



Navigator Update Winter 2014

**Providing a Point of Entry for ABI Services Across
Southeastern Ontario**

Coming Events

Substance Use, Mental Health, and Brain Injury with Neuropsychologist Dr. Carolyn Lemsky,

21 February 2014, Kingston ON

Dr. Lemsky, director of the *Substance Use and Brain Injury Bridging Project* provides insights into treating individuals with comorbid diagnoses, including those accessing services for addictions, mental health, homelessness, and brain injury. Participants will learn how to work together in an integrated approach which meets the individual's whole needs and maximize positive outcomes.

McMaster University ABI Rehabilitation Therapist Certification Program, March 3—7 2014 , Belleville ON

A five module certificate program for non-regulated health professionals working as Rehabilitation Therapists in the field of Acquired Brain Injury. This week long course will provide essential knowledge in key areas relevant to their work in the field of ABI.

Survive and Thrive with Humour, Hope, and Happiness With Lois McElravy, 27 March 2014, Kingston ON

Workshop for survivors of brain injury, their family members, and professionals on using humour to deal with the unexpected, develop courage, and discover opportunity. Free to survivors and family members, with transportation assistance available. Organized by the Regional Community Brain Injury Services.

For more information visit:
Braininjuryhelp.ca/events

Local Update

This past fall brought many things. August through October 2013 featured the "Community Brain Talk" series at a number of small communities across Southeastern Ontario. This initiative was an attempt to heighten awareness on issues related to ABI, and reach out to survivors who may be more isolated due to distance from urban centres. The opportunity to meet people from across the region and hear about their experiences with brain injury was enlightening. I hope that more events in outlying areas can be planned for 2014.

October's "Brain Injury Brunch" Long-Term Care Symposium brought together representatives from across the long-term care and ABI sectors. We learned a lot from each other during the course of the day and identified next steps to enhance the quality of life for residents of long-term care (more details on page 2.)

The development of a proposal to address the needs of individuals with comorbid Mental Health and ABI diagnoses continues to be at the forefront of the work of System Navigation. A preliminary proposal has been developed and is being circulated to stakeholders within the mental health and ABI communities for feedback. We hope that one day our vision of offering specialized psychiatry services with expertise in ABI will be realized in our region. Stay tuned for further updates on this one!

Our ongoing efforts to complete the regional database of ABI survivors is gradually becoming a reality. Of the 114 entries, 90 individuals are reported to be receiving some form of ABI Outreach services; including 69 receiving individual counselling and 44 receiving group services (with some overlap). The median for

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Acquired Brain Injury System Navigation
of Southeastern Ontario



The System Navigation Team (left to right): Program Manager Dawn Downey, Neuropsychologist Dr. Martin Logan, Service Coordinators Joni Hartman and Neil Muchmore, System Navigator Rachael Henry, Service Coordinators Laurie Ogilvie and Tim Hammell, and Clinical Secretary Sheryl Wattie.

individualized service was 2 hours of service a week. 44 individuals are waitlisted for some type of residential service, including 24-hour and Variable Assisted Living. 38 individuals are reported to require constant support (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Of these individuals, 22 are receiving unpaid support from family members, 16 from paid sources, and a further 7 are in Long-Term Care homes.

In December, System Navigation was awarded the City of Kingston Municipal Accessibility Committee's Access Award. It was an honour shared with the team. Each member of the team works to ensure support is available to those who need it to identify appropriate services, make refer-

als, consult, and provide education on ABI related issues.

We continue to investigate options to increase support in the community to those living with ABI and will surely find ourselves busy in 2014. Thanks to the many individuals who have supported System Navigation efforts thus far; we look forward to further opportunities to collaborate in the year ahead. - *Rachael Henry*

Long-Term Care Symposium Highlights

In October 2013, a symposium was held with stakeholders from across Long-Term Care regarding residents with ABI. Feedback was solicited using small group techniques, focusing on resources required to provide appropriate services and the development of action plans to uncover the steps needed to move forward.

Several themes emerged from these discussions, including information sharing about current resources, and needs yet to be filled such as ABI education tailored to the needs of long-term care, behavioural supports, and administrative changes to better plan for admission and support a resident once moved into a home. We discussed the limitations of the current system and that long-term care is not always the most appropriate placement, but may be the only one that is available. Most importantly, partnerships were forged and plans were made to continue working together to support one another.

Already there is some action with the start of an Education Working Group and discussions between RCBIS, System Navigation, the Psychogeriatric Resource Consultants, and the Mobile Response Team. It is a promising start to bring about changes that will improve the quality of life for many residents in long-term care.

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