

MENTAL HEALTH AND BRAIN INJURY

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS

DID YOU KNOW?

Opioids don't always kill you,
but they always fry your brain.

#ChangeYourMind

Learn more at www.biausa.org

 **BRAIN INJURY
ASSOCIATION**
1-800-444-6443



We all encounter incredibly complex and intricate systems or machines on a daily basis. From computers to televisions, from plant life to animal life, from phones to social networks, from economic systems to even larger systems such as the source system: we are surrounded by delicate and complex systems from every side.

However, the complexity contained in any of these systems pales in comparison to the complexity of our brains. The human brain is perhaps the most delicate, intricate, and complex system in the universe. In the many centuries that humanity has

been studying its own brain, there has been great progress. However, the fact remains that there is still far more unknown about our brains than known.

That is why brain injuries are so utterly devastating. The brain is not something that medicine has learned to adeptly fix the way it has learned to handle a broken leg. According to the Centers for Disease Control (2017), 1.7 million people suffer a traumatic brain injury annually. These people have to deal with an almost limitless spectrum of maladies. Depending on the part of the brain that is injured, people who suffer from traumatic brain injury (TBI) can develop many other types of disability.

Due to the diversity of TBIs, there are few universals. However, there are some fairly typical problems that individuals with a TBI suffer. For example, many individuals with a TBI suffer from very poor memory. The hippocampus is generally regarded as the major part of our brain associated with memory, in particular short-term memory. The hippocampus often seems to be affected in anyone who has sustained an injury to their head. The degree to which memory is affected varies according to the individual. Some cannot recall what happened 10 minutes ago while others struggle from long-term memory issues.

Furthermore, there is no cure for memory issues. The sufferer cannot just exercise her memory and hope that it rebuilds itself. Most doctors say that if the brain is going to heal it will do so within five years after the injury. For most individuals with TBI, it is a constant struggle.

...Continued on page 3



Legal & Financial Planning
Monday, 3/18/19 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Rm. 302, County Office Building
60 Central Ave., Cortland

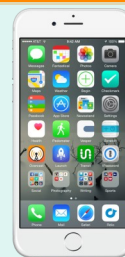


The diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease makes planning for the future more important than ever. This is an interactive program where you will have a chance to learn about important legal and financial issues to consider, how to put plans in place, and how to access legal and financial resources near you. This program will cover information for families and individuals dealing with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Topics covered will include: Making legal plans that fit your needs; legal documents you'll need and what they mean for all of you; how to find legal and financial assistance; practical strategies for making a long-term plan of care. Please join this **free** event hosted by the Cortland County Area Agency on Aging's Caregiver Resource Center by calling (607)753-5060 to register.



APP OF THE MONTH: Concussion Recognition & Response

A free app for parents and youth coaches, Concussion Recognition and Response helps coaches and parents recognize whether an individual is exhibiting/reporting the signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion. The app allows a coach or parent to respond quickly and appropriately to this potentially serious medical situation. In less than 5 minutes, the user can go through a checklist of possible signs/symptoms to determine whether to remove the child from play and the need for further medical examination.



iPhone: <http://bit.ly/TBIConc> Android: <http://bit.ly/TBIConcAn>



FOOD AND MENTAL HEALTH

The human brain requires a constant supply of fuel to work properly. This fuel is provided by the foods you eat and can make a difference in physical and mental health. Eating higher-quality foods with more vitamins and minerals

nourishes the brain and keeps the mind in healthy working order. Conversely, diets high in refined sugars are harmful to the brain. Such diets can cause impaired brain function and worsen the symptoms of mental health disorders such as depression. Diets are linked to the areas of the brain that are involved with learning, memory, and mental health. Higher levels of mental health and well-being were reported by individuals who consumed more fruits and vegetables in their diets.

Diet and depression

Diet is directly linked to rates of depression. Studies show that highly processed foods that have little nutritional value have a negative impact on mental health and increase symptoms of depression in children and adults. Regularly eating processed foods can increase the risk of developing depression by as much as 60%.

Individuals that eat a healthy diet including whole foods such as fruits, nuts, whole grains, legumes, fish, and unsaturated fats are up to 35% less likely to develop depression than individuals that eat processed foods. Recent studies record that by adjusting poor eating habits, participants were able to significantly reduce symptoms of depression. These results were sustained at least six months after the initial trial, and display that a wholesome and nutritious diet can have a beneficial effect on the risk of depression. Eating a healthy diet allows for an efficient, safe, and non-stigmatizing method of lessening major episodes of depression.

