

FEATURE STORY:



Connecting Brain Injury Survivors, Lloydminster & Area Brain Injury Society

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The Lloydminster & Area Brain Injury Society has been serving the community for the past 35 years with free supports and programming for brain injury survivors and their families and caregivers. The Connecting Brain Injury Survivors program provides essential social, recreational, and educational programs for adults with brain injuries in and around Lloydminster. Through providing social and interactive programs, activities are designed to empower individuals with brain injuries to embrace life once again. Not only do participants receive support, but so do their families and caregivers with the much needed respite time while their loved ones are attending programming.

Along with directly serving individuals with brain injuries, this program indirectly serves their families and caregivers, as well as the general public with referrals and resources. We believe that by educating people on brain injury, we can help lessen the stigma and bring awareness to brain injury and the need for our programs within our community.

This year, more than ever, people can relate to experiencing isolation, depression, and feeling alone. These are just a few attributes that commonly affect individuals with brain injuries in their daily lives. Our programs are designed to ensure participants are supported in all aspects on their journeys throughout the brain injury recovery process. Knowing one is not alone is so important after sustaining a brain injury. Fellowship amongst peers and community as well as having the feeling of belonging and connecting to their society continues to prove the necessity of our programs and services for our participants and community.

How has your program been modified since the onset of COVID-19? Were there any obstacles you had to overcome? Any tips or lessons learned?

We saw the pandemic as a time where our participants needed our supports more than ever. We had to adapt how those services were being provided, but our participants still knew that even with our doors closed, they were able to access support.

Phone calls, video calls, social distanced visits, and text messages to participants and their families and caregivers helped us through the hard times. Care packages of projects, journals, painting, and coloring were provided to participants. We gave challenges and tasks to the participants to partake in and keep track of their progress.

We learned that this time was also very hard on our caregivers and families as they were not receiving the respite they much needed. We kept in contact with them as well, to know that we still supported them, and to ensure they were getting time for themselves.



“When I first started going to LABIS, I was socially isolated from the other participants. I slowly got worked into activities and became part of the group! Now I feel much more confident there and in my personal life.

At LABIS, we play games which gets us to interact with others. We do crafts that allows us to artistically express ourselves. And volunteer to help support the community.

We do excursions sometimes that help us understand how others have coped with life. Or we would go on a trail ride that lets us get out and see nature and the ride is organized by another Brain Injury survivor, so it shows support.

Having all of us together lets us show off our difficulties and get help through any of our plights. It also allows us to portray any recovery advancements we have and motivate others to keep trying. There is always something to work on. That is why having LABIS around as a helpful hand is nice because they enjoy helping us through struggles.

Walking is good for health... I heard. So as a group, we go to the Sports Centre walking track. We set certain times that we go walk, that way we always have some familiarity when about. It gets us out and walking with others who have their own situations like sports training or youngsters wanting to play. It lets us feel different situations.

Sometimes we relax and watch a movie. It allows us to see how others react in situations and how the outcome of their actions work out. But we probably will never try to steal gold from 3 Vegas casinos at once!”

- Dustin, program participant