



# CONNECTIONS

## Brain Injury Canada's Newsletter

As summer winds down and we move into autumn, we have lots of new ways for our community to participate in what we're doing. From advocacy to free educational events, we have a busy autumn ahead. We're hosting a free online webinar with our partners at Transcendent Concussion Research Program; we're collecting signatures for Bill C-206; and we have some great personal stories from our community. Take a read, and don't forget to follow along on our social media to stay up to date with us!

The Brain Injury Canada Team

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## Speakers



**Sydney Low**  
Lived Experience  
Ambassador and Host



**Dr. Roger Zemek**  
CHEO Research Institute



**Dr. Rébecca Robillard**  
University of Ottawa



**Dr. Noah Silverberg**  
University of  
British Columbia

## VIRTUAL WEBINAR

# THE INVISIBLE INJURY:

MANAGING HEADACHES,  
SLEEP, & MENTAL HEALTH  
SYMPTOMS AFTER  
A CONCUSSION

**THURSDAY**  
**SEPTEMBER 25**

12:00 - 1:30 PM EST

Are you or someone you know struggling with concussion symptoms? Hear from the experts!

*Sign up for free via  
the link or scan here:*

[https://redcap.link/  
6157p3a3](https://redcap.link/6157p3a3)



## CONCUSSION AWARENESS WEEK 2025

SEPT 22-26 COME LEARN ONLINE WITH US!

# Long, Slow, Deep: Mindfulness for Brain Injury

An article by Jessie Smith

Hi there, Jessie here. I am a brain injury survivor and mindfulness teacher. After my car accident in 2013, the fine folks at GF Strong Rehab Centre in Vancouver suggested I take up mindfulness. I soon discovered that mindfulness was both a help and a hindrance. I founded Mindful Concussion so that I could share my hard-earned lessons with others. I want survivors and the professionals who care for us to understand the beautiful benefits of mindfulness. At the same time, I want others to avoid the pain, panic, dissociation, and shame that I felt when I was first learning mindfulness for brain injury care.



My first taste of the power of mindfulness for brain injury came through a link I found on Brainstreams, the website of the BC Brain Injury Association. The video showed me how to take Long, Slow, Deep breaths, where the exhale is longer than the inhale. I felt such relief as my tired brain had finally found a place to land—on the undulating calm of my breath.

I also found comfort in nature. I took Long, Slow and Deeply nourishing walks outside, soaking up and sinking into all the beauty all around [me]. I literally stopped to ‘smell the roses.’ I gazed at their bright colours, I touched their soft petals, and I let that beauty land in my soul.

The Long, Slow, Deep holds of yin and restorative yoga also served to help me release the ‘issues that were in my tissues’ and calm my frazzled nervous system.

In each of these practices - breathwork, time in nature, and gentle yoga - I felt such agency. I had discovered tools to turn to that take my mind off my symptoms and my situation, and help my attention land on wholesome, growthful objects of attention instead.

Later, I learned deeper practices that helped me ‘get comfortable with the uncomfortable’ of my symptoms. When I stopped fighting against my symptoms, I felt a dissipation of my suffering. I learned that I could handle my symptoms; the struggle against them was half the battle.

Instead of this dissipation, some practices lead to intensification of my symptoms. Practices that asked me to pay so much attention were overly cognitive. It was exhausting! Others, which asked me to pay deep and prolonged attention to my body,

# Long, Slow, Deep: Mindfulness for Brain Injury

**An article by Jessie Smith**

triggered panic attacks or dissociation. I felt ashamed that I could not do what other students seemed to do with ease.

Over time, I learned to modify mindfulness for brain injury so that survivors can get the help without the hindrances. I became a Qualified Mindfulness Teacher through the University of California's Center for Mindfulness, and I founded Mindful Concussion in order to share my lessons with others. My hope is that survivors will be given a prescription for mindfulness, but with a warning label.

My mentor, David Treleaven of Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness encouraged me to write, and he is penning the forward to my forthcoming book: *The Power and Perils of Mindfulness for Brain Injury*. This Fall, I will be launching a social media campaign called *Phrase From A Page* where I will share excerpts from the book's draft. I am seeking feedback from fellow survivors and the professionals who care for us - before the book goes to print! I would be honoured if you would follow along and share your insights.

