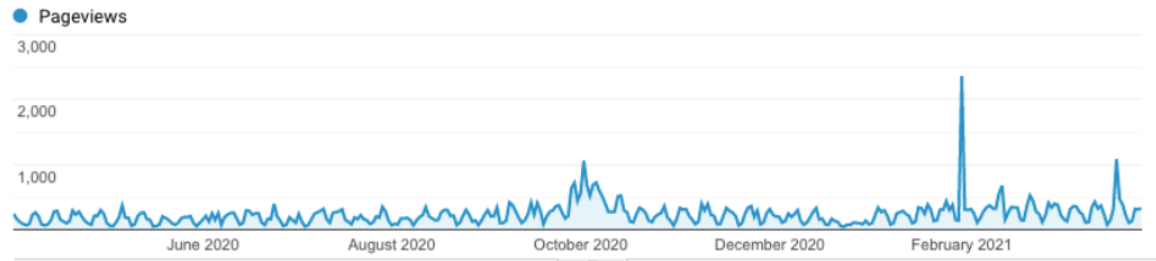
Linked In - Brain Injury Society of Toronto - April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021						
Month	# of Posts	Clicks	Impressions	Social Actions	Reach	Followers
April	9	17	1083	49	120.33	452
May	10	46	1228	77	128	457
June	25	29	3147	212	126	475
July	30	258	5746	222	192	480
Aug	21	161	3044	117	145	490
Sept	29	152	3944	87	160	509
Oct	15	74	2231	96	149	517
Nov	11	32	2040	74	185	563
Dec	11	82	2705	97	246	577
Jan	10	34	1668	96	167	612
Feb	9	50	1991	81	221	624
March	13	59	1840	110	142	638
TOTAL	193	994	30,667	1,318	1981	638

www.bist.ca

The following screenshots from Google Analytics shows how bist.ca performed throughout April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021. These indicate there were:

- 31,323 people who visited the site
- The majority of visitors were new users
- The average time spent on the site was 1:54 minutes
- Most people find bist.ca through an organic search (such as Google)
- Our top visited page is our front page
- Our second most visited page is Alison's article, "Activities to do while Recovering from a Concussion"
- bist.ca's third most popular page is www.bist.ca/event which lists our monthly programs, showing that our service users access our website for monthly program information





Pageviews
85,190

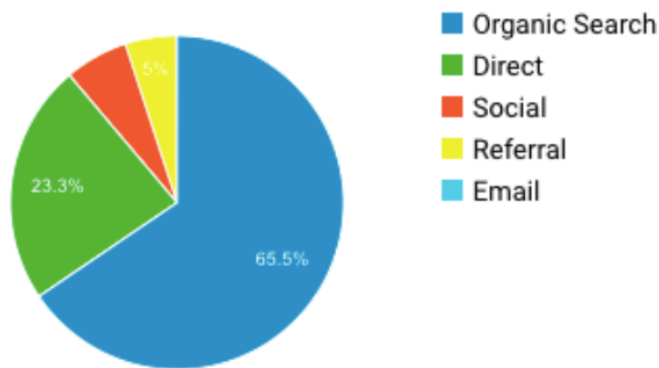
Unique Pageviews
68,820

Avg. Time on Page
00:01:54

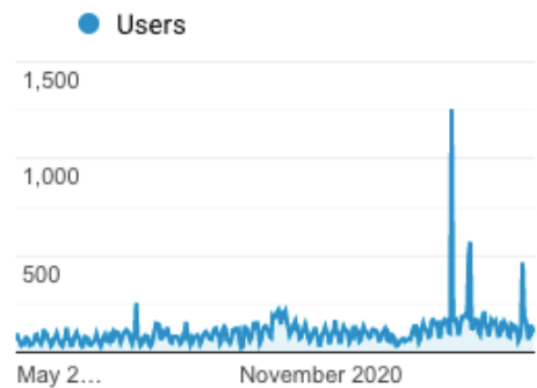
Bounce Rate
72.37%

% Exit
51.95%

Top Channels



Users



Page		Pageviews	% Pageviews
1. /		12,320	14.46%
2. /activities-to-pass-the-time-while-recovering-from-a-concussion/		11,194	13.14%
3. /event/		3,652	4.29%
4. /online-programs/		2,215	2.60%
5. /about/programs-and-services/		2,097	2.46%
6. /events/2020/30569/10th-annual-bistroes-run-walk-or-roll		2,036	2.39%
7. /bot-traffic.icu		1,996	2.34%
8. /this-valentines-day-fall-in-love-with-yourself/		1,478	1.73%
9. /webinars/		1,462	1.72%
10. /5k/		1,177	1.38%

Sessions:

What one site visitor views during their visit to the site - during a specific time period (i.e. 30 minutes). So if a visitor visits the site once in the morning, and once in the afternoon, this counts as two sessions.

