

CONNECTIONS

Brain Injury Canada's Newsletter

What an incredible year it's been! Between online courses, new resources, Bill C-206 and lots of in-person events, we're ending 2025 more excited than ever. Check out what we've been up to these past few months, what we have on the horizon, and revisit some tips on having a nice holiday season. We'd also like to remind you that **our office will be closed from December 24, 2025-January 2, 2026**. All emails and phone messages will be returned in the new year.

Thank you for all of your support this year, and we'll see you in 2026!

The Brain Injury Canada Team

In this issue...

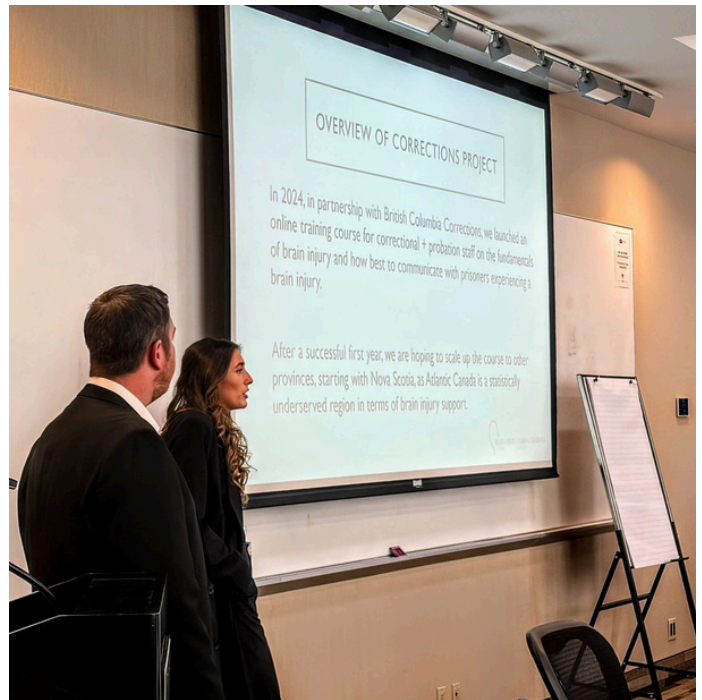
Brain Injury Canada in the community.....	page 2
On Parliament Hill for Bill C-206.....	page 4
Tips for a happy and comfortable holiday season.....	page 6
Our year in review.....	page 9
What's coming next.....	page 9
Make your donation before December 31, 2025.....	page 10
Stories of brain injury: Ann D.....	page 11

The Brain Injury Canada team in the community

Brain Injury Canada has had a busy fall season, attending a lot of events and conferences where we've had the privilege of talking about our programs; supporting our collaborators; and staying informed about research and community.

The John Howard Society Annual General Meeting

In October, members of our team travelled to Nova Scotia to meet with organizations and present at the John Howard Society Canada Annual General Meeting. We talked about our pilot program we've been doing with BC Corrections, providing training to correctional facility workers and parole/community officers on the fundamentals of brain injury. Brain injury is overrepresented in the justice system, and we're working hard to gather the feedback we've received and expand this program to more provinces/territories.



The Ontario Brain Injury Association Conference

Our CEO Michelle and Manager of Partnerships and Development Garry set up for a packed couple of days at the Ontario Brain Injury Association Conference. We got to talk to so many amazing people in the community and share more about what we're up to with organizations from across Ontario. Michelle gave a presentation on Bill C-206 and how the community can help move this forward.



The Brain Injury Canada team in the community

Pathway to Peers

Rachel, our Manager of Education and Engagement, spent some time in November at Pathway to Peers, a free community event hosted by Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia and March of Dimes. It featured presentations from individuals with lived experience, NS Health, and a panel discussion. We were able to visit many organizations in the exhibit hall and learn more about what they do and opportunities for supporting each other.