- [My Facebook](#)
- [My LinkedIn](#)

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## Find your local brain injury association

Provincial and local brain injury associations are available across Canada and are ready to provide support, information, education, advocacy, and a variety of programs and services.

[What's my local association?](#)



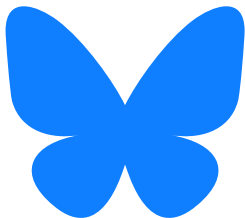


## Your story can make a difference

### Be a part of Stories of Brain Injury

People living with brain injury and their families are sharing their personal stories with Brain Injury Canada to help others learn; feel supported; and give them hope. Wherever you are in Canada, and wherever you are in your recovery journey, we want to hear your voice.

[Share my story today](#)



## We're on Bluesky!

### Connect with us on our newest social media channel

Brain Injury Canada is now on Bluesky! Join us on our brand new social media channel for updates, new resources, and more.

[Follow us on Bluesky](#)

## Visit Brain Injury and Teens (BRITE), our youth resource website



[britecanada.ca](https://britecanada.ca) is our new resource website specifically created for kids to take charge of their own learning when it comes to concussion, brain injury and recovery. This website is available in English and French, and is a growing resource that has new information being added regularly.

If you have children in your life with a brain injury, encourage them to check out [britecanada.ca](https://britecanada.ca) and/or share their story through our community page.

[Learn more](#)

## Sign the petition for Bill C-206

We're excited to share that on June 10, 2025, Member of Parliament Gord Johns (Courtenay-Alberni) introduced Private Members Bill C-206, An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries. The first reading has been completed, and we are currently asking Canadians to sign Petition 6620, urging the Government of Canada to adopt the strategy and improve outcomes for millions of Canadians, reducing the long-term social and economic impacts of brain injury.

[Sign the petition](#)

### Watch Member of Parliament Gord Johns introduce Bill C-206



### Learn more about national strategy advocacy

Bill C-206 is the latest chapter in advocating for a national strategy. Learn more on our website about work that's been done and how you can continue to support this work.

[Visit our website](#)

# Thank you for your support during Brain Injury Awareness Month

**We couldn't do it without you!**

This past June, we ran the first ever Beyond the Injury online campaign. This campaign encouraged Canadians to sign up as fundraisers and help spread awareness about brain injury. Thanks to the hard work of everyone involved, we are able to raise over \$25,000 towards brain injury awareness and advocacy work for the coming year. We met so many new people, worked with many influential Canadians, and formed partnerships that we can't wait to explore. We already have so many ideas for what to do next (and are already thinking about Brain Injury Awareness Month 2026!).

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your ongoing support. You made Beyond the Injury a success, and we couldn't do the work without you.

## **Classify Moderate to Severe Brain Injury as a Chronic Condition**

A significant collaboration between Brain Injury Canada and the Canadian Traumatic Brain Injury Research Consortium (CTRC) is calling for moderate to severe Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to be officially classified as a chronic condition in Canada. This move would significantly enhance nationwide healthcare strategies, policies, and patient outcomes.

[Read the position paper](#)

## **A Seat at the Table is looking for candidates**

The Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) is looking for people to be a part of their project A Seat at the Table, whose goal is to connect corporations and individuals with disabilities and appoint them to their boards of directors.

[Learn more](#)



## The Canada Disability Benefit applications are open

### If you receive the Disability Tax Credit, you may be eligible

The Canada Disability Benefit provides financial support of up to \$200 per month to eligible people with disabilities with low income. Individuals must be between the ages of 18-64. The first month of eligibility was June 2025. If an individual qualifies for the benefit, payments will start the month after their application is received and approved. If the application is approved in July 2025 or later and an applicant was eligible for payments in earlier months, they will get back payments. There will be no payments before June 2025.

### Am I eligible?

You must be approved for the Disability Tax Credit before you can apply for the Canada Disability Benefit. If you have that, you will also need your:

- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Direct deposit information for your bank, so you can receive payments

You may have already received a letter in the mail about the Canada Disability Benefit. If you haven't, you can still apply. You will need to include your mailing address and your net income (line 23600) from your 2024 notice of assessment.

### When can I apply?

You can apply starting June 20, 2025.

### How can I apply?

Applications can be submitted online through the application portal, by phone, or in person at a Service Canada Centre.

