

BI-INSIDE *Magazine*

10th ISSUE: September 2023

Recovery: Vision Issues



BRAIN INJURY™
RESOURCE
CENTER of Wisconsin

FEATURES:

Resource Facilitation: Have you Heard of Neuro-Fatigue?

Picnic Recap

Take a Closer Look: Help is on the way!

Vision Problems After TBI

Telling of the Tail: Barb S (Caregiver)

Good Day Everyone!

The Summer of 2023 has started off slow, but has ended with a bang! August 26th brought a beautiful day and this day was also our BIRC Picnic day! The picnic was held at the Blue Lotus Center in West Bend. This location offered our group so many wonderful opportunities and perhaps the best part about this location is that it has been designed to be handi-cap accessible!

Their website even states, the "Blue Lotus Center assists people of any age with profound life challenges by offering accessible outdoor recreational and therapeutic opportunities in a caring, accepting and inspiring 64 acre day camp setting!" (Blue Lotus Center. 2023) The location is amazing , we want to give a big thanks to the Blue Lotus Staff that worked our event! We saw many familiar faces and encourage brain injury survivors to become part of our resource facilitation service and one of the many perks is being invited this picnic!

This magazine is full of links to webpages that will provide more information. Check out the links today! Hover over any given text to click.

Until next time!

Lois York-Lewis

Lois York-Lewis

Our Mission:

To offer assistance, provide resources and information and reassure survivors that they are not walking this journey alone.

Our Vision:

A world where all preventable brain injuries are prevented, all unpreventable brain injuries are minimized and all individuals who have experienced brain injury maximize their quality of life

Who we are:

We are all volunteer and run by brain injury survivors and support persons.

We are a 501C3, Registered Charity 27-4483622, Tax Exempt Organization, and are 100% funded through the generosity of people like you!

BI-INSIDE Magazine Team:

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Lois M. York-Lewis (Co-Founder, Mother of the TBI Survivor who inspired this organization, Mother in-law, Wife and Daughter to Brain Injury Survivor, Pres. of Board of Directors for the BIRCoFWI, and Contributor)

Linda Scherwinski (Mother to a Brain Injury Survivor, Contributor and Board Member for the BIRCoFWI)

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THANK YOU!!

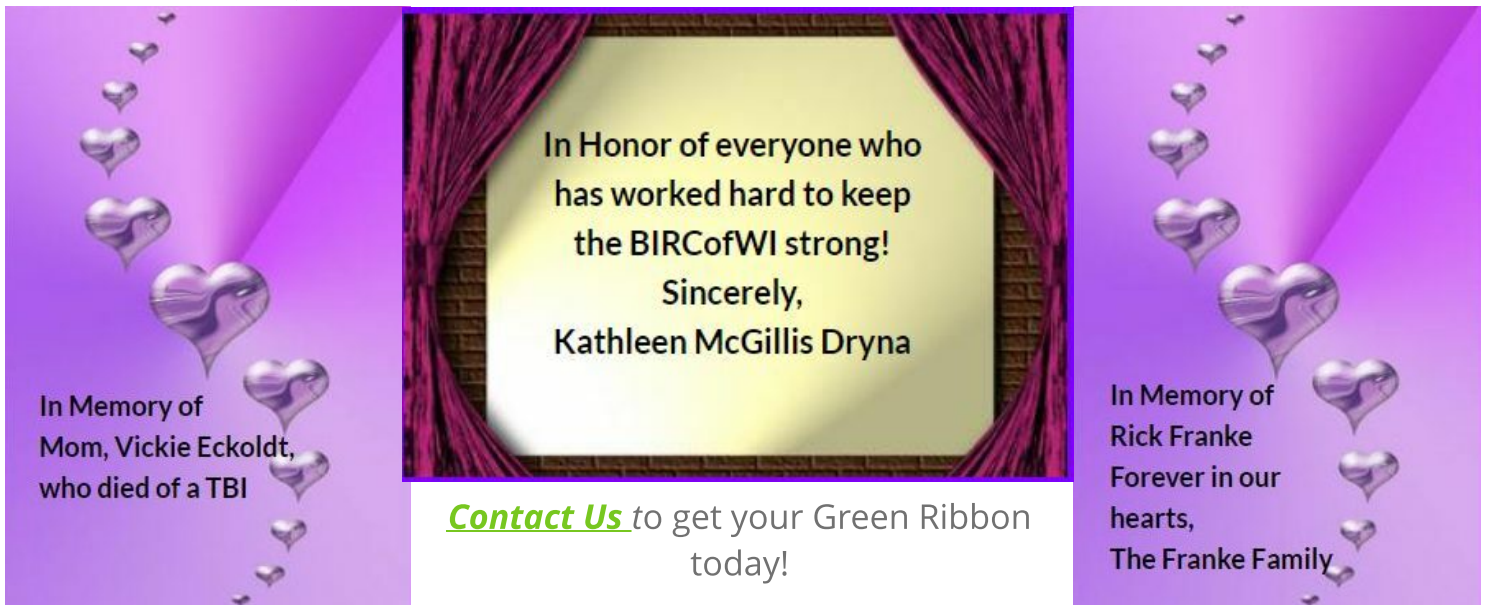
In Honor of...

