

# HeadSTRONG

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is the go-to resource for help and services for survivors of an injury to the brain, their families, and providers.

## Tips For Thriving This Holiday Season, Not Just Surviving

*Written by Billie Ratliff, Director of Behavioral Health, UC Memorial Hospital*

If you are experiencing an increased sense of unease, anxiety, or stress, it is for good reason. There is a COVID-19 surge that far exceeds our experience in March and April this year. If that isn't enough, the holidays are approaching, the Presidential election process has been exhausting, and Colorado is facing increased COVID-19 restrictions. Living with a brain injury is challenging enough without all the added stimulation from the environment. You can expect increased confusion and irritability as well.

I have borrowed the phrase "Corona coaster", as this best describes the ups and downs of living this last year. Just when you think you have settled into a new normal, something changes. For those amongst us who are "planners" and need control, you may be experiencing a difficult time. Feeling alone is one of the major difficulties many experience after a brain injury. COVID-19 restrictions reinforce feeling alone with mandatory isolation or quarantine.

The question is how to cope in a

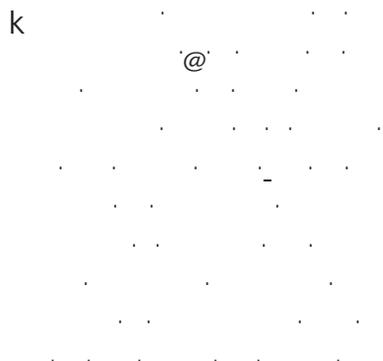


world that may feel like it has turned upside down?

Every human being needs to feel safe, loved, and to have something to look forward to. The following are suggestions to consider in creating or maintaining a sense of control:

**1 Establish as normal a routine as possible.**

**2 Maintain healthy habits.**



**3 Connection to other people is critical.**

Establish connection in your routine. If you are not able to physically see someone in person, then use on-line tools and the phone.

**4 Allow only positive input.**

Negative input will only bring you down. Remember not everything you read on the internet is factual.

If you have tried the coping skills that have always worked for you, as well as new ones, but nothing is working, it is time to seek professional support. Everyone needs help sometimes.

# Upcoming Classes and Events

## Classes and Workshops

Due to concerns surrounding COVID-19, all in-person classes and workshops are **cancelled until further notice**. Please check our website [BIAColorado.org](http://BIAColorado.org) for updates and virtual class options.

Virtual classes and workshops will be held via Zoom. Click [here](#) to register. Please provide email during registration to receive the Zoom link. For questions, contact Michael Zavala at [Michael@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Michael@BIAColorado.org) or 720-907-1455.

### Grief & Loss Group

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month through December  
1:30 – 3:00 pm

### Cooking Matters

Every Monday, November 9th - December 7th (except Thanksgiving Week)  
4:00 - 5:00 pm

### Social Wellness

Wednesday, December 16th  
2:00 - 3:00 pm



### Music Therapy

Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month through December  
10:15 – 11:15 am

### The Mindful Brain

Every 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month through December  
10:00 – 11:15 am

### Tai Chi & Breathwork

Tuesday, December 15th  
2:00 - 3:00 pm

### Recreation Programs & Social Activities

For questions, contact Michael Zavala at [Michael@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Michael@BIAColorado.org) or 303-562-0401. Visit the [Recreation Programs page](#) on our website for updates!

## Brain Injury Professional Networking (BIPN)

BIPN groups seek to "improve the availability of services and supports for individuals with brain injury, promote the ongoing sustainability of community support systems, and share resources". BIPNs offer an opportunity to identify the needs of survivors and develop a support system for yourself as an individual or organizational provider.

BIPN meetings are currently meeting over Zoom and will oftentimes include a speaker and highlight topics related to brain injury in order to continue broadening awareness of brain injury across Colorado.

For more information visit the [BIPN page](#) on our website.

#### BIPN Contacts:

##### Denver Metro

Ellen Kordonowy, CBIS, at [Ellen@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Ellen@BIAColorado.org)

##### Northern Colorado

Sarah Beetch, M.S. OTR/L, at [Sarah.S.Beetch@colostate.edu](mailto:Sarah.S.Beetch@colostate.edu)

##### Southern Colorado

Carol Cochran, MA, CBIS, at [Carol@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Carol@BIAColorado.org)

##### Central Mountain and Western Slope

Audrey McNeely, BS, RMA, EMT, CBIS, at [Audrey@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Audrey@BIAColorado.org)

##### Pediatric BIPN

Kate Fatica, BSN, RN, at [KateF@BIAColorado.org](mailto:KateF@BIAColorado.org)

## Who We Are

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is the go-to resource for help and services for survivors of an injury to the brain, their families, and providers.

