



CARE NOTES

A Newsletter for Family Caregivers of Persons with Brain Injury

Home for the Holidays...

Enjoying the simple things...

Last year in our winter edition of Care Notes we offered some tips on how to make the holiday season less stressful by simplifying some of the things that often expend large amounts of time and energy. We thought we would repeat this information and add a few more tips.

Caregiving can be time consuming and stressful at any time, but the holidays often come with their own stressors. Below are some simple suggestions that may help ease the pressure of the season.

- **Manage your time effectively.** Time management is important year round but especially during the holidays. The time you invest in planning is actually time saved in the long run.
- **Set boundaries.** Setting boundaries or limits on what you can or cannot do, can make the difference in whether you enjoy the holiday season or just wait for it to end so that you can get your stress back to its normal level.
- **Take steps to control your spending.** Overspending can add to stress year-round. Set your budget within your comfort zone, make a list and stick to it. Resist impulse buying and keep track of what you have bought.
- **Keep the decorating simple.** Consider the fact that everything you decorate must be undecorated after the holidays. Concentrate on the common rooms. Is that lighted tree in the powder room really necessary?
- **Cook some of the holiday menu items and treats ahead of time and freeze.** Many items store well and can be thawed and served on short notice.
- **Do not accept invitations just because they are extended.** Ask yourself, is this important to me and why is it important. Is it worth the time it will take and stress it will cause? If the answer to these questions is yes, then you should accept, but if the answer to one or more is no, then it may not be a wise use of time or energy.

- **Ask for help from extended family.** Ask other family members to assist with some of the task associated with holiday events. Involving other family members in the small task can give you more time to focus on the important things.
- **Educate guest so they are aware of important or sensitive topics.** Guest who are uninformed can inadvertently say or do things that create unpleasant situations. Providing a brief overview of do's and don'ts can make the visit much more enjoyable.

There are many websites and publications that offer tips for coping with the extra stress of the holidays, but it is important to remember that only YOU can control the amount of stress you create for yourself. Knowing your limits can be the key to managing the daily demands of being a caregiver, and this becomes even more important during the holidays. Remember, YOU are in charge.

YOUR Gift to YOU

Take care of your health

- ***Eat nutritious meals.*** Enjoy holiday treats, but don't give in to stress driven urges for lots of sweets.
- ***Take some time for yourself.*** Arrange for someone to fill in as caregiver for a few hours. Go shopping, read a book, watch a movie, or go for a walk.
- ***Get enough sleep.*** If you are awakened at night, try napping during the day to make up for your loss of sleep.
- ***Exercise regularly.*** Try to find someone to exercise with – it will keep you going.
- ***Treat depression.*** If you have symptoms of depression see a doctor right away. Depression is an illness and must be treated.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

You are Invited to Come

Celebrate the Season

THE CHARLOTTE AND UNION COUNTY BRAIN
INJURY SUPPORT GROUPS
INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION 2007

THE 10TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION WILL BE
ON

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

11:00 AM UNTIL 2:30 PM

SILER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

6301 Weddingyon-Monroe Road

WESLEY CHAPEL, NC

(a short distance from Charlotte)

There will be



Lots of Food to pig out on!



Music and laughter and visiting with friends!



Santa has agreed to come!



There will be gifts for everyone!

The Celebration is for persons with brain injury and their families from all across North Carolina. We hope you will attend. For additional information or to request your personal invitation with directions to the annual Christmas Celebration contact Project STAR at Carolinas Rehabilitation.

Phone: 704-355-1502 OR 704-355-4354 or email

peggy.philbrick@carolinashealthcare.org



ICE your Cell Phone

If there is an accident or emergency and the victim is unable to communicate paramedics will turn to the victim's cell phone for clues to the person's identity. ICE stands for "In Case of Emergency" If you add an entry for your emergency contact in the contacts list in your cell phone, Paramedics will be able to immediately call your emergency contact. So "ICE" your cell phones today!

MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

It is not too early to begin plans for Brain Injury Awareness Month. Individuals and support groups across the nation can use this designation to educate their communities about brain injury.

There are many ways individuals who provide care of a loved one with brain injury can become involved.

Local Support Group Activities: If you participate in a local support group, urge the group to organize events that would spotlight brain injury and educate the community.

Legislative Advocacy: Contact your local and state elected officials and ask if you can speak with them about brain injury and how it affects families who experience it. Be prepared with fact sheets and specific ways the legislator can help.

Public Bulletin Boards: Use bulletin boards at locations such as grocery stores and other public locations to post fact sheets and other information about brain injury. Fact sheets and other information are available at

<http://www.biausa.org/biam.htm>

Health Fairs and Community Forums: Contact local healthcare agencies who may hold health fairs and ask if they can offer information on brain injury as part of their focus.

Speak about your experiences: Churches and other organizations may allow you to speak about your experiences as a caregiver of a person with brain injury.

Disability Rights North Carolina - a name change but the same representation

The North Carolina Protection and Advocacy System for Traumatic Brain Injury (PATBI) was created in 2002 when Congress authorized a state grant program to improve access to health care and other services for individuals with TBI. The grants support protection and advocacy agencies in each state that provide information and referral services to people with disabilities and help them find solutions to problems involving discrimination in employment, education, health care and transportation, personal decision-making, and overall quality of life.

In North Carolina the PATBI and other protection and advocacy grants for persons with disability were administered through the GACPD, a state agency. Many disability advocates expressed concern that the protection and advocacy agency, representing persons with disability, was housed within the structure of the state government, rather than in the private sector. They worked to have the designation moved to a private agency that could more objectively represent persons with disability.

This situation was rectified effective July 1, 2007, when, by a gubernatorial re-designation, all functions of the Governors Advocacy Council for Persons with Disability (GACPD) were re-designated to Disability Rights North Carolina (formerly Carolina Legal Assistance). This includes the PATBI grant that provides advocacy assistance for persons with Traumatic Brain Injury.

Disability Rights Carolina (DRNC) is an established non-profit organization that is well positioned to handle the responsibility of serving as the state's Protection and Advocacy agency. DRNC has an experienced Board and staff and the organization enjoys the respect of the disability community, the legal community and government policy makers, and has advocated continuously for people with mental disabilities in North Carolina since its inception in 1978. Starting out as a "special client program" within Legal Services of North Carolina, DRNC expanded from providing civil legal assistance to patients at Dorothea Dix Hospital to serving people with mental illness and developmental disabilities statewide. With the designation as P&A, DRNC has expanded its services to all people with disabilities consistent with the federal mandates.

Some services provided by DRNC include:

- Investigate reports of abuse/neglect/exploitation
- Assist parents in obtaining appropriate educational services from preschool through high school
- Advocate for necessary equipment to help a person communicate, move, learn
- Ensure accessibility to public programs and services.

How DRNC can help:

If you are a person with a disability or have a disabled loved one and need assistance accessing appropriate services, DRNC may be able to help by providing information and referral, advocacy services or legal representation.

How to contact DRNC

When you first contact DRNC you will talk with an intake specialist who will take the details of your concerns. Cases are accepted for assistance based on a fair system of case selection criteria and the resources available at the time of the request.

For Intake regarding a possible case call toll free: 1-800-821-6922

Your voice is important

We are including a survey from Disability Rights North Carolina on the next page. Please fill it out and return it to Allison Breedlove at the address provided.