Castellion, Kyle
 Dudzik, Mark
 Erickson, Renee'
 Franke, Rick
 Fromader, Tony
 Koenig, Robert
 Kraemer, Noelle
 Krahn, Sheri
 Lee, Grace
 Marshall, Katie
 Rieth, Bari**
 Rieth, Gary**
 Scherwinski, Micki
 Schmitt, Mark*

** Indicates additional recognition*

In Memory of...

Eckholdt, Vickie
 Foster, Donna
 Franke, Rick ***
 Gebert, Elliot
 Kasprzak, Loraine
 Koehler, Lois(Lois Ann)
 Kozak, Margaret (Peggy)
 Malueg, Mark
 Niebuhr, Matthew Marvin
 Rieth, Bethany*
 Robinson, Derek*



Participation in Thrivent Choice®

Makes a Difference

As eligible Thrivent Financial members direct Choice Dollars® to Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. the momentum continues to build. The funds we receive from Thrivent are used to help support our efforts to assist brain injury survivors and families locate needed resources, obtain information, and to further our education awareness and prevention efforts.

Thank you to Thrivent and its members who helped make this possible! Together, we can strengthen communities and changes lives.



Kathy Richardson, BS, CBIST
Resource Facilitator

FACT: Seventy percent (70%) of traumatic brain injury survivors suffer neuro-fatigue.

FACT: Brain injury survivors have less than one-third (1/3) of the energy reserve others have.

Neuro-fatigue is commonly defined as the awareness of a decreased capacity for physical and/or mental activity due to an imbalance in the availability, utilization, and/or restoration of resources (energy) needed to perform an activity. Resources may be physiological or psychological.

At a physiological level, fatigue is caused by damage to neurotransmitters or neural connections, due to brain injury. This damage impairs the processing speed, attention, memory and executive functions of the brain making cognitive functioning very exhausting for the brain.

When a brain is

Resource Facilitation: What's the Buzz

Have you heard of Neuro-fatigue?



injured, it takes a lot more energy to perform even the simplest of tasks, this is called *Primary fatigue*. *Primary fatigue* may also be associated with muscle weakness or injuries in the peripheral nervous stem.

According to Heins et al. psychological fatigue is a "state of weariness related to reduced motivation, prolonged mental activity, or boredom that occurs in situation such as chronic stress, anxiety or depression." 2018 This type of fatigue is called *Secondary fatigue* and often gets worse with stress.

Neuro-fatigue is one of the most debilitating consequences of a brain injury. It affects everything the injured person does, both physically and cognitively.

A person's emotions also become very raw when they are experiencing **neuro-fatigue**. After initially sustaining a brain injury, a survivor will find that they tire easily, even after a simple activity like watching TV or having a conversation with someone.

As time goes by, a survivor is likely to try and push themselves to do more things, resulting in **neuro-fatigue**. Accepting that you no longer have the

same physical and mental stamina that you had before your injury goes a long way in managing **neuro-fatigue**.

Please also remember that it will take your brain longer to recharge itself since your brain injury.

Signs of fatigue: Pale face, Glazed eyes, Irritable, Making mistakes, Loss of concentration, Headaches.

Avoiding Fatigue: Know your limits, don't over schedule yourself, Pace yourself, take breaks, Exercise for 30 minutes a day, Eat a well-balanced diet at regularly scheduled times, Make certain you get 8-10 hours' sleep each night, Don't nap during the day, Don't drink caffeine after noon, Schedule all your activities for the day and follow your schedule, Prioritize your activities, Do things requiring the most energy in the morning, Do one enjoyable activity each day, Avoid stressful situations, Do one relaxing activity each day, Take your medications according to prescriptions.

Conditions That May Cause or Increase Fatigue: Depression, Sleep apnea, Insomnia, Seasonal allergies, Hypothyroidism or other endocrine disorders,

Respiratory or cardiac problems, Headaches, Lack of exercise, Vitamin deficiency/poor nutrition, Stress, Anemia, Medications, Illness, Chronic pain, Sensory overload.