Unique Page Views:

If a user visits the same page more than once in a session, this counts as one unique page view.

Bounce Rate:

When a visitor leaves the site after going to the landing page without clicking further

www.abijustice.org

The first month of www.abijustice.org was very successful, with over 900,000 page views. We are excited to see where this site will go.



BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH COMMITTEE

In June 2020 in the midst of the pandemic, BIST switched gears and hosted our annual art show virtually. The event showcased six artists living with brain injury and aimed to showcase the interconnections between the Pandemic, Brain Injury & living with Hidden Disability. All art continues to be featured on <https://bist.ca/virtual-expressive-art-show-2020/>

The event was mentioned on Global News as part of their Feel Good segment, you can watch it [HERE](#). The CN Tower was also lit up once again in the Brain Injury colours of Blue and Green on June 10, 2020.



Green & Blue CN Tower, June 10, 2020



2020 Virtual Expressive Art Show,
Artist: Alexander Jordan

Social Media - Brain Injury Awareness Month 2020

Green & Blue CN Tower - OVERALL REACH 18,599

Facebook: 9,024
Instagram: 1,753
Twitter: 7318
Linked In: 504

Virtual Expressive Art Show - OVERALL REACH - 10,518

Facebook: 1,184
Instagram: 1,724
Twitter: 7,265
Linked In: 345

Other BIAM Posts - OVERALL REACH - 21, 586

Facebook: 8,086
Instagram: 699
Twitter: 12,575
Linked In: 226

TOTAL REACH ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS: 50,703



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

BIST is fortunate to have so many hard-working and dedicated volunteers. Our volunteers sit on committees, help plan and lead our programs, plan our fundraising and social events and contribute to our blog. Our volunteers are survivors, family members, professionals from the ABI field, and individuals interested in giving back to their community and supporting the mission of BIST.

Due to the high number of quality volunteers, the committee acknowledged volunteers in 3 categories: ABI Survivor/Thrivers, Caregiver, BIST Ambassador.

ABI Survivor/Thrivers Winner: Matthew Chung

Matthew Chung has been a central figure of our Brain Injury Awareness Month Committee (BIAM) for years, and has chaired the committee for the past two years. Matt has lead the committee with never-ending energy, passion and his easy-going attitude. Because of Matt's contacts and media savvy he has helped BIST with our press releases and past appearances on Breakfast Television. Thank you Matt for helping raise brain injury awareness amongst the community.

Caregiver Winner: Taliesin McEnaney

Taliesin McEnaney is the Writer and Director of Brain Storm, a play that follows the life of a young woman post-brain injury while weaving in spiritual conversations with the deceased Dr. Wilder Penfield, a Canadian Neurosurgeon. Brain Storm received critical acclaim for its artistry and story telling. For the brain injury community, the play ignited empathy and understanding for the symptoms of brain injury. Ms. McEnaney collaborated with BIST to arrange a screening and talk-back session for BIST members both in 2017 and again in 2020.

BIST Ambassador: Eden Dales

Eden joined the Birdies for Brain Injury Golf Committee in 2018 and has elevated the event each and every year. She has consistently markets the event to everyone she meets which has resulted in amazing silent auction items and gifts (including the famous Raptors jacket that Mayor Tory wore) as well as celebratory guest appearances (such as Mark Osbourne). We are thrilled that she is continuing to support BIST in this role!



Matthew Chung



Taliesin McEnaney (L) with Executive Director, Melissa Vigar (R)



Eden Dales (L) with Board Member, Darrell Booker (R)



Platinum Sponsor



MCLEISH ORLANDO
OATLEY VIGMOND
THOMSON ROGERS
PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS

Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors



NIX THE MIX

This year, we were saddened that we couldn't host our annual Mix and Mingle fundraiser with OBIA at the Steam Whistle. However, we did what we do best, and switched gears to host a total of 3 virtual Nix the Mix Events.

We would like to thank all those who came out to support these events, and especially the chefs, mixologists and musicians who took the time to share their talents with us!