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?](#)



Bill C-206: On the hill

Brain Injury Canada and partner organizations hold meetings and host a reception at Parliament

Bill C-206, An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries, has been a big portion of the advocacy work of our organization, and we were thrilled to have the opportunity to meet with partner organizations and lawmakers in person. This November, our CEO Michelle, along with representatives from multiple organizations across Canada and individuals with lived experiences held meetings with Members of Parliament. We also co-hosted a reception with the Bill's sponsor Gord Johns, Senator Flordeliz Osler, Senator Yuen Pau Woo, and many other champions. Individuals with brain injury, family members, board members, and politicians all came together to talk about the impact of brain injury and what a national strategy would mean. Having so many incredible members of the community in the same room was a powerful reminder how important Bill C-206 is. We're committed to working with all parties to make this a reality.



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](#)

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



[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](#) and/or share their story through our community page.

[Learn more](#)

Thank you for your support during Giving Tuesday

Creating more mental health resources for individuals with brain injury and caregivers

Giving Tuesday was December 2, 2025. It's a day of charitable giving, and this year our mission was to raise money to create more mental health resources. About half of individuals with a brain injury experience depression within the first year post-injury, and there are many other challenges people can face. Many mental health resources and supports aren't created to support individuals with complex cognitive needs, and this can make it hard to find tools that work.

Thanks to you, we're going to be able to make accessible resources that can help people care for their own mental health and advocate/find the supports they need.

Tips for a happy, comfortable holiday season

Every December, we like to share some tips for navigating a busy holiday season. December is when a lot of holidays happen, and there can be a lot of expectations to attend events or participate in certain traditions. And while you may hope to celebrate as much as possible, it's important to keep the holidays from becoming a source of stress or making symptoms of brain injury worse.

Say no if you can't (or don't want to) do something

If you say yes to every invite or event, you end up with a packed schedule. This can lead to more fatigue and disruption to your routine, which could impact symptoms of brain injury. You don't have to say no to everything, as there will be some activities that are really important to you. But if you receive an invite that you think will be more stressful than fun for you, it's okay to say no.

Many people struggle with saying no (particularly around the holidays) because they don't want to hurt others feelings. But saying no doesn't have to be dismissive or hurtful. Here are some ways you can approach it:

“Thank you for the invite, but I'm not able to join you. I appreciate you thinking of me.”

“I appreciate the invite, but I have a lot of other things happening around that time, and I really need some time to myself to balance it out. I would love to get together with you in the new year.”

“Thanks for thinking of me. I don't think I'll be able to go, but I know you'll have so much fun. If you can, send me some photos!”

Build breaks into your schedule

Blocking out periods of time in your schedule for a break is a helpful way to make sure you're getting the rest you need.

For example: You have a holiday party on Friday evening, and then a family dinner on the Saturday evening. You want to go to both, but know you'll need some extra rest and a little time to be alone. You block out the Saturday morning and afternoon on your calendar as a rest period so you know not to book anything for that time.

Taking a break could even look like setting aside 30 minutes during a holiday gathering to go sit quietly or be in a new environment. Be open with friends and family about what you need in order to participate, and ask for help accessing it.

Tips for a happy, comfortable holiday season

Find environments that work for you

Holiday events can be noisy, have a lot of bright lights, and be in environments that may not work for you. You may decide that you want to participate in events with a lot of sensory stimulation, but you choose to participate for a shorter period of time. You can also talk to the people in your life about environments that are more accessible to you.

Make adjustments to your traditions

Traditions are an important part of the holiday season for many people. You may have your own favourite holiday traditions. But after a brain injury, it may not be possible for you to engage with them in exactly the same way.

For example: Every year you host a big holiday party at your house for all your friends. But the planning, prepping, cooking and decorating takes a lot of your mental and physical energy. You are able to cook one dish comfortably, but organizing and hosting a whole party for a bunch of people just isn't something you want or are able to do this year.



You may feel some grief/loss around a tradition like that. It's perfectly natural to be disappointed that you aren't able to do things the same way. However, that doesn't mean you don't have to do them at all. In this example, you could ask one of your friends to take over hosting duties and you'll bring one special dish you served every year. It may not look exactly the same, but you are still getting to spend time with good friends (and good food).

