



December 2021

## Alabama Head Injury Task Force News

### 📣 Welcome TBI Navigators! 📣

Brinda Dungan & Fara Flick are new **Traumatic Brain Injury Grant Navigators** funded through an ACL Grant and housed under ADRS. Brinda comes from Colorado where she did similar work there and is based out of the Homewood VR Office. Fara has a background in education and is based out of the Opelika VR Office.

In FY21, the ADRS Traumatic Brain Injury Program concluded a two-year Federal Administration for Community Living grant, partnering with the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) to screen, identify, and customize treatment interventions for individuals with TBI within the state behavioral health and substance use disorder programs. The 2021 TBI/ADMH dissemination report showed **1 in 3 individuals within the mental health system screened positive for a history of TBI**, those with a suicide attempt were 2.6X likely to have a TBI, and those diagnosed with a trauma disorder were 1.14X more likely to have a history of TBI. Click [here](#) to read the report.



### TACT (Teacher Acute Concussion Tool)

The TACT includes short tutorial videos and educational cut sheets about concussions in the general education classroom and provides weekly email reminders to teachers. This tool is now in Alabama, sponsored by the ADRS TBI Program, [www.getschoolledonconcussions.com/alabama](http://www.getschoolledonconcussions.com/alabama), and the Return to Learn Protocol. Log into the Get Schooled on Concussion Alabama site [here](#). (Password: TACTAlabama2020)



### Toolkit — Traumatic Brain Injury and Substance Use Disorders: Making the Connections

NASHIA released a new resource which merges the content on TBIs and SUD to expand capacity to address both issues in treatment. The toolkit provides valuable and practical information for advancing behavioral health providers' capacity when serving persons who have brain injuries. The toolkit was written by Dr. Carolyn Lemskey and is a collaboration with the Mountain Plains Addiction Technology Transfer Center and the Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center and NASHIA. Check it out [here](#).



### Accessing Potential Through Assistive Technology (APTAT) A project of ADRS Rehab Engineering & Assistive Technology

The APTAT Project is partnering with STAR to manage the statewide assistive technology lending library as well as coordinate assistive technology training, demonstrations and technical assistance for Alabamians with disabilities and those that support them. For more information, email Ashley McLeroy at [ashley.mcleroy@rehab.alabama.gov](mailto:ashley.mcleroy@rehab.alabama.gov).

### Brain Fly-Through

*Stanford University's Crash Course on Concussion, partnered with NASHIA & TeachAids*

This educational experience takes viewers inside a 3D representation of a real human brain to help them better understand its complexity and vulnerability. Learn more [here](#).



The **Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Registry (AHSCIR)** requires that hospital trauma TBI records be collected, reviewed and eligible individuals contacted for needed linkage to crucial services and supports statewide. For FY 21, 6769 new records were received from the Alabama Department of Public Health and 3585 individuals were eligible to be contacted (53%) to provide Information and Referral assistance from ADRS, AHIF and other community agencies.

### Toll Free TBI Helpline

**1-888-879-4706**

The TBI Helpline had a total of **308** referrals and/or phone calls through FY 21.



## Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)

Our online support groups meet every Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:00pm. Email [info@ahif.org](mailto:info@ahif.org) for more info. AHIF is also offering a 5-week educational series via Zoom for caregivers presented by UAB Occupational Therapy Group on Thursdays at 2:00pm from Jan.13th – Feb.10th. Email [caregiver@ahif.org](mailto:caregiver@ahif.org) for more info.



### Adult TBI Program (ICBM)

The Interactive Community Based Model (ICBM) pre-vocational program for adults served 378 caseload consumers and their families for FY 21. ICBM provides individual cognitive remediation, counseling, TBI education and accommodations to transition to community, school, and/or employment.

### Children’s Rehabilitation Services (CRS)

The PASSAGES Pediatric TBI Care Coordinators served a total of 383 consumers through FY 21 assisting children and youth with transition from hospital to home, community, and school and providing information/education on TBI residuals to family and school systems.



### State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL)

SAIL Personnel continue to provide services to Alabama’s population of individuals with significant physical disabilities in their homes and communities including individuals with TBI.

The following is a breakdown of program participants for FY 21:

- 464 SAIL Homebound Program
- 360 SAIL Community Supports Program
- 636 SAIL Medicaid Waiver Program



### The University of Montevallo Speech and Language Center

(UMSLC) offers brain injury evaluation and treatment for Adults and Pediatrics. Reach out [here](#) to request services. Telehealth options are available.

### SAVE THE DATE!

Don’t miss any of this year’s Task Force meetings:  
*March 10, 2022 - June 9, 2022 - September 8, 2022*



Visit [AlabamaTBI.org](http://AlabamaTBI.org)



Brinda with her partner, Brock

### Survivor Spotlight – Brinda Dungan, Riverside, AL

The brain always fascinated me. Growing up, I had quite a few people close to me who had brain disorders. In graduate school, I focused my research on early language acquisition in neurodivergent individuals. In 2010, several people close to me, deployed in the Armed Forces, sustained TBIs. There was little to no support for them at the time, and it was then that I decided I wanted to go into this field. I moved over to social work and began working with clients with TBIs.

Little did I know that five years later, I would become my own client. I sustained a mild TBI in Oct. 2015, later being diagnosed with Post Concussive Syndrome, as a result of a high impact motor vehicle accident. I was attending post graduate work specializing in neuro-behavioral analysis for persons with brain injuries and had just completed my first course at the University of Colorado. I withdrew before the following semester due to cognitive and

physical issues resulting from my injury. I sustained injuries to my vestibular cortex and “biffed it” (Colorado term meaning *falling down hard*) often, and also experienced behavioral, cognitive and emotional changes.

I was somewhat prepared for the road to recovery working in the field, but even still it was a challenge as I had significant executive functioning deficits - most especially working memory, rate of recall, word finding and reading/listening comprehension. I took off two years from work to go to almost daily visits with OT, PT and SLP. The day after I was cleared to go back to work, I got an interview as a Case Manager at the BIA of Colorado where I worked until moving back home to Alabama earlier this year.

Honestly, two things that helped me most in my recovery were the support and understanding of my family and friends and doing one thing a day that made me smile. Every day of the last 6 years has been a challenge, but the best advice anyone gave me was to “be kind to yourself, take every day as it comes and don’t rush recovery.”