September 24, 2020 - Nix the Mix

Mixologist, Mark Lapowich

Chef Nuit Reglar

Musical Guest Carl Dixon

February 11, 2020 - Valentines Edition

Mixologist, Mark Lapowich

Chef Tamara Coleman

Musical Guest, Eric Lambier

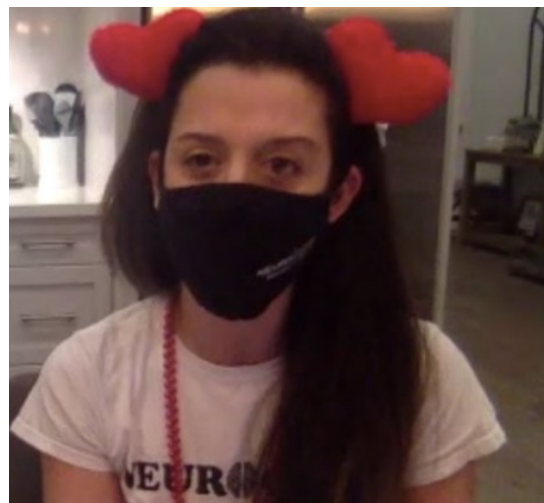
November 25, 2020 - Holiday Edition

Mixologist, Mark Lapowich

Chef Jennifer Lakhan-D'souza

Chef Jordan Wagman

Musical Guest, Wagman Brothers
Band



BIRDIES FOR BRAIN INJURY

Delayed to due Covid-10, our 6TH Annual Birdies for Brain Injury happened September 18th, 2020 at Lionshead Golf & Country Club.

Modified due to Pandemic regulations, our event raised almost \$30,000

Big thanks to our Birdies for Brain Injury Committee: Jordan Assaraf (Chair), Robert Nigol, Ryan Murray, Diana Rockbrune, Jeff Nunn, Erik Joffe, Pearse Brett, Darrell Booker, Daniel Fenwick and Colleen Worsley.



2021 Tournament Sponsors

PRESENTING SPONSOR



CORPORATE PLATINUM SPONSOR



MCLEISH ORLANDO
OATLEY VIGMOND
THOMSON ROGERS
PERSONAL INIURY LAWYERS

GOLD & DRINK SPONSOR



SILVER SPONSORS



BREAKFAST, LUNCH &
SIGNATURE HOLE SPONSOR



5K HEROES RUN, WALK OR ROLL

Our Heroes still showed up for the 10 year anniversary of the run, which also happened to be our 1st ever virtual event! We had 264 people registered and raised approximately \$20,000! We had winners in multiple categories, as running it virtually we were able to incorporate 1K, 5K and 10K distances!

Thank you to all of those who came out to participate!

Many thanks to our dedicated committee who helped make this event such a success:

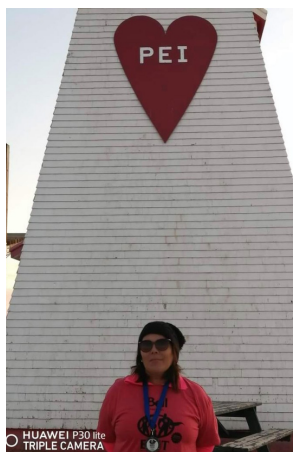
Kate Mazzucco (Chair), Melissa Vigar, Jennifer Bowler, Melissa Dowrie, Ann Grozier, Mark Lapowich, Rohit Tamhane, Maxine Fyffe Roberts, Erin Spencer, Jonah Waxman

10K Winners - Men

1st Jonathon Burton
2nd Mark Roberts
3rd Cruz Rodrigues

10K Winners - Women

1st Erin Spencer
2nd Maxine Fyffe Roberts
3rd Jessica Roberts



5K Winners - Women

1st Kathleen Lawrence
2nd Laura MacPhee
3rd Colleen Boyce

5K Winners - Men

1st Garvin Moses
2nd Garrett Lehman
3rd Adam Little

BEST COSTUMES

Individual - Beverlee Melamed
Best Family - Tara Woods
Best Kids - Sylvia Haycock
Best Family Video- Justin & Michelle Klien



THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 VIRTUAL RUN, WALK OR ROLL SPONSORS



BIST Corporate Platinum Sponsor



MCLEISH ORLANDO
OATLEY VIGMOND
THOMPSON ROGERS
PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS

Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors

Accessible Daily Living
Bayshore Healthcare
Beyond Law

Complex Injury Rehab
Functionability
Innovative Rehab

Lad and Associates
Singer Kwinter
Neinstein LLP

THIRD PARTY FUNDRAISERS

BIST is extremely fortunate to have such a dedicated and generous community.

As we continued to receive requests for other organizations to create third party fundraisers on our behalf, this year we created **Third Party Fundraising Guidelines** which can be found on our website: www.bist.ca.

Our most successful third-party fundraiser was the second annual Tanya's Ride for Brain Injury, which raised almost \$20,000 for BIST.

