



Step Ahead

Federal Grants Provide Relief during Covid

Our “Brain Connect” Program is funded by a federal government grant that allows us to provide services to our clients virtually. This includes providing technology to those who are in need in order to participate in programs, email, partake in virtual doctors’ appointments, assist with reminders, connect with friends/family and more. Our team of staff and volunteers is not only providing new devices but also helping clients use their own technology better.

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Proud Funded Partner of



Our second federal grant is entitled “BIAWE REACT” and aims at assisting clients with system navigation and support. This program allows us to respond to the needs of clients to provide short term support when applying for health, income, housing, and support services. Our Virtual Support Coordinator, Bianca Colaluca will be assisting clients and overseeing this project. If you need assistance with obtaining social assistance (OW, ODSP, CPP-D) please reach out and we would be happy to assist.



Video Production

Thanks to volunteers Niloofar Khastavan (videographer and editor), Rob Miller (interviewer), and Anna Jurak (producer), BIAWE has produced a video about the story of Cameron Rivard, a local 15 year old, who fell while riding his bicycle and was saved from serious head injury because he was wearing a helmet. Hear him and his mother tell the story. This video will be shown during the STAR (Stop, Tell, get Assessed and Rest) program that is presented to grades 7 to 12 in school and will be available on our website, www.biawe.com.

Link: <https://youtu.be/7fEsas9DbDg>

9 Things NOT to Say to Someone with a Brain Injury

Brain injury is confusing to people who don't have one. It's natural to want to say something, to voice an opinion or offer advice, even when we don't understand. And when you care for a loved one with a brain injury, it's easy to get burnt out and say things out of frustration.

Here are a few things you might find yourself saying that are probably not helpful:

1. *You seem fine to me.* The invisible signs of a brain injury — memory and concentration problems, fatigue, insomnia, chronic pain, depression, or anxiety — these are sometimes more difficult to live with than visible disabilities. Research shows that having just a scar on the head can help a person with a brain injury feel validated and better understood. Your loved one may look normal, but shrugging off the invisible signs of brain injury is belittling. Consider this: a memory problem can be much more disabling than a limp.
2. *Maybe you're just not trying hard enough (you're lazy).* Lazy is not the same as apathy (lack of interest, motivation, or emotion). Apathy is a disorder and common after a brain injury. Apathy can often get in the way of rehabilitation and recovery, so it's important to recognize and treat it. Certain prescription drugs have been shown to reduce apathy. Setting very specific goals might also help. Do beware of problems that mimic apathy. Depression, fatigue, and chronic pain are common after a brain injury, and can look like (or be combined with) apathy. Side effects of some prescription drugs can also look like apathy. Try to discover the root of the problem, so that you can help advocate for proper treatment.
3. *You're such a grump!* Irritability is one of the most common signs of a brain injury. Irritability could be the direct result of the brain injury, or a side effect of depression, anxiety, chronic pain, sleep disorders, or fatigue. Think of it as a biological grumpiness — it's not as if your loved one can get some air and come back in a better mood. It can come and go without reason. It's hard to live with someone who is grumpy, moody, or angry all the time. Certain prescription drugs, supplements, changes in diet, or therapy that focuses on adjustment and coping skills can all help to reduce irritability.
4. *How many times do I have to tell you?* It's frustrating to repeat yourself over and over, but almost everyone who has a brain injury will experience some memory problems. Instead of pointing out a deficit, try finding a solution. Make the task easier. Create a routine. Install a memo board www.BrainLine.org 3939 Campbell Avenue Arlington, VA 22206 703.998.2020 info@BrainLine.org www.BrainLine.org in the kitchen. Also, remember that language isn't always verbal. "I've already told you this" comes through loud and clear just by facial expression.
5. *Do you have any idea how much I do for you?* Your loved one probably knows how much you do, and feels incredibly guilty about it. It's also possible that your loved one has no clue, and may never understand. This can be due to problems with awareness, memory, or apathy — all of which can be a direct result of a brain injury. You do need to unload your burden on someone, just let that someone be a good friend or a counselor.
6. *Your problem is all the medications you take.* Prescription drugs can cause all kinds of side effects such as sluggishness, insomnia, memory problems, mania, sexual dysfunction, or weight gain — just to name a few. Someone with a brain injury is especially sensitive to these effects. But, if you blame everything on the effects of drugs, two things could happen. One, you might be encouraging your loved one to stop taking an important drug prematurely. Two, you might be overlooking a genuine sign of brain injury. It's a good idea to regularly review prescription drugs with a doctor. Don't be afraid to ask about alternatives that might reduce side effects. At some point in recovery, it might very well be the right time to taper off a drug. But, you won't know this without regular follow-up.
7. *Let me do that for you.* Independence and control are two of the most important things lost after a brain injury. Yes, it may be easier to do things for your loved one. Yes, it may be less frustrating. But, encouraging your loved one to do things on their own will help promote self-esteem, confidence, and quality of living. It can also help the brain recover faster. Do make sure that the task isn't one that might put your loved one at genuine risk — such as driving too soon or managing medication when there are significant memory problems.



