



# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2019 - 2020

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# MESSAGE



## FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BIST BOARD

**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, 2020.**

As I write this, we are in the midst of Global Pandemic with many non-profit organizations wondering what their future holds. Although this report does not reflect our current climate, I am happy to report that despite a drop in our fundraising and personal interaction, BIST is continuing and will continue to offer our virtual groups and provide on-going support for our members during these unprecedented times.

Once again, BIST has exceeded expectations for our 2019/2020 year. Our hard-working leader and Executive Director, Melisa Vigar, has been successful in securing new grants and forming new partnerships in an effort to continuously propel BIST as one of the leading Brain Injury organizations in the province. With support from our committed Board of Directors, Melissa and her dedicated team of staff, students and volunteers continue to work hard to promote our mission: to enhance the quality of life for people in the City of Toronto living with the effects of acquired brain injury, through education, awareness, support and advocacy.

This year, as we have done for the past number of years, BIST has added additional programs to help support our members. Our fearless leader has worked non-stop to secure a grant that allowed us to welcome our newest staff member, Isabelle Rivaletto, as our Violence Impact Coordinator, I know our members will value her support. Melissa did not stop there, in addition to the above, she has made sure that our members will have the continued assistance of Laura Bellon, our Transitional Support Coordinator.

To keep the good news flowing, we also added the 'Not So Blue Mondays', where our members engage in weekly discussion about arts, culture and more. As the Board and the organization expands, we will continue to deliver new programs for our existing and prospective members.

BIST's programming is funded by our generous corporate sponsors, third party fundraisers and the government grants secured by our hardworking team.

Without these organizations, BIST would be a small voice in an area that requires a loud presence. We want to thank our corporate sponsors for their continued financial support, which allows BIST to enhance the quality of life for people in the City of Toronto living with the effects of acquired brain injury.

This report would not be complete without thanking Julie Notto our previous Programs Coordinator for her help and support to our members during her time with BIST. Although we are sad to see Julie go, we are happy to welcome back Ryan Natale as our new Program Coordinator, along with our Programs Assistant Madison Chong.

I wanted to end off this report with a THANK YOU to our past and present board members, our hardworking staff and volunteers for making BIST the organization it is today. It has been truly special to serve as a Board Member and Chair for such an incredible organization that touches so many lives and families. I promise to continue to support BIST and continue with my role as Chair of the Birdies Golf Tournament.

As the year moves forward and we adapt to the new-normal, BIST will continue to provide the services and support that assists our members and we will continue to ensure our members remain safe and connected during COVID-19.

Stay Safe and Healthy.

**SINCERELY, JORDAN ASSARAF**

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



**The ending of this year's fiscal year was like no other. BIST has been challenged with supporting our members in the most difficult time since our agency has been in operation.**

BIST staff rose to the challenge and spent the end of March ensuring our members remained safe and connected at the start of Covid-19.

This included moving programs to virtual platforms, setting up a warm line and assisting our members with accessing groceries, supports and resources.

**BIST will continue to do the best we can to protect the physical and mental well-being of our members during this unprecedented time.**

Prior to March 2020, BIST had another successful year full of expanded programming and increased advocacy and awareness initiatives. In October 2019 we received an Ontario Trillium Seed Grant to assist brain injury survivors whose brain injuries were a result of assault, mostly stemming from intimate partner violence.

We also continued with our Transitional Support Coordinator Program, funded by an Ontario Trillium Grow Grant, assisting individuals with brain injuries who are financially unstable. You can read more about the metrics of these programs, and the amazing work the staff has done in their respective sections of this report.

Hallmarks of these programs, as with all BIST programs, is that a brain injury diagnosis is not required to access these supports, and in many instances, we assist with obtaining this diagnosis so that more formalized long-term supports can be accessed.

In keeping with this mandate to increase accessibility and remove barriers to support, BIST membership continues to be financially attainable at five dollars per year, which can be waived should a person not be able to afford it.

BIST does not keep any waitlists, and individuals are always welcome to trial our programs before signing up as a member. We continue to reimburse TTC to members whose transportation costs are a financial barrier and we are finding creative ways to ensure members have access to education and technology so that they remain connected when in-person meetings are not an option.

BIST would like to acknowledge the support of Jill Andrew, our MPP, who has remained a strong supporter of our organization. Dr. Andrew attended and gave impassioned speeches about brain injuries, the community and BIST supports at our Expressive Art Show and our Victims of Violence Program Launch.

In relation to our mandate of improving brain injury education and awareness, BIST engaged in the following initiatives/projects this past fiscal year:

## BIST Generations

This project, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility, addressed the Financial Abuse and Fraud that individuals with ABI, especially those who are aging, are at risk for. This project included the creation of our website [www.bist.ca/financialabuse](http://www.bist.ca/financialabuse) - (spearheaded by Meri Perra), includes information on common types of scams, how to get help, and training materials and tools on how to protect yourself or someone else from financial abuse. At the end of the project, an online webinar was hosted which included Covid-19 specific scams that were beginning to emerge.