We are saddened to say that Tanya passed away in October 2019 and she will be greatly missed and remembered by her family, friends and the BIST community. The BIST office has renamed our snack and beverage station "Tanya's Table" to commemorate and remember her generosity and hospitality.

In December 2020 Complex Injury Rehab, ADL, and Propel Physiotherapy teamed up to coordinate BAKED IT, and fundraiser that raised funds to support BIAPH, BIST and Spinal Cord Injury Ontario.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jordan Assaraf, Chair

Jordan Assaraf is a lawyer at Gluckstein Personal Injury Lawyers. By being involved in contact sports his entire life, Jordan has seen how traumatic brain injuries can occur and affect not only the person who acquired the injury, but their whole family. This has led Jordan to become the personal injury lawyer he is today and has also led him to volunteer his time and raise awareness about brain injuries by joining BIST. Jordan's other volunteer experience includes leading his law firm's team in the annual Wheelchair Relay Race and supporting the charitable organization THREE TO BE in their efforts to assist children with neurological disorders. Jordan is committed to raising public awareness about the effects of brain injuries on victims, their families and the broader public.

Alexandra Piotti, Vice Chair

Alexandra Piotti is a private Case Manager/ Rehabilitation Consultant working with the catastrophically injured. Her areas of expertise include working with individuals who have sustained an acquired brain injury, have complex medical needs, mental health issues, dual diagnosis and the behaviourally challenged. Alex is an advocate for her clients, dedicated to helping to ensure the best environment for maximal recovery. Alex has been a member of BIST since 2012 and currently is the Chair of the Awareness Committee. As a member of the BIST Board, Alex hopes to bring her passion for people and service and hopes to find new ways cast a wider net to increase the presence of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto in our city.

Erik Joffe, Secretary

Erik Joffe was motivated to join BIST as a result of his experience growing up working at Camp Awakening, and later on in life, as a result of his experience working with clients suffering from traumatic brain injury. Erik has been an Associate with Neinstein LLP since joining as a summer student in 2011. He completed his Bachelor of Arts at McGill University, where he obtained a double major in Political Science and Sociology and graduated with Distinction. He went on to graduate with a J.D. from Queen's University Law School. While at Queen's University, Erik was an active member of the Queen's Law Journal, Clinical Correctional Program, and an Executive Producer of Queen's Pro Bono Radio. Erik is an avid traveler and spent half of his final year of law school on exchange in South Africa. He has backpacked through Nepal, Israel, South East Asia, South America and Europe. During his free time Erik also enjoys running, playing hockey and golfing. Erik's practice is devoted to all areas of Personal Injury litigation on behalf of plaintiffs, including motor vehicle accident claims, disability claims and Canadian Pension Plan, occupier's liability claims, product liability claims, medical malpractice and accident benefit claims.

Rim Grewal, Treasurer

Rim is a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Business Valuator and is the Partner at his own boutique valuations and litigation support firm, Clearhouse Valuations. Rim has worked within the personal injury industry since 2012, having prepared hundreds of expert economic loss reports. Previously, Rim was a board member at BIAPH (Brain Injury Association of Peel and Halton) from around 2014 to 2016. Rim is married with 2 young daughters, and is excited to be bringing his expertise and energy to the Treasurer Role at BIST.

Darrell Booker

Darrell began volunteering for BIST so that he could be involved with helping survivors from the ground up. As the owner of DH Group Inc. Darrell works daily to assist those in their homes who have acquired an injury, either physically or mentally. He has a passion for designing and building, and has worked in this space for over 10 years. Darrell believes providing people with a new home or renovation is a rewarding feeling. In his free time he enjoys living an active lifestyle. You can usually find him after work biking along the lake or playing baseball. Darrell began his involvement with BIST in 2016 as committee member assisting with the annual golf tournament. He enjoys being part of the committee and working together with the other volunteers. He wanted to join the board to assist with growing the society and developing new ideas to raise awareness and funds for its many programs and services. One of his favourite quotes is " Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." – Thomas Edison

Jennifer Bowler

Jenn is a social worker with more than 12 years' experience working with adolescents and adults with acquired brain injuries and their families. She currently works as a clinical leader at Markham Stouffville Hospital where she is responsible for providing day-to-day supervision and operational support to over 100 staff members.