Tips for a happy, comfortable holiday season

Making adjustments to traditions so they work for you helps make sure that you enjoy them and the holidays more.

And remember: it's okay to say goodbye to traditions that aren't working for you anymore. You want to feel your best during the holiday season, and if some traditions are causing you stress, it may be helpful to take a break from them this year.

Set a budget

Many holidays this time of year have a gift-giving component. This can get expensive, and finances can be quite stressful. One of the best ways to help yourself navigate holiday expenses is to set a budget that will allow you to give without stress. We have some tips on setting budgets on our website.

Talk to your family and friends about what you need

Many people try to do it all during the holidays, often on their own because they feel it's their responsibility to make the holiday great. But holidays emphasize the importance of being together. If you have concerns about the holiday, or need some help, talk to your loved ones. They want to support you, and they may need you to tell them what you can do, what you don't want to do, and how you're feeling.

The holidays are a lovely time of year, but they can get busy and overwhelming. These are just some tips you can use to help navigate the busy season, prioritize your wants and needs, and find a balance.

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](#)



2025: Year in review

When we look back on 2025, we have had one of the biggest years in the organization's history!

- We launched 10 courses in English and French
- We had one of the most impactful Brain Injury Awareness Months in history
- We developed new partnerships with community organizations
- We completed a multi-year research project on election accessibility
- We aired a national public service announcement that was seen by thousands of people
- We presented at multiple conferences/events about the work we're doing, getting to meet with members of our community

What's on the horizon in 2026?

2026 is going to be a big year with a lot of focus on growing our current resources, as well as adding a few more, such as:

- A symptom management tool
- Transitioning from Youth to Adulthood: A free course for family caregivers
- Expanding britecanada.ca
- New mental health resources

Stay tuned through our newsletter and social media for all the updates on what we're doing; what's coming; and opportunities for you to participate in programs, research, and more.



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](#)



You have until December 31, 2025 to make a donation and receive a credit towards your taxes

While any time of year is a great time to donate, we want to remind you that December 31, 2025 is the deadline to receive tax credits for your 2025 tax year. When you donate to a registered charity like Brain Injury Canada, you can receive a tax credit, which can reduce the amount of taxes owed at the federal and provincial levels.

[Make a donation to Brain Injury Canada](#)

How to claim the charitable tax credit?

There is a section of your income tax forms that is for donations. You will need to have donation receipts from each donation throughout the year in order to demonstrate that the donation has been made. This will also give you the total amount you donated over the years.

- ➔ [Donations and gifts-Government of Canada](#)
- ➔ [Do Charitable Donations Reduce Taxable Income in Canada-TurboTax Canada](#)

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](#)

Ann's Story: "I wish people knew that every day is different, and patience and understanding go a long way"



How did you acquire your brain injury?

My journey with brain injury began at just 3 years old, when I contracted meningitis and spent two weeks in the hospital fighting for recovery. The aftermath brought blackouts and then seizures, which persisted until I was 16 and underwent a life-changing right frontal lobe removal surgery. This experience has given me a unique perspective, and I'm passionate about raising awareness for brain injury support and advocacy.

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




While I was too young to fully grasp the impact of certain therapies or strategies during my recovery, I want to acknowledge the incredible support I received from my medical team. The doctors and specialists who cared for me before and after my surgery were instrumental in helping me navigate this journey. Their expertise and compassion made a lasting difference in my life.

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

As someone living with a brain injury, I wish people knew that every day is different, and patience and understanding go a long way. It's not always visible, but the challenges are real. By being supportive and open to learning, you can make a big difference in the lives of those affected.

I wish there was more support available for brain injury patients, starting from the moment of injury. Early intervention and ongoing care can make a significant difference in recovery and quality of life. Let's advocate for better resources and services to help individuals and families affected by brain injury.

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](#)

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[Yes](#) 😊

[It was okay](#) 😐

[No](#) 😞

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