### The Project:

Impacted 360 at-risk individuals  
Reached 210,000 via our social media campaign (and counting)

### In Addition, BIST Staff & Consultants:

Conducted 6 training sessions  
Trained 10 program volunteers

The educational materials, printable tools and BIST's Financial Abuse and Fraud Prevention webinar continue to live on our website for anyone to access. BIST would like to thank and acknowledge Jason Peddle, Toronto Police Vulnerable Services Coordinator and Jeff Chartier and Koulla Martin of AccesSolve for their contributions to this project.

## BIST LEAP (Legal Education Awareness Project)

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

Funding for this project was sought out to help address the high percentage of persons with ABI involved in the criminal justice system. The toolkit is anticipated to be completed by October 2020 and 15 virtual training sessions are being scheduled to spread awareness about this issue, our project and how to access support.

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).



## BIST 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 have been brainstorming creative, virtual ways to further engage this population and provide this needed support.

## BIST Toronto Provincial Police Trainings

During this report period, BIST put together and presented four trainings on brain injury, prevalence and communication strategies, at Toronto Police's 52nd Division.

I am grateful to have worked on this project with the contributions of Colleen Worsley (Complex Injury Rehab) and Alex Piotti (ICM) who also helped to co-facilitate these workshops. In collaboration with Alexander Jordan Mongkonrob and Catherine Wiseman Hakes, BIST also provided a half day educational workshop on brain injury to Toronto's MCIT Unit (Mobile Crises Intervention Teams).

Training materials on BIST's programs, prevalence of brain injury and the challenges this population faces and how to address them were provided. The training was well received, and there is discussion of continuing to offer this educational session to more officers within various sections of the force.

## Conferences

BIST was thrilled to present two workshops at the Ontario Brain Injury Association Conference in Niagara Falls in November 2019.

Myself, BIST staff Laura Bellon, and the Brain Injury Association of North Bay, presented to a packed room on our Transitional Support and Homeless Prevention Initiatives as well as on the importance of connecting persons with brain injury to their community associations.

Laura Bellon, BIST Transitional Support Coordinator, myself and Katie Manikas, Director of AccesSolve, also had a poster presentation at University Health Networks Traumatic Brain Injury Conference in Toronto which highlighted the financial instability and prevalence of brain injury in the homeless population and offered strategies to address these issues.

## Toronto Police Disability Community Consultative Committee

BIST continues to sit 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. BIST was proud to assist in the organizing of their town hall in November 2019 and helped to moderate the online portion of the event. Despite the bad weather, the meeting was attended by approximately 50 people in person and 3,000 more participated online.

## 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.

## Brainstorm

For a second time, BIST partnered with Lucid Ludic Productions and supported their production of Brainstorm by Talisan McEnaney. This production was put on in the Distillery District of Toronto in March 2020 and BIST members attended a special performance that included a talk back session with myself, Creator Talisan McEnaney, the cast members, and BIST member and Brain Injury Consultant and Dramaturgy Shireen Jeejeebhoy.

## Queens Park – Unmasking Brain Injury Event

BIST was thrilled to join OBIA and the provincial organizations as we kicked off Brain Injury Awareness Month at Queen's Park, displaying the masks made by our members and speaking with MPPs on the importance of brain injury awareness and supports.

## 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:

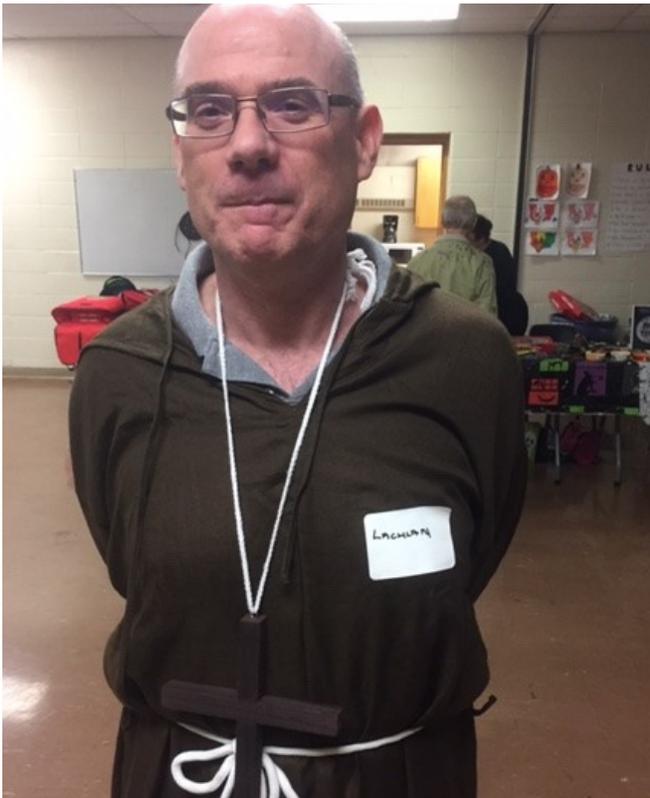
- Ryerson University, Bachelor School of Social Work
- York Seneca Rehabilitation Program
- Wilfred Laurier University, Masters of Social Work
- Mohawk College, Brain Disorders Management Program.