Prior to this role, Jenn worked for 11 years full-time at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre with the majority of those years working in the Trauma Program, and she still works at Sunnybrook in a casual social work capacity. While full-time at Sunnybrook, Jenn was a member of the ABI Network Transitions Committee for several years. She has also been a regular promoter of BIST services/supports with her patients, families, and colleagues including being a volunteer on the 5K Run, Walk, and Roll Committee since 2017. Based on Jenn's experiences supporting ABI affected individuals and families in their hospital journeys and community transitions, she hopes that she can provide insights and advocate for support during the early phases of ABI. She is also passionate about ABI education and prevention and looks forward to promoting awareness and safety strategies. Jenn spends her free time travelling, watching movies, playing tennis, and enjoying the Toronto restaurant scene.

Alison Foo

Alison has been a member of BIST since 2013. She was previously on the Special Events Committee and currently writes for the "Mind Yourself with Alison" column on the BIST Blog. She's dedicated to using her unique perspective, research and experience to help other brain injury survivors and their caregivers. She has a B.Sc.H. from Queen's University, a M.Sc. from University of Toronto and a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. She worked in the pharmaceutical industry for over 10 years and created the brand, Cooking with Alison, which offers social media marketing services. Her other interests include dogs, new experiences, and psychology. Her current daily mantras are, "good enough is good enough" and "I didn't come this far to only come this far".

Dr. Hiten Lad

Dr. Lad is a registered Clinical Psychologist with specialization in the practice of Clinical Neuropsychology for adults and seniors. He is listed with the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology and is the Practice Director and Owner at Lad & Associates. Dr. Lad previously held positions as a Clinical Neuropsychologist with the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Program at Hamilton Health Sciences and as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University. He is also involved in research and has co-authored journal articles as well as a book chapter related to acquired brain injury. Dr. Lad also held a position as a clinical coordinator and training supervisor for the Canadian Psychology Association Accredited Neuropsychology Internship program at Hamilton Health Sciences. Furthermore, he worked as the clinical supervisor for rehabilitation therapists at the Acquired Brain Injury Community Services program at Hamilton Health Sciences. Prior to working with Hamilton Health Sciences, Dr. Lad worked in a multidisciplinary team at Toronto Western Hospital providing cognitive behavioural rehabilitation services for the treatment of chronic pain patients.

Dr. Carolyn Lemsky

Dr. Carolyn Lemsky is a neuropsychologist with over 25 years of experience working in rehabilitation settings in the U.S. and Canada and has been the Clinical Director at CHIRS since 1998. She is also the director of the Substance Use and Brain Injury Bridging Project (SUBI), a research and knowledge transfer initiative funded by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. Carolyn supervises an active clinical research program related to co-morbid mental health and problematic substance use and is a regular presenter at national and international conferences on brain injury. She is hoping to bring her skills and expertise to the BIST board to help further awareness and advocacy efforts. Carolyn has a passion for working with people and loves the outdoors. In her spare time, she volunteers with the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing, plays soccer and baseball and is an expert 'green thumb.'

Rick Menassa

Rick is the CEO of, iCare Home Health, a boutique home health care agency that provides attendant care for ABI clients, navigation services, patient advocacy and expert opinion regarding standard of care for persons who suffered injury. Rick is also the CEO of Health Espresso Inc., a real-time tracker of vitals and medication adherence, patient centred platform that connects primary care givers, physicians and other circle of care providers for a seamless connected-care approach complete with e-Visits and e-Prescription capability. Making a difference is an integral part of his DNA, Rick serves on two other boards and actively fundraises for several organizations and hospitals. Serving on the BIST Board compliments Rick's passion to empower injured and aged to live with dignity and maintain the quality of life they deserve."

Celia Missios

Celia Missios is the founder and author of the internationally read lifestyle blog High Heeled Life. Since 2010 she has been inspiring women worldwide with her journey of surviving what should have been a fatal accident, finding her "Joie de vivre" and creating a new life that fits the person she is today. Celia has been a brain injury survivor for almost 9 years and has volunteered with BIST as Peer Mentor; spoken at community meetings and is a regular editorial contributor to the blog. She is also a regular speaker for Canadian Blood Service's – Speakers Bureau. Prior to her accident Celia had a successful corporate career as Business and Market Development for a local communications firm. And volunteered her time as Chair of Fundraising Committee for an East York homeless youth shelter. Celia believes it's not what happens to you that determines your future it's how you chose to react to it. When she is not volunteering her time in the community and helping others create a healthy lifestyle that fits who they are today– she enjoys traveling; meditating; afternoon tea; self-care; yoga; writing; gardening; photography; and playing with her Yorkies, Dolce & Gabbana.



40 St. Clair Avenue East Suite 205

Toronto, Ontario, M4T 1M9

416-830-1485 | info@bist.ca | www.bist.ca