The safety of our clients and staff is our top priority. Programs and services have been modified and will be carried out remotely until further notice.



## What We Do

### Client Programs

- Resource Navigation
- Self-management Program
- Recreation Programs
- Classes and Workshops
- Support Groups
- Online Resource Directory
- Youth Education Support
- Peer Mentorship Program

### Programs for Professionals

- Brain Injury Professional Networks (BIPNs)
- Annual Symposium
- Community Outreach and Education



### Other Programs & Fundraisers

- Pikes Peak Challenge Fundraising Event on September 12, 2021
- Public Policy
- Quarterly Newsletters
- Reinhardt/Bruno Golf Tournament

## Program Spotlight

### Self-management Program

Survivors of a traumatic brain injury will learn skills and strategies to live more self-sufficiently in these specific areas that can be challenging after a brain injury.

**WHO:** Traumatic brain injury survivors ages 16 and up

**WHAT:** Work on three specific tasks in Communication, Scheduling/Planning, and/or Prioritization/Organization

**HOW:** Work one-on-one with a BIAC advisor for 6 months (about 4 hours per month)

If you are a survivor of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and are interested in participating in our Self-management program or learning more, please contact BIAC for an application: [Info@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Info@BIAColorado.org) or 303.355.9969, toll-free 1.800.955.2443. Application assistance is available upon request.

## Brain Injury Research



**Mount  
Sinai**

*Brain Injury  
Research Center*

### **Emotional Regulation Study**

You may qualify if you have had a traumatic brain injury (TBI)/concussion and are experiencing difficulties with your emotions an/or behaviors.

Participation involves 24 group sessions over 12 weeks in an online setting. Compensation will be provided.

Contact the Brain Injury Research Center at **212-241-4886** or [BIRC@mountsinai.org](mailto:BIRC@mountsinai.org) if you are interested or have questions. You may also complete the interest survey [here](#).

**COVID-19 Impact on TBI Survey:** <https://is.gd/tbicovid19>

For more research studies, visit BIAC's Research Studies page [here](#).

## Colorado Gives Day

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

Each December, Coloradans come together with the common goal to strengthen the community by helping to power nonprofits.

Donating through the CO Gives Day website will stretch the value of your donation. Go to [ColoradoGives.org](https://coloradogives.org) and search for Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado to support our organization or click [here](#). Under "Donation frequency", select "Colorado Gives Day".

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is the go-to resource for help and services for survivors of an injury to the brain, their families, and providers.

## Do You Shop on Amazon?

Please consider using **AmazonSmile** while shopping online.

Amazon will donate .5% of your purchases to the charity of your choosing (no donation required on your part). BIAC is an eligible charitable organization and we hope you choose us!



**Your Support Makes a Difference!**

Thank You,  
The Staff and Board of BIAC



## Survivor's Story

# A Second Chance to Live

*Written by Craig Phillips, MRC*

**M**y name is Craig J. Phillips. I sustained an open skull fracture and a traumatic brain injury in an automobile accident when I was 10 years old in 1967. I remained in a coma for 3 weeks with right frontal lobe damage, a severe brain bruise with brain stem involvement. I also fractured my left femur and remained in traction for 6-7 weeks. I then was placed in a full body cast (Spica) for 5-6 months. After being taken out of the Spica cast, I learned how to walk, talk, read, write and speak in complete sentences. I also underwent 2 EEG's and a battery of cognitive and psycho social testing. The results were shared with my parents, but not with me. Once my external wounds healed, the impact of my traumatic brain injury went invisible.

I graduated on time with my high school class and then went on to college, although the testing done in 1968 showed that I would probably not succeed beyond high school academically. It took me 10 years to obtain my undergraduate degree (2 universities and one college) and 3 ½ years to obtain my graduate degree (2 graduate schools).

I had a long history of getting and losing jobs. I applied for SSDI 3 times and was a client of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in Florida and North Carolina. After my 2nd DVR evaluation my voc rehab counselor told me that I was unemployable. Shortly after being told that I was unemployable by DVR I was approved to begin receiving SSDI at the end of 1999.