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

## RYAN NATALE, PROGRAMS AND PEER SUPPORT COORDINATOR

The 2019/2020 fiscal year saw several changes in programs and personnel. In particular, two programs, the young adult's group and parent support group, which have been a staple of BIST's core programming, have been terminated due to poor attendance and diminished interest; and our amazing Programs Coordinator, Julie Notto, bid us farewell as she has moved onto new endeavors.

The BIST team wants to acknowledge and thank Julie for her work over the last 5 years. Her creativity and prowess as the program's coordinator produced engaging art show workshops, and innovative activities for our members. She sought to ensure BIST programs offered an inclusive and safe environment for each member and her efforts will not be soon forgotten.

Still, more changes developed throughout the year as many of the programs introduced in 2018/2019 have continued to grow and reach new members. The introduction of the women's support group offers an example of how BIST programming has adjusted to the needs of members, with 44.8% growth over the previous year.

Similarly, both the men's social drop-in and Not So Blue Monday have steadily supported increasing numbers, 17% and 18% respectively, and have established a stable audience of returning members.

## 2019/2020 Fiscal Attendance & Service Breakdown

2019/2020 Fiscal Attendance & Service Breakdown	
Group	Total # Served
Not So Blue Monday	439
ABI Support Group	228
Men's Social Drop-In	75
Peer Support Post-Concussion Group	21
Parent Support Group	12
Young Adult Group	11
Women's Support Group	97
Caregiver Peer Support Group	45
Community Outings	268
Community Meetings	332
Member Phone & Email Support	1204
Student Support	54
Workshops	1318
<b>Total Members Served 2019/2020</b>	<b>4104</b>
Total Members Served 2018/2019	2652
Total Members Served 2017/2018	1959
Total Members Served 2016/2017	1310

BIST served **4104 Members** in 2019/2020, representing an increase of **1452 Members** served from the previous year (**54.8% growth**).

It is important to note that although the COVID-19 pandemic marginally affected the March programming in the present report, BIST continues to deliver, modify, and introduce programming and services to meet the needs of our members.

## Not So Blue Monday (NSBM):

This group continues to run weekly and offers members a lively, social educational space to create and share their artwork, poetry and more. NSBM was created in collaboration with Community Head Injury Resource Services (CHIRS) and is facilitated by a CHIRS staff member.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **439** (18% GROWTH)

## ABI Adult Support Group

This support group continues to serve adult BIST members (ages 27+) living with the effects of mild to moderate ABI's. The support group is facilitated by a social worker and provides a space for members to connect and share their experiences, challenges, successes, and coping strategies in an inclusive and supportive space.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **228** (30% GROWTH)

## Men's Social Drop-In:

Formerly the social drop-in, the Men's Group saw a steady rise in participation over 2018/2019. Now offering programming specifically to members who identify as men, the group has demonstrated a steady, gradual increase in engagement since the transition in Jan 2019. The group offers members an opportunity to connect socially with other men living with ABI both in the office and in the community.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **75** (17% GROWTH)

## Peer Support Post-Concussion Drop-In:

This pilot program grew out of member-driven interest and was first offered in Jan 2018. Since its launch, the group has experienced mixed engagement and participation and was unattended for six months in 2018/2019. Despite this attendance, the group did have significant growth (162%) over the previous year. Given the decrease in engagement and lack of member interest, the program was cancelled in Jan 2020 and will be reviewed for continuation.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **21** (162% GROWTH)

## Young Adult Group:

Attendance in the young adult group has continued to drop over the years. This has been primarily due to youth members ageing out of this group, moving on to college/university, developing new health issues and, or the need for more intensive support. Participation significantly dropped over April - June and was cancelled in July for the remainder of the year due to diminished interest.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **11** (84.5% DECLINE)

*Number reflects attendance from April - June 2019*

## Parent Support Group:

Similar to the young adult group, this drop-in support program experienced a decline in participation over the previous year. Unfortunately, the parent support program was also cancelled in July. Members of this group were encouraged to attend the caregiver peer support group, and many have continued to receive support from this alternative programming.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **12** (79% DECLINE)

*Number reflects attendance from April - June 2019*

## Women's Support Group:

After its launch in September 2018, and thanks to a substantial grant from Shopper's Drug Mart, this group continued to grow over the past year. The group is facilitated by a social worker, offered twice each month and addresses the unique challenges and experiences of women with ABI.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **97** (44.8% GROWTH)

## Community Meetings:

The community meeting continues to serve members as both an educational workshop experience and a social gathering space each month. These meetings provide the platform for the annual Halloween and Holiday parties, as well as the Summer Picnic and Annual General Meeting.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **332** (36% GROWTH)

## Special Thanks to our Amazing Presenters

Jason Peddle - *Toronto Police Services*

Rikie Ritcher - *Osteopathy*

Rose- Anne Partridge - *Essential Oils*

Alex Theodorou - *Occutheapy*

Renee Long - *Craniosacral Therapy*

Kate Stewart & The Canadian Adaptive Climbing Team - *Adaptive Climbing*

Jenn Bowler, Michelle Diamond, & Dr. Carolyn Lemsky - *How to Cope with Anxiety around COVID-19*