Diet and Child Development

Good nutrition starts in the womb. The children of women who consume highly processed, fried, and sugary foods during pregnancy are more likely to display negative mental health symptoms as adults. Similarly, being exposed to a nutritious diet in utero is linked to positive mental health outcomes in children. This claim also applies to child development during the first few years of life. Poorer diet is linked to poorer mental health in children and adolescents, with children practicing unhealthy eating habits displaying an increased risk of externalizing emotional problems. Emotional and behavioral problems in children are therefore linked to dietary practices early in life.



...Continued on page 3



We are a volunteer Board of Directors that act to initiate and promote advocacy services, educational presentations, prevention programs, and information and resource referrals.

President:

Patricia Schaap

Vice President:

Kurt Warner

Treasurer:

Richard Bush

Secretary:

Writer:

Kurt Warner

Board Members:

Martha Bush
Amanda Delee
Mary Dykeman
Kathy Taylor
Sue Lewis
Shari Weiss

To learn more about the Cortland MHA visit:

<http://www.mhacortland.com>

or contact:

mhacortlandny@gmail.com



...Continued from page 1

Mental Health and Brain Injury

Another fairly universal issue that often plagues someone who has a TBI is a lack of impulse control. Individuals with TBIs often lack verbal filters. Someone with a brain injury may struggle with exclaiming socially inappropriate thoughts or observations. For example, one individual with a TBI had shouted “You are not a man... You are just a pig!” at another person in a formal social setting. This may cause social ostracization and can be further detrimental to the mental health of an individual suffering from a TBI.

Such hurdles are constantly being jumped by individuals with TBI. Their resilience and ingenuity in finding ways to overcome their problems and deficits are often simply remarkable. Despite the infinite complexity of the brain and our inability to understand it, our brains very often can find a way. March is National Brain Injury Awareness month, so please remember the great adversity that those suffering from a brain injury may have to endure.

-Kurt Warner, Catholic Charities of Cortland County
Board Vice President, Mental Health Association of Cortland County

For TBI help in Cortland:
Please contact Liberty Resources' Center for Brain Injury and Rehabilitation (CBIR-Cortland).
Phone: 607-218-6055
Fax: 607-218-6059
Location: 149 Main Street, Cortland, NY 13045

...Continued from page 1

FOOD AND MENTAL HEALTH

So, what can you do?

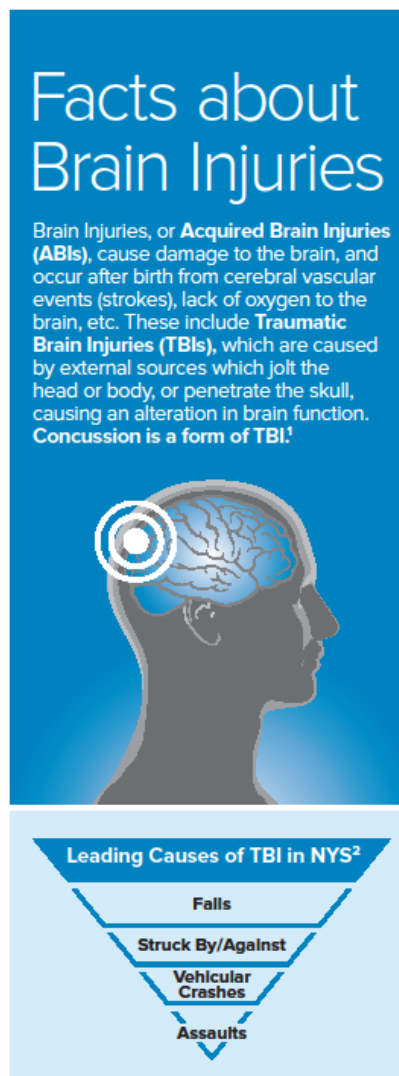
Eating healthy and nutritious foods can combat symptoms of mental health disorders. Fresh foods produced and purchased locally have the highest levels of nutrition, so be sure to shop at your local farmers' market and check local farms for their seasonal CSAs. SNAP benefits can also be used at most local farmers' markets, so everyone has access to a healthy diet and mental well-being.