8. *Try to think positively.* That's easier said than done for many people, and even harder for someone with a brain injury. Repetitive negative thinking is called rumination, and it can be common after a brain injury. Rumination is usually related to depression or anxiety, and so treating those problems may help break the negative thinking cycle. Furthermore, if you tell someone to stop thinking about a certain negative thought, that thought will just be pushed further towards the front of the mind (literally, to the prefrontal cortex). Instead, find a task that is especially enjoyable for your loved one. It will help to distract from negative thinking, and release chemicals that promote more positive thoughts.

9. *You're lucky to be alive.* This sounds like positive thinking, looking on the bright side of things. But be careful. A person with a brain injury is six times more likely to have suicidal thoughts than someone without a brain injury. Some may not feel very lucky to be alive. Instead of calling it "luck," talk about how strong, persistent, or heroic the person is for getting through their ordeal. Tell them that they're awesome.

Written by Marie Rowland, PhD, [Empowerment Ally](#). Used with permission. www.brainhealthconsulting.com.

Peer Support and Mentoring Program

Partner - You will have the opportunity to learn from someone "who has been there" and can offer you guidance and support based on their own personal experience living with ABI.

Support is provided to you via the telephone or internet, based on your preference so you can participate in the comfort and privacy of your home.

Mentor - You have the opportunity to help others by sharing your experience by providing support and information to your partner who has a similar lived experience.

You will have comprehensive training in your community to match with a Partner.



This is a free program available to any person with an acquired brain injury (ABI) and to a caregiver (family or friend) of a person with an ABI.

To register, call 519-981-1329 for a short intake to match you up with someone who has your shared experience.



Canada Sews Donation

BIAWE is the recipient of a donation of 50 face masks from the local Canada Sews.

Canada Sews is a grassroots movement of sewers supporting front-line ,essential service workers and communities during the covid-19 pandemic. It was started by an Oshawa woman and has blossomed into a network of over 2,000 people on Facebook. Volunteers make and distribute homemade masks across four provinces.

The Windsor masks were made and donated by Denise Bellaire. Thank you!

Coffee Chat



This weekly social is for survivors. It's a good way to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances you've made attending support groups. It helps in reducing the social isolation during this Covid-19 pandemic and keeps you up-to-date as to what's going on at BIAWE. Talk with old friends and make new friends. It's unstructured and you can talk about whatever you want. Each week is different.

Volunteer Opportunities

- ◆ **Mentor.** For the Peer Support Group. Volunteer one hour per week for one year. Free training by the Ontario Brain Injury Association. For survivors and caregivers. This is an opportunity to share your lived experience and help someone.
- ◆ **Directory Recruitment.** For the on-line Directory. Call health care, legal professionals to provide information for the Directory. This is a source of information for those in the community seeking specific services related to a brain injury.
- ◆ **Other Opportunities throughout the Year**—fundraisers, outreach, socials.

Why Volunteer?

Many studies have established a connection between volunteering and improved health. In the brain, acts of kindness release powerful chemicals like oxytocin, serotonin and dopamine, elevating our mood, increasing stimuli, and reducing stress. Compassion lowers heart rates and reduces risk of coronary distress.

In a 2016 study, researchers asked participants about scenarios in which they either gave or received support. According to the study, published in *Psychosomatic Medicine: Journal of Biobehavioural Medicine*, MRI tests showed that only the instances of giving correlated to reduced stress and enhanced activity in the brain's reward centres— which suggests that giving support ultimately brought greater mental benefits than receiving it.