Carl Dixon & Lauren Dixon, Melanie Peterson, Angela Saini, Melanie Frade, Sarah Jordan & Matt Von - *Music on the Brain Concert*

Shawn Gargoum & the Complex Injury Rehab Team - *The Concussion Series*

Dr. Bojana Budisin, Dr. Liesel-Ann Meusel, Kyle Whaley, Hoong Phang, Dr. Chanth Seyone, Simone Friedman & Natalie Kalymon - *The ABI Info Series*

## Community Outings:

Community outings continue to be among the most well-attended groups in BIST's programming. The outings offer members an opportunity to visit a Toronto attraction (e.g., the AGO, or the movies) and to engage in the community.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **268** (3.6% DECLINE)

## Caregiver Peer Support Group:

This group continues to offer crucial support and respite to family members and caregivers. The trained peer facilitators who lead the group provide members with a social-educational space to share experiences and learn from one another.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **45** (36.36% GROWTH)

## Weekly Member Phone & Email Support:

BIST staff and volunteers continue to support members from a distance through telecommunication. These services are a helpful, barrier-free alternative for members who are unable to travel to the office and require assistance with resources, education, and brief social support.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **1204** - 33.8% GROWTH

## Weekly One-on-One Member Support:

This program connects BIST members with placement students and volunteers. This program has assisted members in completing various applications (e.g., WheelTrans, the ABI Network, Access 2 card), organizing paperwork and calendars, and much more.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **54** - 28.6% GROWTH

## Workshops

In 2019/2020, BIST continued to offer members a variety of informative and creative workshops. Both the Concussion and ABI series continue to offer educational and practical strategies for navigating recovery and adapting to life with a brain injury. The Music on the Brain Concert and the Expressive Art Show allowed members to showcase their creative skills and to enjoy an evening of music together.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: **1318**

Workshop	Date	Presenter	Attendance
<b>Expressive Art Show [Brain Injury in the 6ix]</b>	May 21 - 25		1100
<b>Music on the Brain Concert</b>	June 9th	Carl & Lauren Dixon, Melanie Peterson, Angela Saini, Sarah Jordan and Matt Von, Melanie Frade	60
<b>Concussion Series</b>			
Week 1 - Concussion 101	Nov 4th	Shawn Gargoum	14
Week 2 - Nutrition, Exercise and Concussion	Nov 18th	Shawn Gargoum	18
Week 3 - Pacing, Planning and Sleep	Nov 25th	Ayushi Dhingra	13
Week 4 - Self-Advocacy and Resiliency	Dec 2nd	Colleen Worsley	10
<b>ABI Info Series</b>			
Acceptance Following a Traumatic Brain Injury	March 2nd	Dr. Bojana Budisin & Dr. Liesel-Ann Meusel	18
Physical Rehabilitation Following a Brain Injury	March 9th	Kyle Whaley & Hoong Phang (registered physiotherapists)	12
How Medications Can Be Used In the Treatment Of Patients With Brain Injury	March 16th	Dr. Chanth Seyone	25
Community Healthcare and Government Resources	March 23rd	Laura Bellon	21
Implementation of Compensatory Strategies After a Brain Injury	March 30th	Simone Friedman (Speech language therapist) & Natalie Kalymon (Occupational Therapist)	27
<b>TOTAL Number of Members Served</b>			<b>1318</b>



# 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).

<b>2019/2020 Peer Support Program</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Number Served</b>
# of Trainings	9
Current # of Active Matches	7
# of Partner Intakes	18
# of Mentor Intakes	3
# of BIST Mentors Matched	15
# of Matches Completed	23
<b>Total # Served</b>	<b>75</b>



# 2019/2020 FINANCIAL REPORT

## JOSH HIMMEL, TREASURER

In 2020, BIST achieved financial growth through increasing fundraising efforts and securing additional grants. This has allowed us to further expand our service offering to the brain injury community of Toronto. The increase in revenue and corresponding increase in expenses is primarily driven by the additional grants secured during the year. We continue to leverage our fundraising revenue, grant funds and corporate sponsorships to better serve our community and navigate through the evolving times ahead. We continue to look for new programming and grant opportunities that will allow us to offer additional services to the community and we are excited about the opportunities ahead of us.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our members, board members, community partners, and sponsors including our new corporate sponsors, OBIA and our dedicated staff for all their work. Without these significant efforts BIST would not be the organization it is today.

