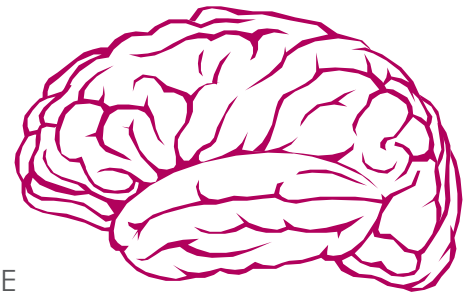


# TBI Updates

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY MODEL SYSTEM  
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE



Volume 8

Number 2

## UW OT Students Help TBI Community: Developing TBI Support Group Facilitator Guide

Each year, the students in the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program at the University of Washington complete a capstone project designed to enhance their learning while, at the same time, giving them an opportunity to contribute to the community. A couple of years ago, Dr. Kathy Bell, Director of the UW TBIMS and the educational consultant for the Brain Injury Association of Washington (BIAWA), became aware of the need for better resources for TBI support groups. She contacted her colleague, Dr. Janet Powell, UW Division of Occupational Therapy faculty member and project advisor, who is also part of the UW TBIMS research group, about the possibility of developing a tool kit of educational materials for the facilitators of these groups. Dr. Powell liked the idea and began to develop the project with the students.

The first group of MOT students, Morgan Benson, Francis Cruzata, Frances Fisher, and Christopher Page, took on the responsibility to create educational materials that would focus on issues of importance to TBI survivors and their caregivers. They learned more about the needs of TBI support group members and facilitators through reviewing the literature, visiting several TBI support groups, and talking with others in the TBI community. While open conversation and discussion of personal experiences is often meaningful to group members, the students learned that the groups would also benefit from a structure that provides a diverse array of topics and activities over time.

Based on this research, the students developed a set of facts and tip sheets for TBI survivors as well as tip sheets for caregivers on eight topics:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Depression
- 3) Fatigue
- 4) Initiation, Planning, and Organization
- 5) Managing Frustration and Irritability
- 6) Memory
- 7) Relationship Skills, and
- 8) Return to Work

They also developed activities and discussion questions for each of these topics for support group facilitators to use in their meetings. In addition, they included suggestions for group building activities, recovery discussions, and conversation starters. The final product was a binder of educational materials designed to be easily accessible for anyone facilitating a support group for TBI survivors and caregivers.

This past year, Janet Mott, the BIAWA Support Services Director, put in a request for a follow-

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# Who's Who



## Valentina Alvarez

Valentina is currently responsible for recruiting patients from Harborview and enrollment into the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury Study. In addition to consenting subjects for the Mild TBI Study, she assists with follow-up interviews and tracking subjects for the Traumatic Brain Injury Model System.

Valentina double-majored in Psychology and Comparative History of Ideas at the University of Washington. Her background experience also includes working at King County Correctional Facility in Jail Health Services, volunteering as a research assistant with UW graduate students examining acculturation effects between Latino fathers and their children, and studying formations of racial identity in Brazil and South Africa. The opportunity to bridge her academic interests in research as well as her passion for working with diverse populations is what Valentina values most about her job.

When Valentina is not running around hospital floors, she enjoys sampling all of what Seattle has to offer in dining, mentoring disadvantaged youth, learning more about the intersections of identity, and globe trotting.

## Facilitator Guide cntd.

up MOT project. The focus of this project was the development of a facilitator start-up kit: a set of resources for anyone interested in starting a new support group for TBI survivors, as well as information on administering and sustaining a group.

A second group of MOT students, Christina Johnson, Molly Kimmel, and Mary Kowal, took on the task with Dr. Powell's guidance. These students conducted a similar process of fact-finding to identify the needs before developing the materials. They began by meeting with Dr. Mott and Valerie Wootton, the BIAWA Support Group Coordinator. As they moved forward, their community partners expanded to include the Brain Injury Support Group Network (BISGN), a coalition consisting of BIAWA, Brain Energy

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## Young Adults with TBI Support Group

The "Young Adults with TBI Support Group" is geared specifically for individuals between the ages of 18 and 35. This group addresses the unique experience of young adults affected by TBI. Younger individuals with TBI and their loved ones have a different perspective than someone injured later in life.

The meetings have been well received by both survivors and their caregivers. Please join us at the next one.

Meetings will be the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 6:00pm to 7:30 in room E212 UW Medical Center.

For more information contact Silas James at 206-685-8354 or [silast@uw.edu](mailto:silast@uw.edu)

If you are older than 35, or looking for a different location, please check out this list of local support groups to find one that better fits your needs: <http://www.braininjurywa.org/supportgroups>

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Support Team (BEST), Tacoma Area Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities (TACID), and People First of Washington, which had received a grant from DSHS to improve TBI support group services in Washington State.

