



OBIA Free Programs and Services: Additional Information

About Us

OBIA is a charitable organization that has been dedicated to helping individuals and families who have been affected by acquired brain injury, for over 30 years. Through providing a variety of easily accessible support services across Ontario, OBIA ensures that; education, awareness and support are provided to as many survivors and their families as possible.

To accomplish this OBIA has 21 affiliated community associations, across the province, which help to provide information, support, and prevention strategies.

Given that almost half a million people are living with Acquired Brain Injury in Ontario, with 45,000 more being added this year alone, OBIA's programs/supports continue to be of great need.

All of our programs aim to benefit the survivor and/or their families, and most importantly, are provided free of charge.

To find out more about OBIA please visit our website at: www.obia.ca/ or contact our main phone at: 905-641-8877

OBIA Helpline – 1-800-263-5404

OBIA provides a toll free helpline which offers emotional support for anyone who is looking for a compassionate and judgement free ear.

Our helpline confidentially, provides help with any issues/feelings that a survivor may be going through. Some of the common themes discussed are related, but not limited to: coping with ABI, loneliness and/or isolation, invisible disability, income supports, information regarding ABI/concussions, and caregiver supports.

It is important for survivors to know that they are not alone in dealing with challenges related to brain injury, and that OBIA is here for them. The Helpline provides callers with listening and emotional support, empowerment and appropriate community referrals.

Our helpline can be reached Monday-Friday 9am-5pm EST, province wide at **1-800-263-5404**.

For more information about this service please visit our webpage at: <http://www.obia.ca/helpline/> or contact Katy Kumar (Support Services) at: 855-642-8877 ext. 224

Online Concussion Support Group

OBIA also offers free support to individuals dealing with issues related to concussion or post concussive syndrome. Our Online Concussion Support Group is a safe space where individuals can seek support and resources to aid emotional recovery. Our registered social worker facilitates groups, via phone or computer, insuring that all sessions are client focused.

Small group sizes allow for effective discussion and ensures that every participant can be supported and heard. For 60 minutes a week, over an 8 week period, individuals can discuss any frustrations and connect with survivors experiencing similar struggles. Confidentiality is maintained through the utilization of an online platform which ensures privacy. This service goes hand in hand with our other programs, and encourages those who want on-going support to get involved with our Peer Support Program.

For more information about this service please visit our webpage at:

<http://www.obia.ca/onlineconcussion-support-group/> or contact Vijaya Kantipuly (Group Facilitator) at:

855-642-8877 ext. 249

Peer Support Program

OBIA's peer support program facilitates the relationship between individuals with lived experience (the mentor) and individuals who are currently living with the effects of acquired brain injury (the partner). This program gives survivors personalized support, as mentor/partner matches are time specific and made based on similar experiences, needs, and individual interests. It allows for matches/support province wide, as it is coordinated through local Brain Injury Associations across Ontario.

This program offers partners support from someone who can better empathize with the life changes that ABI brings, and can offer guidance through their own lived experiences. Made easily accessible to participants, via telephone or internet, this program allows individuals to receive assistance from the comfort of their own home. Support is offered once a week, with a year long partnership.

Additionally, mentors are provided with the opportunity to help others and give back, through sharing their personal journey with ABI. In order to effectively support their partners, all individuals interested in becoming a mentor undergo comprehensive training through their local Brain Injury Association.

The program is made available to all survivors, family members and/or unpaid caregivers free of charge, and is truly an enriching experience for both partners and mentors.

For more information about this service please visit our webpage at: <http://www.obia.ca/peer-support2/> or contact Carla Thoms (Provincial Peer Support Coordinator) at: 855-642-8877 ext. 227

Caregiver Education Workshops

OBIA also provides support through the implementation of our **Support, Hope & Resiliency: An Education and Training Program for Caregivers of Acquired Brain Injury Survivors**. We recognize that it is important for caregivers to be supported, and given adequate resources, in order to best provide care to ABI survivors.

This is a FREE interactive half-day workshop (3 hours) for unpaid caregivers of survivors. Participants have the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversation with other caregivers surrounding the following themes:

1. Understanding how ABI has changed their loved one
2. Exploring how to manage the emotional, cognitive and physical changes of ABI
3. Understanding how to manage these changes in their loved one
4. How has ABI changed them (the caregiver)
5. And how they can support themselves through the emotional, social and physical challenges of caregiving.

Workshops are implemented at various locations throughout Ontario and ran in collaboration with local Brain Injury Associations. Additionally, to make our caregiver education more easily accessible, we are developing an online version of our workshop. Registration for our workshops for both, adult and pediatric caregivers, can be completed online.

The goal of these workshops is to have participants leave feeling; better equipped to handle the complex challenges that come with ABI, connected to a positive support system and better able to provide quality care to their loved ones.

For more information about this service please visit our webpage at:

<http://www.obia.ca/caregivereducation-program/> or contact Nancy LaJoie (Caregiver Education Specialist) at: 855-642-8877 ext. 248

Brain Injury Speaks: Stakeholder Engagement Network of Ontario

We understand that decisions affecting the brain injury community in Ontario should include input from individuals with lived experience. They should be inclusive of those who know firsthand, the impact that government decisions can have on survivors and their families.

Brain Injury Speaks is an active engagement network, whose main goal is to inform and respond to decisions made by the government. This goal is accomplished through the voices of survivors, family and caregivers, who identify as the networks "stakeholders". Those who join the network have the opportunity to be heard through emails, phone calls and surveys on current issues related to ABI. All feedback is then presented as one provincial voice, so that the most important issues can be heard loudly, and effectively.

Those who would like to join the network, and strengthen the voice of the brain injury community, can do so free of charge on our website: <http://obia.ca/about-brain-injury-speaks/> or contact Chad Debison-Larabie (Stakeholder Engagement) at: 855-642-8877 ext. 250

As mentioned before, the need is great, and OBIA is here to help. If you have any clients who may benefit from our support or programs, please have them contact us: 905-641-8877