

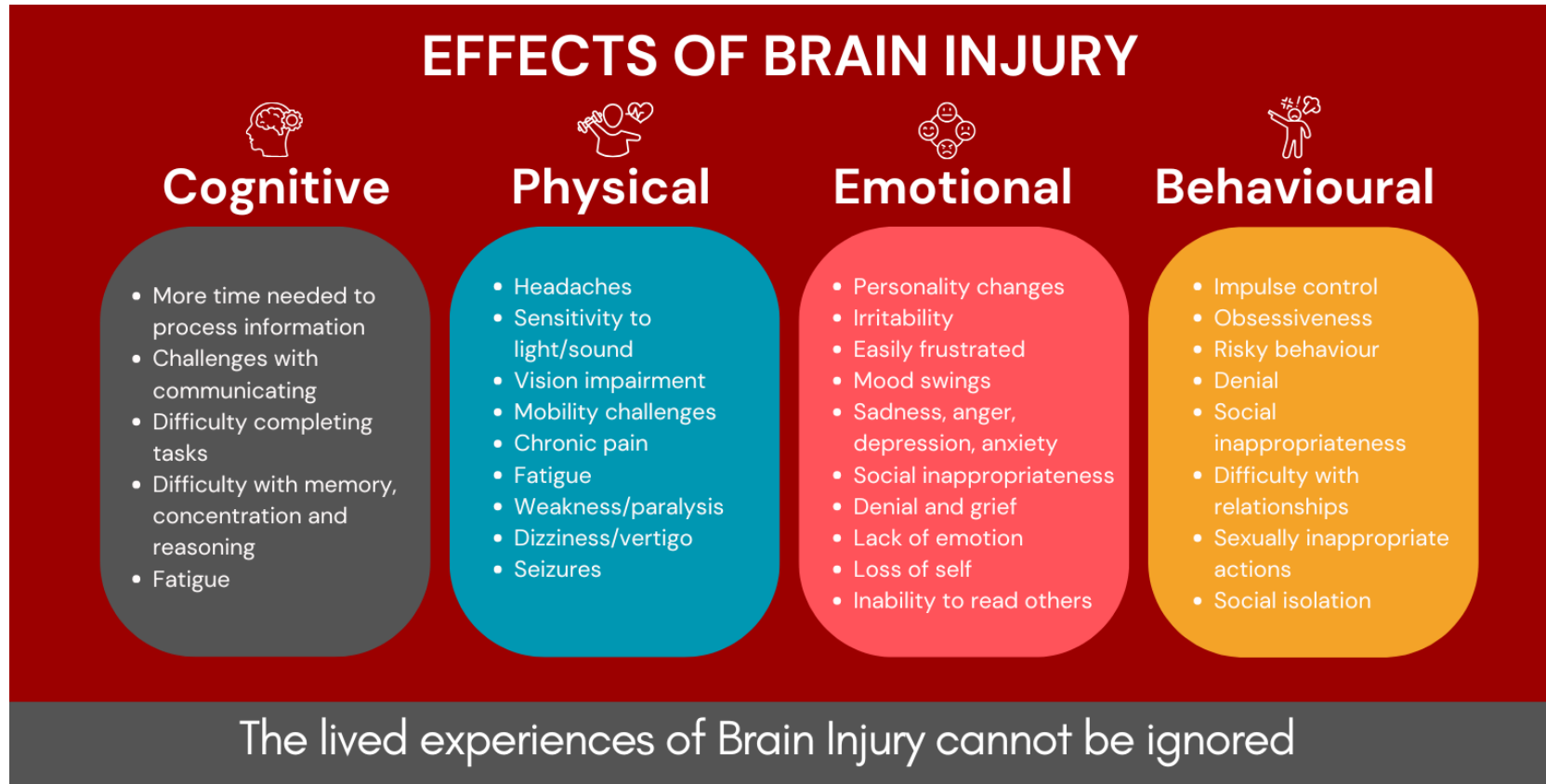


Brain Injury Awareness Month 2026

Presentation to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

Why This Belongs On The Accessibility Agenda

Brain injury is not only a health issue. It is a participation, inclusion, and barrier-removal issue.



Accessibility implication: many barriers are created by speed, noise, complexity, unclear communication, and low awareness — not by the person's injury.

Brain Injury is Often Hidden

People may look fine while still facing major barriers.



“Invisible” does not mean minor.

- Symptoms may fluctuate day-to-day or hour-to-hour.
- Fatigue, overstimulation, memory issues, or mood changes may be misread as attitude or non-compliance.
- Accessible service design can reduce stress and improve participation: clear instructions, flexible pacing, quiet options, plain language, and trauma-informed support.

The Prevalence of Brain Injury Cannot Be Ignored

Brain injury can happen in an instant.

Accessibility needs to last beyond the moment of injury.

TBI accounts for more than 18,000 hospitalizations annually in Canada

Almost **500 people** suffer a traumatic brain injury **every day** in Canada.

By 2031, TBI is projected to be among Canada's most common neurological conditions.

Every 3 minutes, a Canadian suffers a Brain Injury



Adults diagnosed with concussion have a long-term suicide risk about 3x higher than the general population

Canadians who have sustained a TBI are 2.5x more likely to be incarcerated.



Globally, TBI is a leading cause of injury-related death and disability

About 50% of people with TBI are affected by depression within the first year after injury



Up to 74% of women who experience intimate partner violence may have a history of TBI, and these injuries are often missed or untreated.

About BIST

MISSION

- To enhance the quality of life for people living with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) by providing meaningful support services, raising awareness, and fostering a more inclusive and accessible community

VISION

- To build a community of hope and resilience where no one faces the journey of brain injury alone.



Peer Support & Caregiver Support

PEER SUPPORT

- Mentor (lived experience)
- Partner (seeking support)
- Both for survivors and caregivers

SUPPORT GROUPS

- BIST Brain Injury Support Group
- BIST Women & Brain Injury Support Group
- OBIA Caregiver Support Group



Support Services

Service Navigation

- Toronto ABI Network Community Referral Form
- Ontario Works (OW) / ODSP
- Canada Disability Benefit (CDB)
- EI Caregiving Benefits
- Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP)
- Trillium Drug Plan (TDP)

Functional Support

- Form completion
- Phone calls
- Appointment accompaniment
- Advocacy support

Safety Planning & Accessibility Supports

- Brain Injury Card
- MedicAlert ID
- TTC Support Person Assistance Card
- Wheel -Trans registration

BIST Support Groups: Online Support Group (coping & shared experience) and Women & Brain Injury Support Group (problem- solving & stress management)

- Not So Blue Mondays – Weekly creative drop- in
- Wednesday Community Meetings – Guest speakers (in partnership with BIAYR)
- Monthly Cooking Classes – In partnership with North York Seniors Centre
- Monthly Community Outings – AGO, movies, Ripley's Aquarium, etc.
- Freaky Friday Art Group – Creative expression & connection
- Annual Art Exhibition – Tangled Art + Disability