There may come a point sometime when you can barely stand up you are so fatigued.

When this happens the only thing, you can do is recharge by getting some rest and a good night's sleep.

Everything else will have to wait until you feel better. During times of extreme stress, such as the holidays, you need to closely monitor your fatigue and take a break when you feel it coming on.

You should seek medical help for your neuro-fatigue when you are having difficulty getting out of bed, you are not able to do things you enjoy, you are not sleeping well at night, you feel as though you have brain "fog", or you are having difficulty taking care of yourself or your family.

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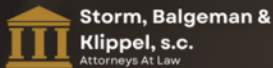


Picnic Recap 2023

What did you choose to do? Multiple options offered to have fun!



The picnic was full of fun and here are a few photos that captured some of the fun things we did at the **Blue Lotus Center**! Thank you again to **WisPact** for sponsoring our picnic and to the **Blue Lotus Center** for offering such a great environment for us!



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Take a Closer Look:

Help is on the way!

Written by: Bari L. Rieth

Since my brain injury, I have experienced vision problems. When I relayed to the eye doctor my symptoms went something like this, “close your right eye and tell me what you see.” I relayed some letters to the eye doctor and then the eye doctor told me “nothing seems to be wrong.” “You relayed the letters on the chart accurately.”

The advise was to come back in a year and we will see if there has been a change. With each visit I grew more and more frustrated each time I went to the eye doctor.

My frustration is that I told the eye doctor about my double vision issue, if everything is fine then how come I see two of everything? Yes this mainly happens at night when my eyes are tired, but should this be happening at all?

The eye doctor told me “you were probably sleepy, get some rest and your eyes will focus correctly” or “hmm... this is interesting...” From these two responses I began to wonder, was I doing something that is contributing to my eyes seeing double or did I just need more sleep.

To my amazement, it took me taking my son to a new eye doctor appointment and speaking with his optometrist that I discovered a break



Dr. Ryan Lang and Dr. Laura Lang
Lang Family Eye care

through with my vision problem.

When I first met Dr. Ryan Lang of Lang Family Eye care in New Berlin, I was very impressed by how he related to my son and talked with him about “stuff” that mattered to him. A light bulb in my head went off as Dr. Lang began to talk even more about his background.

He mentioned the brain eye connection and spoke about the various places he has done research at or worked for in his past. Hearing this, I realized he may just be the right doctor to tell me what was going on with my eye situation.

I was able to schedule an appointment with Dr. Lang, R. and for the first time someone was able to tell me what was going on. I found out I had a more complex problem called, “Dissociated Phoria from Cranial Nerve 4 Injury.”

He prescribed glasses with prisms to help my eyes focus correctly.

After anxiously waiting, I

was both over joyed and amazed the day I went to pick up my glasses. He advised me to not wear them for extensive periods of time due to eye strain.

I was so excited that I didn’t see double anymore, that I remember thinking that “I should never take them off,” however, I did follow his instructions and I cannot express how thankful I am to Dr. Lang, R.!

Since May of 2020 his diagnosis and the treatment has resolved the problem and I no longer experience the double vision issue.

If you have vision problems post TBI, I encourage you to call and schedule an appointment. Perhaps the best part of Lang Family Eye Care is that they truly are a family practice in the way that the other half of Lang Family Eye Care is Dr. Lang’s wife, Dr. Laura Lang.

If you are interested in more information, contact us today!

Vision Problems After Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

April 2014

www.msktc.org/tbi/factsheets

TBI Factsheet

This factsheet tells you about problems with your vision after a TBI and how to treat them.

What you need to know

- Your vision is important for many aspects of life.
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) can cause problems with your vision.
- Treatment can either fix the problem completely, improve your vision, or help you better manage the problem.

What is vision and why is it important?

We often think about vision as being simply what we see. However, vision also includes how our brains make sense of what we see. Vision also helps other systems in the body work well. These include the systems for thinking and moving. When the visual system isn't working properly, there can be a wide-ranging impact on our daily living activities (e.g., reading, driving, employment, school, and recreational activities) and quality of life. Depending on its location and severity, a TBI can affect your vision by damaging parts of the brain involved in visual processing and/or perception (e.g., cranial nerves, optic nerve tract or other circuitry involved in vision, occipital lobe).

How are vision problems found after TBI?

Many members of your care team can find vision problems after TBI. An eye doctor may be part of the team and can check for vision difficulties. Therapists or other rehabilitation clinicians may be the first to notice a problem. They can make a referral to an eye doctor who can examine you and offer advice for treatment. Eye doctors who diagnose and treat vision problems after TBI include optometrists (op-TOM-ah-trists) and ophthalmologists (op-thal-MOL-oh-jists). Neuro-optometrists and neuro-ophthalmologists are specialists with additional training in working with people with brain-related vision problems. Consult with your care team to identify the most appropriate resources for your evaluation and treatment.