(Reprinted from “Good, and good for you”, *Rotary magazine*, cember 2020, page 23))

Meet a Volunteer...

My name is Nicole Couvillon. I am a graduate of the University of Windsor and have always enjoyed being involved in the community. It's a great pleasure to not only help provide resources and information to others at BIAWE but also to learn from inspiring survivors and caregivers. Volunteering not only gives me the opportunity to help others but allows me to meet new people and grow from experiences.



De-

Survivor Social

This is a monthly social for adults with acquired brain injury. It is well known that spending time with others improves our health, emotionally and physically. The risk of depression and early mortality are reduced. We are biologically built to seek friends. This gives you an opportunity to make new friends.

Check us on Facebook for updates and any changes.

Monday, [January 25](#) Zoom 7:00 pm New Year's Resolution

Monday, [February 22](#) Zoom 7:00 pm Cooking Class

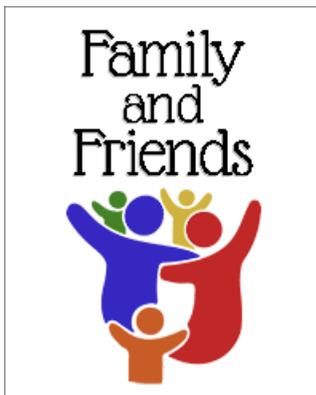
Monday, [March 22](#) Zoom 7:00 pm Self Portraits

If you are not on the email list, please email to info@biawe.com to get the Zoom invitation.



Family and Friends Support Group

Feeling a bit overwhelmed? Feeling the need to talk to someone who understands what you're going through? Come to this monthly drop-in for caregivers of an individual with acquired brain injury.



Tuesday, [January 26](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Tuesday, [February 23](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Tuesday, [March 23](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

If you are not on the email list, please email to info@biawe.com to get the Zoom invitation.

Young Adult (18 to 30 years) Coffee Chat

Young adults meet to discuss their experiences, share ideas and provide emotional support for each other. It can help you develop new skills and learn to deal with problems and issues related to the brain injury. Everything that takes place within the support group stays confidential

Wednesday, [January 13](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Wednesday, [February 10](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Wednesday, [March 10](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

If you are not on the email list, please email to info@biawe.com to get the Zoom invitation.



Our Support Team

Executive Director - Anna Jurak

You Are Not Alone Facilitator -

Young Adult Support Group Facilitator - Rene Cantarutti

Family and Friends Support Group Facilitator -

Volunteer Coordinator - Isabella Baggio

Peer Support Program Coordinator - Anna Jurak

Social Coordinator - Rebeca Robinet

STAR Program Coordinator - Anna Jurak

Social Media —Niloofar Khastavan

Graphic Design —Donna Ntumba

Virtual Support Coordinator—Bianca Colaluca

Income Support Coordinator—Bianca Colaluca

Medical Outreach Program

This program reaches out to physicians, physiotherapists, social workers, occupational therapists, chiropractors, psychologist and neuropsychologist—anyone who works with persons with an acquired brain injury.

Each professional receives information about BIAWE and a pad of scripts they can use to refer their patients and clients to BIAWE.

BIAWE Advocacy

BIAWE is the lead agency in an advocacy campaign to request the provincial government to amend its legislation and directives to allow the Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program caseworkers to approve financial assistance for basic virtual support including but not limited to internet charges, for those in receipt of ODSP and OW who specifically request it.

Local and provincial organizations and agencies are supporting this initiative including the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA), many of OBIA's twenty affiliates, the Ontario Spinal Cord Injury Association, the Alzheimer Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association and others.

Technology provides the opportunity to improve access to services by removing the limitations of geographic location, health status, financial constraints and other barriers to participating. The lowest risk activities for everyone are virtual-only activities, events and gatherings where individuals remain physically distant while connecting virtually. Some medical and other necessary appointments are often held through zoom or other virtual platforms. That is why this initiative is so important.

You can add your support by completing the on-line form and let the provincial government know how this affects you personally. Go to www.biawe.com. Your on-line support letter will go directly to our local MPPs.