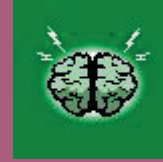
The students organized their final product into three sections. The first section, "Starting a Group," defines the purpose of a TBI support group, the characteristics of a strong facilitator, and directions for planning the initial meeting. The second section, "Administrative Topics," outlines the important details needed for successful management of a group, such as managing finances, recordkeeping, and creating a presence online. Finally, the third section, "Sustaining a Support Group," discusses how facilitators can expand their roles and the potential of the group through community involvement, training for facilitators, and creating positive group dynamics. Each section includes templates for useful administrative tools such as meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, etc., that each facilitator can adapt to fit their individual support group needs. The final draft was reviewed by approximately 10 support group facilitators who gave enthusiastic feedback.

The next step was combining the educational toolkit and the start-up kit to create a TBI Support Group Facilitator Guide. In April 2010, the Guide was combined with additional support materials by the BISGN to become a comprehensive Facilitator Workbook and it was displayed at the Regional TBI Conference where it received rave reviews.

At this time, the BISGN has started distribution of the TBI Support Group Facilitator Workbook to new and existing TBI support group facilitators in Washington State with plans in the works for facilitator training, networking opportunities, and close consultation with the state support group coordinators. All of these resources combined will help ensure the success of TBI support groups in Washington State. Future plans include making the TBI Support Group Facilitator Guide widely available via the Internet so that support groups around the US can benefit.

# What's Hot

## Amantadine Irritability Multi-Site Trial (AIMS)



After a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), many people experience symptoms including mood swings, irritability, and anger, or "a short fuse."

### AIM

uses a particular approach to education and counseling, called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). This type of counseling has been used to effectively treat these symptoms with people who have not had a brain injury.

AIM researchers are investigating whether amantadine is effective in treating irritability in patients with TBI. So TBI Survivors can get back to activities and relationships they enjoy, and improve overall quality of life.

Volunteers will be asked to take either amantadine or a placebo (sugar pill) twice a day for 60 days. At day 60, all the volunteers will begin taking amantadine twice a day for one more month.

Eligible participants will be enrolled in the study for 90 days, which includes 3 in-person clinic visits at the University of Washington Medical Center lasting about 2 hours each, 10 telephone calls from study staff to check on how the volunteer is doing with the medicine lasting about 30 minutes. Participants will receive \$25 for each clinic visit.

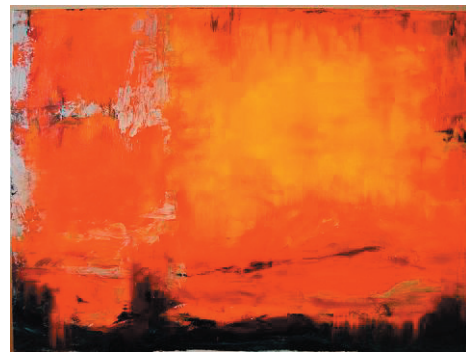
For questions about AIM, or to be considered for this study, please contact Leslie Kempthorne at 206-543-0219 or 1-800-246-6968.

## TBI Art Show

Last July was the 1st TBI Art Show, *Recreating Me: Exploring & Healing through Artistic Expression*. We are pleased that it was such a great success and a beautiful event where art and stories were shared and connections and friendships were made.

We are excited to say that the TBI Art Show grew. UW TBIMS partnered with the Brain Injury Association of Washington to bring you the 2nd annual TBI Art Show, which was July 6th-11th, 2010 at the Burke Museum. The Art Show Committee is already looking forward to next year's art show.

To see the art and learn about the artists from the 2009 and 2010 shows visit our website <http://depts.washington.edu/uwtbi/Education/artshow.htm> where you will find links to a slideshow of the art, a show programs with artists' bios, a



*Composition #3 by Hillary Bassett-Ross*

KPLU interviews and UW Daily and King 5 video coverage.

You can follow the TBI Art Show on Facebook. Search for our page "TBI Art Show."

### TBI Forum Series

The UW Traumatic Brain Injury Model System invites you to join its quarterly information and discussion group.

Instead of a Forum we had our 2nd annual TBI Art Show. It was a beautiful moving show celebrating growth and healing through creativity. For more information, please visit us at <http://depts.washington.edu/uwtbi/Education/artshow.htm> You can also follow the TBI Art Show on Facebook. Search for our page "TBI Art Show."

### The next TBI Forum

"Neuroimaging and Brain Injuries: What Do They Tell Us"

Will be **Wednesday, October 13th, 2010, 7:00pm** at the UW Medical Center Please join us.

For more information, including driving and parking directions, call Heather Porter 206-221-6441 ([hporter@u.washington.edu](mailto:hporter@u.washington.edu)) or visit our website at [www.tbi.washington.edu](http://www.tbi.washington.edu).

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