What are common types of vision problems after TBI?

There are a variety of visual problems that can occur at different time points in your recovery. Some of the most common types of vision problems include the following:

- Blurred vision, especially with seeing up close
- Double vision
- Decreased peripheral vision

There can also be complete loss of vision in one or both eyes depending on the injury.

How can these vision problems affect my day-to-day life?

Many of the visual problems after TBI can make it more difficult for you to read or do activities up close. For example,

- Close objects may look blurry some or all of the time.
- It may take longer than is typical to focus when looking up from reading.
- Printed letters or numbers and other objects may look as if they're moving.
- It may be difficult to read a computer screen.

It may also be harder for you to be comfortable in some kinds of environments. You may feel:

- Irritable in places with a lot of patterns or motion (visual overload).
- Bothered by light or glare.

The Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems Program is sponsored by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. (See <http://www.msktc.org/tbi/model-system-centers> for more information)

Learning to Live with Yourself after Brain Injury

Written by: *Shari K.*



Brain Cancer Survivor

If you, or someone you know, is looking for some practical advice to make your recovery after Brain Injury (BI) more successful, the book *–Learning To Live With Yourself After Brain Injury*, by Jeffrey Sebell, would be my recommendation.

Jeffrey doesn't give many details about his TBI, other than he was broadsided in a vehicle accident and suffered an acceleration/deceleration injury, which he calls his "Jello Injury." He humorously refers to the result of all of this trauma to his brain as his brain closing up shop and hanging up a sign saying "Gone Fishing," and leaving him for an extended vacation.

Can you relate?

One consequence of a BI is the loss of sense of self or the ability to understand your present role and place in the world. Jeffrey refers to his challenge as his attempt to

"Regain Humanity."

He compares that challenge to being thrust headlong into battle but unable to comprehend or learn the new rules. I am sure many BI survivors can identify with that feeling.

Jeffrey points out that some BI survivors mistake the battle to be about "recovering" their old self and lost abilities. Some of us have losses that simply cannot be recovered.

He advocates that we fight to discover what and who we are becoming rather than what happened to us. He wants us to strive to create new and healthy relationships between us, our new self, the world, and our brain injury.

Jeffrey focuses on helping us gain a new perspective to fuel us in this journey to discovery. He refers to "goo" as the stuff that makes living worthwhile for you and charge your mental batteries.

Discover new things that bring you joy and give your pursuits meaning. It may also help to think of yourself as needing to "reset zero" on the car of your life and move forward creating a new human being [existence] in a "pre-owned car."

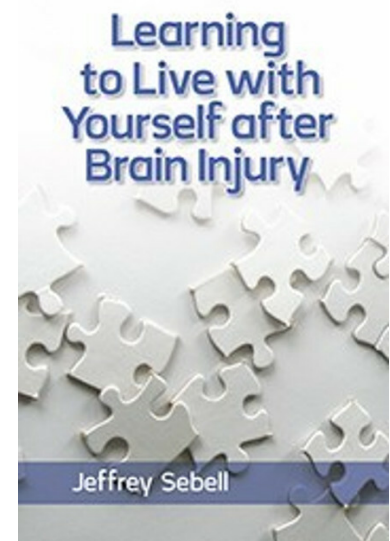
This means believing in yourself and defining what success means to you. You are in control of how fast, or slow,

you need to go and don't need to live up to expectations of others.

Jeffrey's insights also come in the form of cautions that can impede our growth and development in the discovery process; most notably, "our story." When we blame our mistakes on our BI, or over-protect ourselves from mistakes or perceived failure, our BI is controlling us and negatively influencing all of our decisions and negatively affecting all of our relationships.

Be careful that your BI story doesn't keep you stuck in the muck of "woe is me." Yes, BI has probably affected your life negatively, but it has also added to your life positively.

Adopt a "victor," not a "victim" mentality and you will excel, flourish and live a fulfilled life. Learn to let go of your old BI story and create a new BI discovery story.



Telling of the Tale: Barb S. (Caregiver)

Written by: Bari L. Rieth

As Barb S. left the hospital with her husband, she was left with the feeling of being isolated. She then described common feelings of a caregiver, being overwhelmed and grateful at the same time.

The love that was felt from the community, friends, church family and her siblings was so great. Barb can't imagine how she would have gotten through most days without them, but there was a void of understanding.