-Rosalie D. Hopko, AmeriCorps Member,
Seven Valleys Health Coalition

For More Information about Food & Mental Health

Mental Health America:
Mentalhealthamerica.net/eat-well
and
mentalhealthamerica.net/conditions/fitness-4mind4body-diet-and-nutrition

Mental Health Foundation:
mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/d/diet-and-mental-health



In New York State, **more than 500 people** sustain a brain injury each day.³ Prevalence is estimated to be **50% higher than reported**.⁴

At Greatest Risk of TBI⁵

Children 0–4

Teens 15–19

Adults 65 & Older



Every 10 seconds a person sustains a brain injury (BI) in the U.S. which can result in lifelong disability, especially if not properly treated.⁶

Top Sports/Recreation Causes of TBI in U.S.⁷

Cycling	85,400
Football	47,000
Baseball/Softball	38,400
Basketball	35,000
Water Sports	29,000
Soccer	24,200
Skateboard/Scooters	23,000
Winter Sports	17,000
Horse Riding	14,500
Gymnastics /Cheerleading	10,200
Golf	10,000



Department of Health



CORTLAND HIGH ALUM DEDICATES LIFE TO PROVIDING TBI SUPPORTS

Just over five years ago, 1986 Cortland High School graduate Graham Thomas and his wife Cathy lost their 17-year-old son, Willy Alexander Thomas ("Zander"). An avid hockey player, Zander appeared to be on the recovery trail from a concussion when he took his own life. According to Graham Thomas' mother, Cortland resident Sue Covington, Graham and Cathy have "dedicated their lives to helping and educating others about head injuries." Covington shared that Thomas now resides in Yardkey, PA, and "has worked hard since 2013 to provide education by travelling to many states with a great presentation," on Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) and their potentially devastating impacts. The Thomas family founded the [UNTOLD Foundation](#) as a way of turning the family's tragedy into a lasting legacy in Zander's honor.

According to the UNTOLD Foundation's website, they are "a leader in elevating the understanding of concussion symptoms after traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their impact on mental health. [They] do this by promoting awareness through concussion education, advancing the use of standardized protocols, and providing resources for victims and their families."

BOOK SHARE PROGRAM CONTINUES

The Mental Health Association of Cortland County offers a book share program, developed for Mental Health related readings only. (Fiction or non-fiction.) It's *free* - your client gets to *keep* the book, and therapists can send multiple requests for books for multiple clients! Please note, there is a cap on funding, so be mindful of your requests. For more information or to make a request, email us at: mhacortlandny@gmail.com



The UNTOLD Foundation will positively impact research in the fields of TBI, Anxiety, Depression, and Suicide through [their] [Scientific Advisory Board \(SAB\)](#).

The UNTOLD Foundation is dedicated to educating young athletes and their families, coaches, and communities about the effects of traumatic brain injuries and the mental health issues that can result from either a single concussion or multiple sub-concussive events."

- Susan Williams, LMSW
Seven Valleys Health Coalition

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND SUPPORT

LGBTQ Cultural Competence: Improving Care

Wednesday, March 13th, 12-1:00pm

Crescent Commons, 165 Main St., Suite B. Cortland

Colin Albro and Mary Dykeman of the Cortland LGBTQ Center who will update you on the basics including gender, sexuality and LGBTQ vocabulary; health disparities; and how to make your business safe for all seeking services. Please RSVP to

FoodforThoughtRSVP@gmail.com

607 Healing Hearts

Monday, March 18th, 6:00 - 8:00pm

165 Main St., Cortland

Grief support group for parents/guardians who have experienced the death of an adult child.

For more info: 607healinghearts@gmail.com

Cortland LGBT Men's Group (Monthly)

Cortland LGBT Resource Center, 165 Main St. Suite B

For more information: (607) 756-8970

Parents & Change Support Group

March 18 April 15 May 20

6:00 to 7:30 PM

Community Center, 90 Central Ave. Cortland

Contact: Becky Tripp (parentsandchange@yahoo.com)

Caregivers Support Group

Thursday, March 28th, 3:00—4:00pm

Conf. Rm. B, Basement of GCMC, 134 Homer Ave., Cortland

For those who provide support for someone aged 60 or older.

For more info: Caregivers Resource Center (607) 753-5060.

If you have an upcoming community event or article you would like considered for inclusion in the MHA Newsletter, send your submission to susan@sevenvalleyshealth.org by the 14th of the month prior, or subscribe to the newsletter via email.

Disclaimer: The information presented here does not constitute professional medical advice. Individuals respond to treatment for mental health conditions in different ways, and treatment plans often need adjustment over time. Patients should work closely with their doctor and other health professionals in order to achieve optimal control of symptoms.