CDN \$	Year Ended March 31, 2020	Year Ended March 31, 2019
<b>Revenue</b>		
Fundraising Revenue	\$ 207,834	\$ 179,252
Grant Revenue	201,008	111,801
Other Revenue	77,661	51,903
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 486,503</b>	<b>\$ 342,956</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Contractor Fees & Program Expenses	\$ 121,825	\$ 131,153
Fundraising Event Expenses	74,701	66,772
OTF Grant Expenses	201,791	111,801
Admin and Other Expenses	32,291	43,257
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 430,608</b>	<b>\$ 352,983</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 55,895</b>	<b>\$ (10,027)</b>
CDN \$	As At March 31, 2020	As At March 31, 2019
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 222,161	\$ 172,417
HST Receivable	11,024	10,886
Accounts Receivable	34,363	4,516
Prepaid Expenses	4,685	4,685
Investments	62,781	61,945
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 335,014</b>	<b>\$ 254,449</b>
<b>Liabilities and Equity</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$ 32,626	\$ 41,746
Deferred Revenue	161,554	127,764
Retained Earnings	140,834	84,939
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>\$ 335,014</b>	<b>\$ 254,449</b>

# TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR PROGRAM

## LAURA BELLON, TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR

The Transitional Support Coordinator Program is funded by a three-year Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant. The program is currently in its second year of operation.

The program offers supports to adults who identify with a brain injury and/or cognitive issues, who live in the Toronto area. The program is for those who are seeking support in accessing social assistance and stabilizing their financial needs through application with the Ontario Disability Support Program.

The three-year grant target is to support 75 participants throughout its duration. Although not an exhaustive list, the program has supported individuals with finding various community supports, such as: Family Physicians, Headache and Pain Specialists, Psychiatrists, Psychiatrists, talk therapists, Dentists and Optometrists.

The program has also supported clients in connecting with long-term supports through program referrals to Access Point, CAMH, One-Link, Housing supports, Women's Habitat and Barbara Schlifer Clinic.

During support initiatives to help stabilize client's financial needs, support was given to help client's complete taxes, acquire ID, connect with landlords to help pay rent, initiate referrals to legal aid, and support client's through the Ontario Court system.

The Transitional Support Program initiatives produced a secondary talk with Ontario Works employees in the Etobicoke area to provide additional information to workers on BIST and program supports.

As well, a presentation was given to BIST members on March 11, 2019 titled Community, Healthcare and Government Resources fulfilling part of the grant requirements and providing participants with access to supports in their community.

As of March 31, 2019, the program has reached 54 participants, with 10 self-referrals, 13 Brain Injury Society of Toronto self-referrals, 7 Community Agency referrals, and 24 Ontario Works referrals. The total the number of referrals between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 reached 31 participants.

Funding for this project ends in February of 2021.

# VIOLENCE IMPACT COORDINATOR PROGRAM

## ISABELLE RIVALETTO, VIOLENCE IMPACT COORDINATOR

The Violence Impact Coordinator Program is a one-year Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant which began in October 2019.

The program offers support to adults who identify with a brain injury and/or cognitive issues, who live in the Toronto area and who have been victims of intimate partner violence. The program is for those who are seeking trauma informed support in accessing social assistance, housing, support with medical appointments, referrals to counselling, updating and submitting taxes and overall stabilization while exiting or currently living within a situation of intimate partner violence.

The one-year grant target is to support 30 participants throughout its duration. The program has supported individuals with finding various community supports, such as: Family Physicians, Access to Housing Lists, Support Groups, Psychiatrists, Legal Aid, Psychotherapists, Social Workers, Case Managers and in the Spring/Summer of 2020 offered participants a six-week WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Groups.

The Violence Impact Program initiative provided talks with the Toronto Community Paramedicine Unit, Yorktown Women's Shelter and Ernestine's Women's Shelter in the Etobicoke area to provide additional information to workers on brain injury, BIST and program supports.

As well, this Coordinator joined the FOCUS Toronto tables to provide further access to BIST supports for individuals who have been deemed by table agencies to be at acute elevated risk (AER).

As of March 31, 2020, the program has serviced 22 participants, with 15 self-referrals, 1 Community Agency referrals, and 2 Ontario Works referrals. The total number of referrals between October 2019 and March 31, 2020 reached 22 participants.



# SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

**MERI PERRA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER**

BIST reached over one million people online and engaged over 200,000 people in the period from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, marking a new milestone for our organization.

Across all platforms, BIST has 8,734 followers, an increase of 2,754 followers from the previous period.

These numbers represent an increase of:

- 26% in Reach
- 120% in Engagement
- 37% in Followers

<b>BIST Social Media &amp; Online April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020</b>			
<b>Platform</b>	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Followers</b>
Blog	19,869	26634	1994
Twitter	537280	7893	3315
Facebook	388147	44946	1674
Instagram	46,646	46225	1306
Linked In	31872	24021	445
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1023814</b>	<b>149719</b>	<b>8734</b>
Bist.ca	30,522	76318	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1054336</b>	<b>226037</b>	<b>8734</b>

## Brain Injury Blog TORONTO

The following is a monthly breakdown of analytics from the blog, which currently has 1994 followers.