*Additional information can be located at
www.cladisabilitylaw.org*

Disability Rights North Carolina is now the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organization for North Carolina. It is part of a nationwide network of similar organizations that is charged with the responsibility for protecting the rights of people who have disabilities. Federal regulations require that P&As develop a set of annual "priorities." This year's priority-setting process will take place over the next three months, ending with final approval of priorities by our board of directors at its December 14 meeting. These priorities, which will guide us in our protection and advocacy work, will be reported to our federal granting agencies December 2007. **Your input is critical as we develop these meaningful priorities, which will determine the issues to be addressed by Disability Rights North Carolina. This is an opportunity to influence the future direction of your P&A!**

This is your opportunity to help set the agenda for NC's P&A

1. What are the four most important issues you would like Disability Rights North Carolina to work on?

2. If Disability Rights North Carolina could accomplish only one thing during the next year, what would you want it to be?

3. I am a person with a disability. Yes No

I am a family member of a person with a disability Yes No

Please state your relationship: _____

The disability is a person with:

a developmental disability mental illness a physical disability

a sensory disability substance abuse a traumatic brain injury

4. What are your unmet needs related to your disability?

5. In what county do you live? _____ Town? _____

If you wish to be notified about the listening session, please provide us your e-mail or your mailing address.

Your e-mail address:

Your mailing address:

Please your completed questionnaire to the Disability Rights North Carolina or mail to:

Allison Breedlove, Disability Rights North Carolina, 2626 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 550, Raleigh, North Carolina 27608 or e-mail abreedlove@clanc.org

WEBSITES TO VISIT

<http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/mhddsas/>

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services/ Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Service Website provides links to state service information including Medicaid and Community Support Services

www.headinjury.com

Head Injury Hotline- a site that offers links to many information sites and other resources.

<http://birf.info>

Brain Injury Resource Foundation offers general information as well as information on healthcare services and advocacy issues.

www.aapd-dc.org

Justice for All – a legal information site maintained by American Association of People with Disabilities

www.familiesusa.org

Families USA - a site that offers information on healthcare services and advocacy issues

www.tbi.org

The Perspectives Network- Information for families and survivors including current articles of interest

www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/home.jsp

Family Caregiver Alliance offers information, fact sheets, a newsletter and other information for family caregivers. It also provides links to other informational websites.

www.state.sc.us/ddsn/pubs/head/toc.htm

Making Life Work after Head Injury

A practical guide to making life work at home after head injury. This publication offers strategies and information for family caregivers and other family members.

www.icdi.wvu.edu/others.htm

Untangling the Web is a site that has links to hundreds of topics related to disability and caregiving.

www.headinjury.com

Head Injury Hotline- a site that offers links to many information sites and other resources.

If you find a website you would like to share please contact CareNotes and share the information.

A BOOK TO READ

Brain Injury-It's a Journey

This is a practical user-friendly manual to help families understand the consequences of brain injury. Edited by Flora Hammond, MD and Tami Guerrier, B.S.,C.T.R.S. with the Brain Injury Program at Carolinas Rehabilitation and published by Lash and Associates, the book offers detailed descriptions of how a brain injury can affect physical abilities, cognition, behavior, emotions and communications.

Available at www.lapublishing.com

Project STAR and The Family and Community Support Office of The Brain Injury Association of North Carolina at Carolinas Rehabilitation



**WISHES YOU AND YOURS
A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY
SEASON AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR!**



Brain Injury Association of North Carolina
Toll-free Helpline 1-800-277-1464

Triangle Family and Community Support Office
Raleigh, North Carolina
800-377-1464 or 919-833-9634

Family and Community Support Office
at Carolinas Rehabilitation
Charlotte, North Carolina
877-962-7246 or 704-355-1502

Eastern Family and Community Support Office
Greenville, North Carolina
1-800-697-3115 or 252-439-1900

Western Family and Community Support Office
Asheville, NC
828-277-4868

Carolinas Rehabilitation



The Brain Injury Association of America offers information on research studies that need participants. By visiting the BIAUSA website at www.biausa.org you can get information on how to enroll to participate in a study.

Research

Project STAR
Carolinas Rehabilitation
1100 Blythe Boulevard
Charlotte, NC 28203