Our slogan is: Brain Injury: I can explain it to you, but I can't understand it for you." This slogan is true about the journey one takes after brain injury, but can be applied to describe a similar journey that the brain injury survivor's family and/or loved ones go through.

Barb's husband was in a snowmobile accident in St. Germaine, WI which is located



in Vilas County near the Michigan border. The accident took place on December 29, 1995, and he was released from the hospital in February of

1996.

"I was left with a man I didn't really know, and I was not provided any additional support or the resources to get that support," Barb told me in an interview. Their family was not given any resources to help educate her, her husband, their (at the time) three small children, and the hospital did not give any follow up information other than which doctor to see for follow up visits.

Lastly, she felt isolated in a world full of caring people with just as caring gestures, but there was no one to talk to about her husband's brain injury and no support group information was given. Barb relayed to me that she "just didn't take the time or have the time to pursue taking care of the kiddos and working a full-time job."

All of the responsibilities began to weigh large on Barb's mind and a new twist to her already complicated situation made the whole ordeal even worse. It was a classic case of Dr. Jeckel/Mr. Hide with her husband, he was the "fun guy" when everyone was around, but behind closed doors he became someone she did not even know.

Some of their friends and people they had associated



with before the accident were no longer there due to life just happening and no longer sharing common interests. July 21, 2014, marked the date the divorce was final.

Knowing the divorce was final left Barb with mixed emotions of relief and failure. She has reached out to the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin in the hopes of providing support to other caregivers and just be there to listen.

If you are in a similar situation as Barb and would like to chat with her, give us a call (262) 770-4882 or drop an email to: admin@bircofwi.org subject line, Re: Barb S., and we will connect you to Barb.

| StrokeSmart Word Scramble | |
|---------------------------|--|
| IUETCAAZL | |
| EAUDTVRNE | |
| NEBGNGNII | |
| FRLWUOEP | |
| RDTEMNEDIE | |
| ERITBRH | |
| NEPIIDSR | |
| ECTPPROS | |

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| | | 7 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 3 | |
| 2 | 3 | | | 4 | 1 | | |
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| | 8 | 4 | | | 6 | 7 | |
| | | | 3 | | | 1 | 9 |
| | | 3 | 6 | | | 4 | 1 |
| | 5 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 7 | | |
| 7 | | | 8 | | | | |

StrokeSmart Sudoku

Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure every row, column & 3 by 3 box includes

StrokeSmart Word Search

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| M | E | A | P | P | E | A | A | J | E | R | P |
| I | E | E | L | O | V | I | S | I | O | N | A |
| H | E | V | E | I | H | C | A | F | O | Y | D |
| S | C | C | R | M | V | B | F | N | N | A | A |
| N | T | R | A | M | S | E | K | O | R | T | S |
| A | I | E | L | L | A | L | E | I | A | R | U |
| H | R | G | C | G | P | I | P | T | E | I | C |
| D | C | T | E | T | A | E | R | C | L | U | C |
| V | S | R | D | B | A | V | R | A | D | M | E |
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|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. StrokeSmart | 6. Change | 11. Alive |
| 2. Hope | 7. Believe | 12. Success |
| 3. Triumph | 8. Learn | 13. Begin |
| 4. Action | 9. Replace | 14. Declare |
| 5. Create | 10. Adapt | 15. Eager |
| | | 16. Joy |
| | | 17. Achieve |
| | | 18. Effort |
| | | 19. Dream |
| | | 20. Vision |

Know the Sudden Signs of Stroke

If you see someone experiencing any of these stroke symptoms, call 911 immediately. Getting treatment within 60 minutes can prevent disability.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

KNOW STROKE
www.stroke.ninds.nih.gov
1-800-352-9424

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Watch your mail/email for more information on upcoming events! If you are not on our mailing list, complete the information below to get started!

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Contacts First Name: | | Contacts Last Name: | |
| Mailing Address: | | | |
| City: | | State: | Zip Code: |
| Cell # (including area code): | | | |
| Home # (including area code): | | | |
| (Choose One) Call me on this phone in case of cancellation: | | <input type="checkbox"/> CELL | <input type="checkbox"/> HOME |
| Email: | | | |



Lucille and Richard Krebs, Lois' parents and Bari's grandparents, were known as Nana and Poppy to many people who belong to the Social and Skills Program at the BIRCoFWI, passed away. First Poppy passed from a brain aneurysm April 25, 2023 and Nana would follow almost three months later to the day on July 24th of this year. They both were huge supporters of the BIRCoFWI and volunteered for many events. They will be missed dearly, but we know they are doing well in heaven free of any pain and/or suffering. We love you Nana and Poppy!