UNIFOR

Local2458

Tullio DiPonti
President

Ken Durocher
Secretary-Treasurer

Mike Kisch
1st Vice President

Shelley Smith,
2nd Vice President



Donation to BIAWE

Scott Dillingham, Wealth Creation Advisor at LendCity Mortgages and the Joe Conlon Real Estate Team raised \$1,200 with their on-line fundraiser and donated it to BIAWE. Our Windsor businesses and community never stop helping others. Thank you for this donation. Here they are presenting the cheque to Anna Jurak, Executive Director of BIAWE.

Donation for Art - for Survivor Social

Thank you to the anonymous donor who made a donation in Stephanie Nagle's name in lieu of a birthday gift. Stephanie is a local artist. This donation shares her love of the joy of art with those who live with an acquired brain injury.

This donation will provide materials and instruction to enable survivors to enhance their cognitive, emotional, social and physical abilities and explore their artistic talents.



Affiliated Partners....



NEW PROGRAMS FOR 2021

Pediatric Caregiver Support Program

This program fills a gap in the community as parents/caregivers of these children currently do not have any support for caring for their children who have an acquired brain injury. The needs of parents/caregivers are different if they are caring for children—school, play, and friends. Not only is there a grieving process after an injury, there are changes in the family and in relationships. These relationships provide us with a sense of well-being and security and contribute to the child's self-identity. Preserving and maintaining these relationships are key to future development. Parents/caregivers can speak freely and share information in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. These sessions are facilitated by a social worker and are being held on zoom. (3rd Wednesday of each month. Call 519-981-1329 to get on the invite list.

Wednesday, [January 20](#) at 7:00 via zoom - ABI and Coping with Stress

Wednesday, [February 17](#) at 7:00 via zoom - Caregiver Self Care

Wednesday, [March 17](#) at 7:00 via zoom - Emotional/Behavioural Changes after an ABI

Children's Support/Social Program

Once in-person meetings are allowed to be held, children with an acquired brain injury can attend a social at the same time and place as their parents/caregivers. Here they can mingle with others who are going through some of the same challenges and therefore can understand them. The time will be filled with activities.



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Trillium Grant Announced

The Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County (BIAWE) received a grant of \$69,600 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation under the Resilient Communities Fund. This investment will support BIAWE’s efforts to rebuild resilience and capacity to return to building a healthy and vibrant community.

This grant over 12 months will help BIAWE rebuild and recover from the impact of Covid – 19 by adopting a new funding model and strategic plan to enhance programs and deliver adapted virtual workshops.

Demand for services has increased since Covid-19, concurrently with a decrease in revenue. BIAWE does not receive government funding, but relies on donations and fundraising to raise revenues to operate. BIAWE has seen a loss of over 70% of it revenue to date as a result of cancelling its annual gala and golf tournament. Donations are also down. While the need has increased BIAWE has faced unprecedented challenges.

This grant will allow BIAWE to implement new approaches, prepare for change and build resiliency. BIAWE will readapt and re-imagine the delivery of its programs and services to meet the needs of the community, its employees and its volunteers. BIAWE will be shifting services to models that incorporate social distancing.



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

On-Line Directory

BIAWE is pleased to provide a directory for health care, financial and legal professionals. This provides you an opportunity to promote your specialized services for those affected by an acquired brain injury.

View your information on our web page, www.biawe.com and provide more information about your services, your logo and link to your website. You can either pay on-line by PayPal, or mail a cheque to BIAWE and email your information.

If you are a member of OBIA/BIAWE, the detailed directory cost is \$35. If you are not a member, it is \$65 and provides you membership and all the benefits.

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Fax: 519 944.3884 Fax: 519 252.5551

www.moussaeyedoctor.com moussaeyedoctor@gmail.com

Step Ahead Newsletter

ADVERTISING ORDER FORM

Step Ahead is published four times each year and is circulated primarily in Windsor and Essex County. A copy of the current newsletter is posted on the website. Older newsletters are archived on the website.

Advertising revenue helps cover the cost of this vital means of communication about brain injury with our members, professionals in the brain injury field and the general public.

Company/Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

By choosing to be an advertiser your ad will appear in two newsletters per year. The ads print in colour.