Brain Injury Blog TORONTO April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020				
Month	Total Posts	Total Views	Total Visitors	Likes
April	5	1990	1530	6
May	3	2764	2115	3
June	4	2425	1855	4
July	1	2147	1643	5
August	4	1720	1314	9
September	1	2153	1607	0
October	2	2736	2042	16
November	4	2225	1580	11
December	7	2356	1737	4
January	4	2526	1892	10
February	3	1883	1361	3
March	1	1709	1193	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>26,634</b>	<b>19,869</b>	<b>76</b>

## THANK YOU BLOG WRITERS!

Alison  
Elizabeth MacGregor  
Janet Craig  
Maria Liscio  
Blue Helmet Girl  
Mark Koning  
Julia Renaud  
Shannon Schilling  
Alyson Rogers

## Twitter @BrainInjuryTO

Our Twitter account continued to gain followers. We began the period with 3010 followers on April 1, 2019 and ended with 3315 followers on March 31, 2020 marking a 10% increase. November had the highest impressions - likely due to Tweets mentioning the Toronto Police Service Town Hall. Brain Injury Awareness Month in June had the highest engagement.

April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020									
Month	Total Tweets	Impre-ssions	Engage-ment	Engage-ment Rate	Clicks	Retweets	Likes	Replies	Followers
April	56	30033	440	1.20%	90	72	142	2	3010
May	64	37400	441	1%	72	71	143	8	3053
June	104	75100	1406	1.00%	130	130	337	23	3103
July	47	31700	357	1.2%%	78	78	109	10	3114
August	57	27500	379	0.90%	120	120	117	1	3138
September	72	38200	745	1.40%	78	78	127	4	3155
October	42	35449	449	1.40%	107	48	110	4	3187
November	75	114639	1151	0.80%	186	109	291	15	3236
December	49	47460	568	1.10%	117	66	195	4	3252
January	43	29925	536	1.10%	128	59	188	6	3280
February	49	24874	519	0.97%	122	65	163	12	3295
March	88	45000	902	1.80%	172	172	244	26	3307
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>537280</b>	<b>7893</b>	<b>1.15%</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>2166</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>3315</b>

**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 16% during this period, while our reach, which was 229,125 last period, increased by 51%. Here, March was the most successful month due to BIST's Fraud and Financial Abuse Awareness Campaign.

<b>Facebook - April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020</b>							
<b>Month</b>	<b>Total Posts</b>	<b>Total Reach</b>	<b>Organic Reach</b>	<b>Paid Reach</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Engaged Users</b>	<b>Followers</b>
April	37	21967	21967	0	31202	1320	1422
May	42	20348	20348	0	29151	1586	1444
June	46	26384	26384	0	39611	1988	1462
July	32	22669	22669	0	32594	1863	1515
August	37	18325	16214	2210	27289	1808	1562
September	52	14451	14451	0	19785	1094	1590
October	42	12748	12748	0	15346	954	1604
November	35	13535	13535	0	13942	1401	1605
December	26	11750	11750	0	12327	1137	1639
January	31	11135	11135	0	11436	836	1654
February	29	9473	9473	0	9670	809	1664
March	39	205,362	11280	194,082	12531	820	1674
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>388147</b>	<b>191954</b>	<b>196292</b>	<b>254884</b>	<b>44946</b>	<b>1674</b>

**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 26% during this period. Brain Injury Awareness Month in June was the most successful month on this platform as well.

<b>Instagram April 1 2019 - March 31, 2020</b>								
<b>Month</b>	<b># Posts</b>	<b>Likes</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Saved</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Reach</b>	<b>Video Views</b>	<b>Followers</b>
April	4	136	6	10	1311	1999	n/a	1011
May	15	446	23	6	4778	7049	213	1036
June	22	1201	28	49	7535	10796	601	1095
July	7	216	5	9	3145	2175	n/a	1118
Aug	11	293	9	11	4257	4080	n/a	1127
Sept	20	430	8	5	6959	3181	181	1154
Oct	9	124	8	4	2833	2232	n/a	1181
Nov	6	147	4	2	2499	2203	n/a	1229
Dec	9	229	4	6	2944	3284	n/a	1249
Jan	6	202	9	23	2128	2527	n/a	1268
Feb	7	201	14	37	2764	2402	n/a	1287
March	12	293	18	47	5102	4718	489	1306
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>3918</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>46,255</b>	<b>46,646</b>	<b>1484</b>	<b>1306</b>

## Linked In: Brain Injury Society of Toronto

BIST's Linked In Account has a following of 445, an increase of 45% followers since the last period.

Linked In April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020						
Month	Total Posts	Clicks	Impressions	Social Actions	Reach	Followers
April	4	56	1469	57	1472	280
May	5	98	1747	68	8735	293
June	7	50	1941	75	1946	304
July	3	20	929	37	2787	310
August	6	40	1612	69	1602	320
Sept	15	61	3308	106	3300	329
October	13	52	3075	117	3081	337
November	7	127	2334	114	2331	372
December	7	32	1743	59	1743	387
January	6	69	1524	58	1524	419
February	8	59	1916	33	1920	425
March	17	73	2423	90	2431	445
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>24021</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>31,872</b>	<b>445</b>

[www.bist.ca](http://www.bist.ca)

The screenshots on the following page are from Google Analytics shows how [bist.ca](http://www.bist.ca) performed throughout April 1, 2019- March 31, 2020. These indicate there were:

