



AUTO ACCIDENT SURVIVOR'S GUIDE

for British Columbia

Navigating the medical-legal-insurance system

by Jill Franklin

Your only source for unbiased advice on ICBC injury claims and auto accident injuries including brain injuries.

Available online at www.autoaccidentsurvivorsguide.com

Community rehabilitation resources for people in BC with brain injuries (including mild traumatic brain injury)

Community Therapists or CTI

(604 681-9293; www.communitytherapists.com) provides occupational therapy services throughout the province. While CTI no longer works exclusively with brain injury survivors, most of their OTs do brain injury rehabilitation. Their brain injury programs are designed for people with moderate-to-severe brain injuries, but physicians can refer patients to them for education on mTBI, functional assessments, and at-home help with safety issues, personal care, problem solving, and medication management. CTI will also link people with mTBI with local community resources. They can usually find third-party funding for someone who may not have this.

Sue Barlow, OT

(604-338-7563; sue.barlow@shaw.ca) specializes in assisting persons with acquired brain injuries to improve their performance and satisfaction in life activities. Sue's special interest and expertise is working with persons with mild brain injury symptoms. The symptoms may be related to a concussion, stroke, brain tumour, or other acquired brain injury. The philosophy of Sue's practice is to empower clients with the knowledge, skills, habits, and confidence to become 'self-managers' of their mild brain injury symptoms, and to get 'back to better living'.

Parley Services

Vancouver (604-738-9149; www.parleyservices.com) offers support management services throughout BC for people with acquired brain injuries and other neuropsychological impairments. Their pragmatic supportive approach focuses on behavioral problems and psychosocial needs. The goal of the services provided is to help create an environment for the patient at home, work, school and in the community that empowers the patient and increases functional capacity and self-reliance. The patient may be directed to appropriate community resources and health care professionals, and given help in applying for financial support and locating affordable housing. Contact Bobbi Hoadley at the above number for more information.

Spectrum Rehabilitation Services

(250 763-0289; spectrumrehab@telus.net) works with mTBI patients throughout the Okanagan and in Kamloops. ICBC, WorkSafeBC, and personal injury lawyers send people with mTBI here, as do treating physicians. Self-referrals are also allowed. An OT first determines the patient's needs, then community rehab workers provide 1-on-1 assistance, which may include job coaching and facilitating a patient's return to work, providing emotional support, at-home

support, or high-level life skills training, and developing pragmatic coping strategies. Rehabilitation is on a fee-for-service basis, but costs may be reduced for patients paying privately. Contact Carole Kennedy at the above number for more information.

Columbia Speech-Language Services

Vancouver (604 875-9100) works with people who have communication disorders stemming from a brain injury. This includes patients with mTBI who have word-finding problems; exhibit rambling, disorganized, or perseverative speech; have difficulty understanding what they hear (or what they read); and have other cognitive communication impairments.

Columbia Health Centre

(604 687-5911) has a Concussion Clinic for people who are at least 6 months post-injury. The centre's Head Injury Assessment and Treatment Services (HATS) program is appropriate for patients with CPCS. Both programs are run from a Vancouver office and are open to people throughout the province. Physician referrals and self-referrals are welcome on a fee-for-service basis. An attempt to find funding sources will be made when needed. When no funding can be found, program fees may be reduced. Contact Theresa Wong at theresa.wong@columbiahealth.ca.

MindWorksBC

Richmond (604 233-1177; cynthiiaa@backinmotion.com) is a new pre-employment program for people with mild to moderate neurological disabilities. Funded by the Ministry for Employment and Income Assistance, services are free and are open to people with acquired conditions (brain injuries, strokes, brain tumours), congenital conditions (cerebral palsy, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder) and neurodegenerative disorders (MS, Parkinson's). The purpose of the program is to help individuals manage their disability better, increase their quality of life, and maximize their independence in order to prepare them for community employment services. The program is run by *Back in Motion Rehab* at their Richmond site. Services, which are offered on a 1-on-1 basis, may be provided by a case manager, OT, PT, neuropsychologist and/or a kinesiologist. Participants must be interested in pursuing employment in the future, be of legal working age, and have a confirmed neurological condition.

Back in Motion

(604 273-7600) recently started an early intervention program for people with mTBI. While only WorkSafeBC currently refers patients, the program coordinators hope that physicians will start referring patients as well.

Waldee Services

(604 936-6886; www.waldee-rehab.com) works exclusively with people who have traumatic brain injuries, offering community-based 1-on-1 rehabilitation throughout the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island. Both lawyers and insurers send people with mTBI to them for assessments and treatment, and physician, family, and patient referrals are allowed. Rehabilitation services are pragmatic and goal-oriented, and may include life skills training, job coaching, learning compensatory techniques, and addressing behavioral issues. Support services for family members are available.

Pacific Coast Brain Injury Conference

(www.pcbic.org) takes place yearly, offering physicians and others an opportunity to learn more about brain injury. Brain injury survivors and their families can apply for subsidies to attend. Some of the brain injury organizations above run smaller conferences.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

(GFS; 604 734-1313) helps people with disabilities overcome barriers to employment. Physicians can refer patients whose CPCS makes it difficult to work.

Adult Learning Development Association or ALDA

(604 683-5554; www.alda-bc.org) helps people with cognitive problems gain independence. Physician referrals and self-referrals are welcome. ALDA provides employment assistance and runs a workshop series (Breaking Down Barriers) that focuses on psychosocial behavior, communication and time management skills, and other issues relevant to people with CPCS. The programs are government-funded and free. People with open WorkSafeBC claims can participate, but only limited assistance is given to anyone with an open ICBC claim. (Assessments and psychological counseling can be done on a fee-for-service basis.) ALDA works exclusively in the Lower Mainland.

BC Society of Training for Health and Employment Opportunities or Theo BC

(866-377-3670; www.theobc.org) has employment and education-related programs throughout the province for people with disabilities and mental health problems. Leisure activity programs are also offered. People with cognitive problems from mTBI are welcome.

Accelerated Learning

(604 263-3332; info@esii.org) is a 1-on-1 cognitive training program designed to overcome cognitive and learning deficits, including problems with organizing and processing information. Intact cognitive skills are used to strengthen weaker cognitive areas. Anecdotal evidence shows outstanding results with brain injury survivors (oral communication, E. Reycraft, director, Accelerated Learning, 17 March 2006). The program takes several months to complete and an hour of home study and exercises should be done daily. Fees are on a sliding scale. Family members can be trained to administer the program to patients outside the Lower Mainland.

Learning Disabilities Association of BC

(604 873-8139; www.ldac-taac.ca/chapters/bc-e.asp) and *Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder* (604 222-4043; www.vcn.bc.ca/chaddvan) can be contacted about remedial programs and treatment modalities appropriate for people with cognitive or behavioral problems stemming from a brain injury.

Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network or PLAN

(604 439-9566; www.plan.ca) can help set up personal support networks for people with mTBI. When this is done early on, friends and family may be involved. Unfortunately, PLAN usually is not contacted until a person with mTBI has become estranged from family and friends. PLAN can also assist with financial issues and applying for disability benefits.

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities Advocacy Access Program (604 872-1278) can help people with CPCS apply for financial assistance or disability benefits through federal and provincial government programs.

(See also Jill Franklin's article on mild brain injury in the *BC Medical Journal*, December 2006.)