	<u>SIZES</u>	<u>PRICE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
A)	Newsletter Sponsor (recognition on the cover)	Cost of printing	To be determined
B)	Full Page	\$150.00	\$ _____
C)	½ Page	\$75.00	\$ _____
D)	¼ Page	\$50.00	\$ _____
E)	Business Card	\$30.00	\$ _____
		TOTAL:	\$ _____

DEADLINES: September 15 (for fall newsletter), December 15 (for winter newsletter) March 15 (for spring newsletter) and June 15 (for summer newsletter)

The best format for ads is electronic (PDF, JPG, TIF), sent as an e-mail attachment. Camera ready black and white material is also acceptable. We do not accept faxed documents. If you choose business card size, please ensure your card with larger version of graphics can be scanned clearly into the computer. Do not staple your material.

Thank you for your order and for supporting the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County.

Full payment is due with your order. Pay on-line at www.biawe.com/newsletter and email ad.

Advertising Policy

BIAWE welcomes advertising in the "Step Ahead". Advertisers may not imply that their products/services or memberships is an endorsement by BIAWE or its directors or staff. No advertisement will be accepted for publication until a completed, signed Order Form is received. BIAWE reserves the right to refuse publication of any advertisement .

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and advertisers and not necessarily those of the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County. (BIAWE). BIAWE will not be liable for any damages or losses howsoever sustained, as a result of the reliance on or use by the reader or any other person of the information, opinion, or products expressed, advertised or otherwise contained herein. Where appropriate, professional advice should be sought.

To unsubscribe to the newsletter send to unsubscribe@biawe.com

“You Are Not Alone” Peer Support

This is a free monthly (currently on-line) support group for individuals with acquired brain injury aged 18+ years and their family and friends. Talk with others about things you care about and get information and support that can help you. First timers - please call to register. [519-981-1329](tel:519-981-1329)

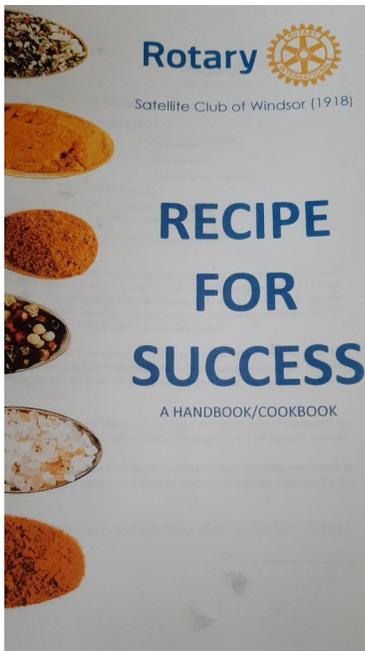
Due to the Covid-19 isolation we are not holding in-person meetings, but will host this online on Zoom. If you are not currently on our call list, you must register to receive your invitation. Call 519-981-1329 or email to info@biawe.com.

Tuesday, [January 12](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Tuesday, [February 9](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

Tuesday, [March 9](#) 7:00 pm Zoom

If you are not on the email/call list, please email to info@biawe.com to get the Zoom invitation.



From the Rotary Club of Windsor 1918 Satellite

BIawe received 20 cookbooks called, “Recipe for Success—A Handbook/Cookbook”. It starts off with a Recipe for Happiness and includes a set of measuring spoons.

The book is divided into categories like: Getting Started, Smart Shopping, Tips and Techniques, Breakfast/Lunch, Dinner, Vegetables, Soups/Salads and Dessert/Snacks.

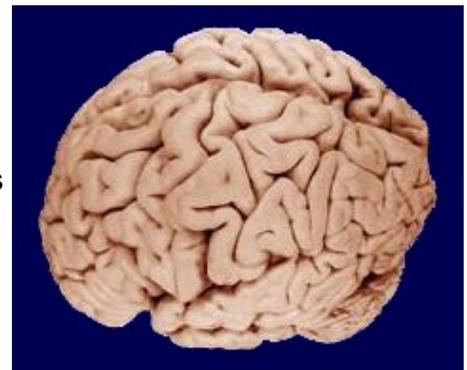
The recipes provide the number of servings, ingredients and directions. They are simple and easy to read. Pages can be removed and added to the book to hold your own favourite recipes.