- 30,522 people who visited the site
- The majority of visitors were new users
- The average time spent on the site was 1:38 minutes
- Most people find [bist.ca](http://www.bist.ca) through an organic search (such as Google)
- Once again, our most visited page is Alison's article, "Activities to do while Recovering from a Concussion" - this has been the case since the article was originally published in 2016
- [bist.ca](http://www.bist.ca)'s 3rd most popular page is [www.bist.ca/event](http://www.bist.ca/event) which lists our monthly programs, showing that our service users access our website for monthly program information

### Sessions:

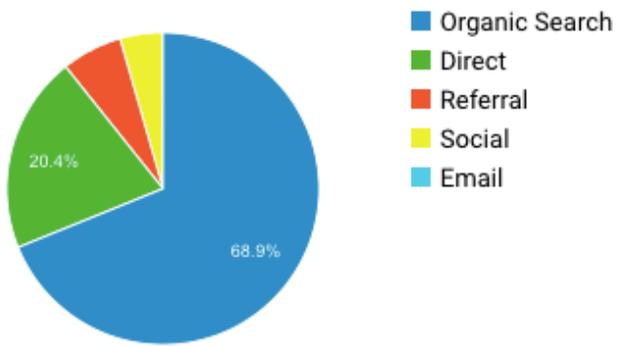
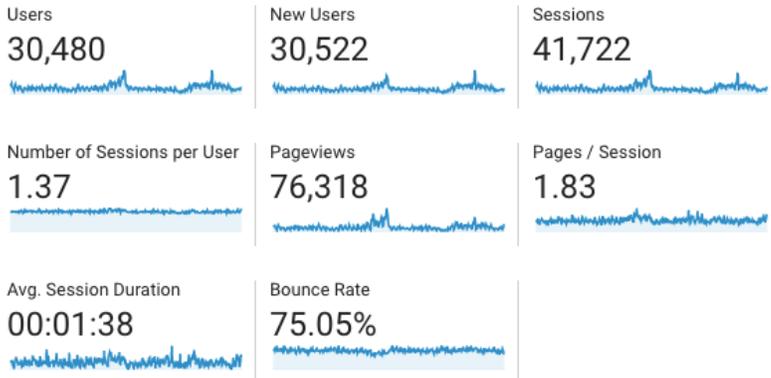
What one site visitor views during their visit to the site - during a specific time period (i.e. 30 minutes). If a visitor visits the site once in the morning, and once in the afternoon, this counts as two sessions.

### 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



	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	30,480	30,522	41,722	75.05%	1.83	00:01:38
1 Organic Search	21,588			80.72%		
2 Direct	6,401			67.38%		
3 Referral	1,966			53.45%		
4 Social	1,383			68.77%		

Primary Dimension: Page path level 1 Page

Secondary dimension: Sort Type: Default

Page path level 1	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
	76,318 % of Total: 100.00% (76,318)	62,183 % of Total: 100.00% (62,183)	00:01:59 Avg for View: 00:01:59 (0.00%)	75.05% Avg for View: 75.05% (0.00%)	54.67% Avg for View: 54.67% (0.00%)
1. /activities-to-pass-the-time-while-recovering-from-a-concussion/	17,051 (22.34%)	16,089 (25.87%)	00:07:14	94.64%	94.22%
2. /	10,710 (14.03%)	8,224 (13.23%)	00:01:36	41.72%	40.40%
3. /events/	10,469 (13.72%)	8,017 (12.89%)	00:01:30	52.84%	34.30%
4. /event/	7,398 (9.69%)	5,429 (8.73%)	00:01:49	71.67%	34.78%
5. /about/	3,841 (5.03%)	3,180 (5.11%)	00:01:40	59.13%	37.15%
6. /5k/	3,174 (4.16%)	2,508 (4.03%)	00:03:10	75.99%	69.75%
7. /registration/	1,356 (1.78%)	1,092 (1.76%)	00:01:23	56.41%	7.60%
8. /contact/	1,055 (1.38%)	939 (1.51%)	00:03:21	78.54%	63.70%
9. /birdies/	1,003 (1.31%)	762 (1.23%)	00:03:02	71.38%	60.02%
10. /this-valentines-day-fall-in-love-with-yourself/	981 (1.29%)	890 (1.43%)	00:03:47	91.67%	90.62%

# 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/Thriver, Caregiver, BIST Ambassador.

## ABI Survivor/Thriver Winner: Mike McNally

For as long as we can remember, Mike McNally, affectionately known as Big Mike, has been the greatest ambassador of the BIST Heroes 5K event. He has leant his energy, and inspiration to a series of motivational videos, he works hard to increase his time and the distance he walks towards the finish line, and last year, his team (Run for Big Mike) raised \$18,000! We are thrilled to have him as part of the BIST family and recognize how deserving he is of this award.

## Caregiver Winner: Andrea Rovazzi

Andrea has been one of the co-facilitators of our Caregiver Peer Support group since its inception. Andrea can always be counted on to provide support to members, communicate with the BIST team and is a staple at all our community events. Her smile lights up every room, and her humour is infectious. We thank Andrea for her years of dedication to our community.