Although I had diligently applied myself both academically and vocationally I felt like someone all dressed up with nowhere to go. Nevertheless, I had a desire to use what I had been seeking to do all my life.

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**"My traumatic brain injury  
went invisible."**

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On February 6, 2007 I created Second Chance to Live. Since that time, I have written 1867 articles, 10 eBooks, 417 video presentations, 20 slide show presentations and 32 inspirational posters. I am a keynote speaker and a workshop leader. I have spoken to the Brain Injury Associations of Louisiana, Mississippi, and North Carolina support groups via Zoom. I have also spoken to participants at the Brooks Rehab Clubhouse in Florida, the Beacon Clubhouse, and the Adapt Clubhouse both in Virginia also via Zoom.



I am scheduled to speak with the Head Injury Association of Northern Nevada in mid December on the topic of "Finding Purpose after Brain Injury via Zoom. Please note that I am available to be of service to survivors, caregivers, and professionals and can be reached at [secondchancetolive1@yahoo.com](mailto:secondchancetolive1@yahoo.com).

# Staff in the Spotlight

**Mark Condon**

*Statewide Support Group Coordinator*

## What is your role at BIAC?

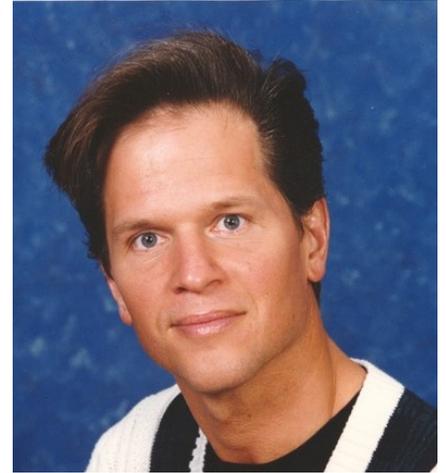
I am the Statewide Support Group Coordinator helping 70+ support groups develop and promote their independently run groups all across the state of Colorado.

## What has been your favorite part about working at BIAC?

I feel certain that I am supposed to take what I have learned from my 40 years of post- severe traumatic brain injury experience and help other survivors as best I can. Being able to do that through BIAC is what I like most about my job. Secondly, I feel great about how BIAC has developed over the years and become more effective at helping survivors all across the state with all of our different programs. Lastly, I enjoy being around the BIAC staff and very much respect their professionalism - working around great people has improved my life to the point where I look forward to going into work.

## What are three traits that define you?

The three traits that define me are thoughtful, creative, and determined.



## Program Spotlight

### Support Groups

#### Denver Central Brain Injury Support Group

**Date/Time:** 1st Thursday of every month from 11:00 am - 1:00 pm, unless noted otherwise [here](#)

**Location:** Zoom meetings during COVID-19 restrictions

**Contact Mark Condon at [Mark@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Mark@BIAColorado.org) for the Zoom link.**

#### Survivors in Recovery Support Group

BIAC will be offering an virtual 5-week group (with a 2 week break at the end of December) for brain injury survivors who are struggling with addiction or are currently in recovery.

**Date/Time:** December 9 & 16, 2020 and January 6, 13, & 20, 2021 from 12:00 - 1:00 pm MST

**Location:** Zoom meeting

**Contact Jaime Horsfall at [Jaime@BIAColorado.org](mailto:Jaime@BIAColorado.org) or 303-562-2332 to register and for the Zoom link.**

For more Support Group listings by type and region, please visit our Support Groups website [here](#).

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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR CLIENTS' CASES AND LIVES

### Practice areas:

Personal Injury • Catastrophic Injuries • Wrongful Death • Dangerous Products  
Auto Accidents • Professional Malpractice

Since 1985, the attorneys of Purvis Gray Thomson, LLP, have provided compassionate, knowledgeable legal advice and representation to people who have been seriously injured throughout the state of Colorado, including numerous people who have suffered brain injuries.

**Call for a Free Consultation 303-442-3366**

**PURVISGRAY.NET**

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Contact Gavin Attwood, *CEO*  
at 303-562-3199 or  
Gavin@BIAColorado.org

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For Your Support!**



**BIAC**

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**BIAColorado.org**