Attend the February Survivor Social and make something together from the cookbook. Cookbooks and ingredients will be provided. **You must pre-register by February 16.** Email to social@biawe.com or call 519-981-1329. There is a limited number of kits.

The Brain—An Undemonstrative Organ

“For all its marvels, the brain is a curiously undemonstrative organ. The heart pumps, the lungs inflate and deflate, the intestines quietly ripple and gurgle, but the brain just sits pudding-like, giving away nothing. Nothing in its structure outwardly suggests that this is an instrument of higher thinking. “

- Bill Bryson, *The Body—A Guide for Occupants*. 2019. page 64.



WUNDER O'BRIEN

Personal Injury Law



Wunder O'Brien Personal Injury Law is committed to the provision of excellent legal representation for those who have suffered injuries and losses due to a serious personal injury or the death of a loved one. Wunder O'Brien is known for professionalism, innovative strategies, and results.

Jerry F. O'Brien is an experienced and respected advocate for injured people. He is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Canadian Bar Association, Kent County Law Association, Essex County Law Association, Court Liaison Committee, Ontario Trial Lawyers Association, Association of Trial Lawyers of America, and the Advocates' Society, where he served on the Board of Directors from 1996 to 1999, as well as a Director of the Brain Injury Association. He was also a member of the Southwestern Regional Committee of the Joint Committee on Court Reform.

Martin Wunder (1931-2015) was a pioneer in personal injury law, author, lecturer, and respected advocate. His achievements continue to be honoured by Ontario Trial Lawyers Association and the University of Windsor Law School through awards and bursaries to young lawyers and law students.

We look forward to the opportunity to assist you regarding personal injury matters.

Wunder O'Brien Personal Injury Law

Phone: (519) 252-1121

Fax: (519) 256-1621

Jerry O'Brien: jobrien@lawojs.com

Legal Assistants:

theresa@wunderobrienlaw.com

diane@wunderobrienlaw.com

rachel@wunderobrienlaw.com

Membership Benefits

For one annual membership fee, individuals and families can become members of both the Brain Injury Association of Windsor and Essex County (BIAWE) and the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA).

Application forms can be found online at: <http://obia.ca/dual-membership-application-form/> or you can call BIAWE at 519-981-1329 to get a form sent to you.

Why should you become a member of BIAWE?

- You can vote at the annual meetings for BIAWE and OBIA.
- You will receive a one year subscription to the "OBIA Review" - the official publication of the Ontario Brain Injury Association. It's full of information about the latest in brain injury research, stories and supports.
- You may participate in the Peer Support Mentoring Program for People Living with ABI.
- You will have free access to OBIA's resource library.
- You will be eligible for a discount on most of OBIA's training programs.
- Your voice will be heard both locally and provincially.

NEW:

- Discounts on some BIAWE sponsored events and socials where there is a cost.
- Link to your website for local services and programs for those with ABI in our directory.
- Invitations to special events

Annual Fees for Dual Membership

Individual	\$30
Family (2 or more at same address)	\$50
Subsidized (please enquire)	\$5

Survivors can participate in an on-line survey - [Membership free for one year](#) - go to the OBIA home page to find the survey

What You can offer BIAWE...

- Attend the programs that are offered
- Share with others the opportunities for learning, support and fellowship
- Support the work of BIAWE by attending fundraisers
- Volunteer for events or become a Board Member
- Sponsor programs and make donations

What BIAWE can offer You....

- Provide you with information about local services and benefits in our community
- Discuss issues you should be raising with medical and legal professionals
- Explain the often confusing terminology associated with ABI
- Support Group sessions for both persons with acquired brain injury and caregivers
- Peer Mentoring Program for survivors and caregivers
- Socials for survivors
- Opportunities to be involved in committees and volunteering
- Introduce you to others who have experienced an ABI through our support groups and socials
- Invitations to fundraising events throughout the year
- Invitations to attend our conference and concussion workshops
- Opportunity to promote your brain injury-related business or service in our directory



OUR MISSION

To enhance the lives of residents of Windsor and Essex County affected by acquired brain injury through education, awareness and support.

Phone: 519-981-1329
E-mail: info@biawe.com
www.biawe.com