[I'd like to learn more about the Canada Disability Benefit](#)

## Amanda's Story: "Practicing empathy goes a long way"



### **How did you acquire your brain injury?**

I was the front-seat passenger in my friend's car. We were T-boned\* on my side by an oncoming van when we slid through an intersection in the winter (February 3rd, 1996).

\*This means that the front of one car struck the side of the other car.

### **What are some things that have helped you throughout the recovery journey?**

I got lucky and had what is now considered "the Cadillac of insurance coverage" at the time of the car accident. I also had an AMAZING lawyer, who had had a concussion himself, so was familiar with brain injury and was an incredible support. With his help, I was able to access the best support for my recovery. I was also very lucky to be in the London area at the time, which had many supportive services for people like me. In terms of specific therapies that helped me the most, I would say there were 3 things:

1. My tutor in high school (who helped me re-learn how to learn and to implement memory strategies);
2. My psychologist through Brainworks, who taught me cognitive behaviour therapies (CBT) strategies for regulating emotions, managing day-to-day priorities, and gaining the confidence I needed for self-advocacy in the world, and;
3. My neuropsychologist who agreed to see me even in adulthood so I could understand how my pediatric brain injury had aged. That third detail was also incredibly important for my personal awareness and self-advocacy.

### **If you could go back to when you first acquired your brain injury and tell yourself one thing, what would that be?**

At 44 years of age, and having lived more of my life WITH my brain injury than without, I would have simply congratulated myself on pushing for my independence and acquiring the knowledge to self-advocate in the system. I was often discouraged by the fact that people didn't understand me, but looking back, I can see that that was less important than my understanding myself, being okay with having specific needs, and learning how to explain my needs to others so that I could work cooperatively with those around me in having my own needs met while complementing theirs.

## Amanda's Story: "Practicing empathy goes a long way"

**What would you like people who don't have a brain injury to know?**

Brain injury is a serious and very real threat to a person's independence. Whether acquired through a physical injury, substance abuse, or anything else, people need to remember that the brain is the source of every function in the body – including emotional wellness, intellectual or cognitive ability, as well as all of the unseen autonomic functions like the heartbeat and digestion. If we know that a friend, acquaintance, client, or coworker has any level of brain injury, we need to consider how that might affect our interactions with them. Practicing empathy goes a long way.

It is my hope that more doctors, nurses, specialists, professionals, and all types of people in both support roles AND the overall community will pursue an understanding of the effects of a "hidden-hurt" like brain injury so that those of us who suffer from these challenges don't have to fight as hard to be accepted for who we are.

### Brain Injury Canada Connect

Find services for individuals with brain injury & caregivers across Canada through our interactive service directory. And if you provide supports, list with us today!

[Access the service directory](#)



### Free E-Courses for Family Caregivers

Sign up for our free self-guided e-courses for family caregivers all about brain injury, caregiving, and more

[Sign up today](#)

# Check out our online education catalogue

**Available in English and French**

Education is an important part of Brain Injury Canada's mission, and we are thrilled to be able to offer a variety of online courses to help people better understand brain injury and better support individuals in their community.

## Community Builders Bundle

**Available in English and French**

**\$30 each or all four for \$100**

We have launched a bundle of four courses designed for people who work in their communities.

- Introduction to Ethics for Community Organizations
- Introduction to Trauma-Informed Care for Community Organizations
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility plus Belonging in Community Spaces
- Mental Health and Wellbeing for Community Workers

[Access the bundle](#)

## Foundations of Brain Injury for Health Care Professionals

**Available in English and French**

**\$65+HST**

The course that started it all, our foundations course is a must for anyone working in health care or social services who wants an introduction to brain injury, including videos with experts and support strategies to improve quality of care.

[Get the foundations course](#)

## Brain Injury in Long-term Care




**Available in English, French coming Fall 2025**

**\$50+HST**

Long-term care has many residents with brain injury of all ages. We created a course specifically for those who work in long-term care about brain injury and how it may impact residents, the environment around them, and your role.

[Get the long-term care course](#)

**You might also be interested in...**

-  [Educational infographics on brain injury, concussion and more](#)
-  [Make a donation to Brain Injury Canada](#)
-  [Health care professionals can sign up for our Foundations educational e-course for just \\$65+HST](#)

**Follow us on our social media channels**



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[It was okay](#) 😐

[No](#) 😞

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