

SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

Virtual Brain Injury Support Group Meetings

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the government safety guidelines enforced to prevent the spread of the virus through stay-at-home orders and social distancing, many brain injury support groups have suspended in-person meetings. However, we have identified below several traumatic brain injury (TBI) support groups that have continued to connect, via **Zoom**, to meet virtually. You do not need to have access to a computer or the Internet; you can use your landline phone or cellphone to call in to the video conference. (You will not be able to see anyone that way, but you will be able to hear everyone.) Group facilitators will be available 5-10 minutes prior to the meetings to help you, if needed. In addition, you do not need to be in one of the support groups below to be part of their virtual meetings. All support group facilitators listed below have indicated that everyone is welcome to participate. However, in order to do so, you will need to reach the contact person listed below and provide your e-mail address or phone number so they can send you the **Zoom** video conference link or phone number.

- Heads On Straight for TBI Survivors and Families Support Group, Langhorne, PA
Contact: Mike Hrabowski (215/741-4196; e-mail: mikkar@comcast.net)
This group typically meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 2, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.
- Lancaster Area Brain Injury Support, Lancaster, PA
Contact: Kathleen Meade (717/394-3466, ext. 173; e-mail: kmeade@acadiarehab.com)
This group typically meets on the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- Shadyside Brain Injury Support Group, Pittsburgh, PA
Contact: Monica Bielawski (412/956-1694; e-mail: shadyside.tbi.group@gmail.com)
This group typically meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
- Lost & Found in Pittsburgh (West Penn Hospital Brain Injury Support Group), Pittsburgh, PA
Contact: Amanda Burgy Allemang (412/608-0713; e-mail: acburgy@gmail.com)
This group typically meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 17, 2020 at 6:15 p.m.
- TBI Support Group at Hope Community Church, King of Prussia, PA
Contact: Todd Buzby (610/574-0827; e-mail: toddbuzby@yahoo.com)
This group typically meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

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Virtual Brain Injury Support Group Meetings (Continued)

- Penn Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group, Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Erika Silverman (215/662-9724;
e-mail: erika.silverman@pennteam.upenn.edu)
This group typically meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: Monday, June 22, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
- Adult Survivors and Family Members Group, Norristown, PA
Contacts: Catherine Chambers (610/279-9068) or Charlene Towers (610/999-0713)
This group typically meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
Next **Zoom** meeting: June 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

The Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania (BIAPA) hosted a “pop-up” virtual support group meeting on April 23, 2020. There were 39 participants from across Pennsylvania. BIAPA has indicated that they will advertise future “pop-up” virtual meetings on the BIAPA **Facebook** page. They are asking for ideas for topics and any special requests for future meetings; you can message them on their **Facebook** page or send e-mail to survivorsupport@biapa.org.

Online Video Support Resources

The BIAPA has introduced the Survivor Support Video Project in an effort to provide support and encouragement to traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Brain injury survivors are encouraged to submit short videos explaining how they are coping during this stressful and challenging time. These videos are meant to offer hope and encouragement to other TBI survivors. There are several videos already posted on the BIAPA **YouTube** channel, and more should be coming soon. Go to www.youtube.com/channel/UCuj9YEaMwVId0pSaeDPBoqw.

Other Online Resources

www.BIAPA.org

www.BIAUSA.org

www.BrainLine.org

www.hopeafterheadinjury.com

www.disabilityrightspa.org/covid19

www.Facebook.com/BIAPenn

www.Facebook.com/groups/192376202209559 (Council on Brain Injury’s “Strive and Thrive During Social Distancing” Group)