## BIST Ambassador: Kate Mazzucco

Kate has been the Chair of our Heroes 5K committee for the past 2 years. If you've noticed how the event has been elevated over this time, we have her to thank! She is the queen of rallying the community together and introducing new supporters to the run including the Toronto Fire Association (a hit for all participants crossing the finish line) and Coast to Coast Coffee, fueling our runners, walkers and rollers with a much-needed caffeine hit. We thank Kate for the endless hours she has spent chairing our meetings and working to ensure this family friendly event continues to be a successful one!



Mike McNally



Andrea Rovazzi



Kate Mazzucco

# BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH COMMITTEE

## MATTHEW CHUNG, COMMITTEE CHAIR

For the 2019 Brain Injury Awareness campaign, the Awareness Committee collaborated with community partners to raise awareness and understanding about the effects of brain injury. Building on our relationships with various hospitals and community groups, our volunteers attended events to share information about brain injury statistics, effects as well as BIST supports and programming.

During this campaign we handed out 'Brain Injury Can Happen to Anyone' stickers, pens, pamphlets and brain-shaped Squish Candy. In case you missed us, we had information booths set up at the following:

- Toronto Western Hospital
- Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, where BIST gave an educational presentation to their Brain Injury rehab team
- Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre
- Toronto Pride weekend
- Variety Village - The Access Expo
- Toronto Youth Day - a creative arts festival celebrating young people at Yonge-Dundas Square

In addition, we partnered with Community Head Injury Resource Services (CHIRS) to host Our 1st Music on the Brain concert, featuring Carl Dixon of Coney Hatch and his daughter, Lauren.

BIST Executive Director, along with Jordan Assaraf (Board Chair) and Laura Bellon (Transitional Support Coordinator) also participated in an Unmasking Brain Injury Event at Queen's Park.

Carl Dixon and BIST were also featured on Global News Morning, when Carl performed during the show.

The CN Tower was once again lit up Blue and Green, the colours of brain injury awareness to commemorate our annual BIST/OBIA Mix and Mingle as was The TORONTO sign in Nathan Phillips Square. We hosted our annual Birdies for Brain Injury golf tournament and Mayor John Tory proclaimed June Brain Injury Awareness month.





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# MIX & MINGLE

This year, along with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA), we celebrated our 15-year anniversary of the Mix & Mingle, where we celebrated partnerships within our ABI community. Our event took place on Wednesday, June 12th, 2019 at the Steam Whistle Brewery in Toronto.

With over 700 guests in attendance, the event was once again another success in raising awareness for this important cause, as well as raising funds to support our ongoing programs and services.

A huge thank you to all our sponsors for your generous donations and continued support.

Many thanks to the Mix and Mingle Committee for organizing such an amazing event: Greg Neinstein (chair), Terry Bartol, Jennifer Norquay, Ellie Lapowich, Yasmin Klement, John Paul Zeni, Pamela Foster, Nick Gurvich, Deena Ginsberg, Cynthia Sprigings, Jordan Assaraf, Sonya Fervaha, Melissa Vigar, Joanne Driscoll

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# BIRDIES FOR BRAIN INJURY

Our 5TH annual Birdies for Brain Injury was another well organized and fun day for all. Held at Lionhead Golf Club on June 21ST, 2019, this event brought together the ABI community, sports and the great outdoors.

This SOLD OUT event raised \$44,000 and for the first time we had a Media Sponsor and had on-air ads running on Z103.5 Many thanks to the committee, golfers and sponsors who helped us reach our fundraising goal.

**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.



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# 5K HEROES RUN, WALK OR ROLL

We had another successful event on September 29, 2019!

We raised the most funds EVER at our 2019 5k Heroes, Run, Walk or Roll, bringing in approximately \$55,000 to support BIST supports and services.

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

## Top Male Finishers

1. Garvin Moses
2. Shion Ramsey
3. Scott Garrett

## Top Female Finishers

1. Kathleen Lawrence
2. Erin Spencer
3. Laura Macphee

## Top Child 12 & Under

1. Chase Ellis
2. Knowledge Spencer
3. Francis Duras

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



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# 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](http://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.

**Once again Colleen Worsley, Complex Injury, hosted a Beach Blast Volleyball Event, which benefited multiple brain injury associations, including ours, thank you Colleen and all the folks who participated!**



# 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.

## Josh Himmel, Treasurer

Josh is a Senior Accountant at Lipton LLP, a mid-sized accounting firm. He has had extensive experience working with clients in the not-for-profit sector and has a strong background in the Accounting Standards for Not-for-Profit Organizations (ASNPO). Additionally, as Josh has had a close relative suffer from ABI, he has seen the effect it has on the individual and their family members. Josh is looking forward to both raise awareness for brain injury and broaden the reach of BIST while using his professional experience in accounting to help ensure long-term growth from a financial perspective.

## Darrell Booker

Darrell began volunteering for BIST so that he could be involved with helping survivors from the ground up. As an owner of In-Trend Home Solutions, he 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 comorbid 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.

# BIST

Brain Injury Society of Toronto



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