



The Monthly Motivator

Life After Brain Injury's January 2012 Newsletter

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1918 East Los Angeles Avenue (in the RR Gable building) Simi Valley 93065

A New Year and Two New Locations!

A New Location for one-on-one assistance – it's our new **Simi Office!**



We're excited to announce that we have opened an office in Simi Valley!

We are renting space from the RR Gable Realty Company, at **1918 E. Los Angeles Avenue** (cross street Erringer). RR Gable is behind the Regional Center, around the corner from Smart & Final, and kitty-corner across the lot from Simi Surgery Center.

The office is a great place to help survivors create customized plans for solving problems, or achieving personal goals.

Please be sure to phone ahead and make an appointment. Cherie is often out in the community so just "dropping in" won't work.

A New Location for our Simi Valley Meetings
Still every Wednesday, 5:30-7 pm

Yup, no more Aspen Outpatient Center for us;

Simi Valley Hospital
Adventist Health

we've moved and **are now meeting at Simi Valley Hospital, in the Café Conference Room.** We're thrilled, because...

1. We'd completely outgrown the conference room at the Aspen Center;
2. We hope to reach survivors as they're beginning their new life after brain injury; and
3. We want to reach and support families early on, so we can connect them to community services and let them know what to expect after the hospital and rehab.

To get to the Café Conference Room, turn left on Jones Way and go into the hospital through the Emergency Room entrance. Take the elevator by the ER down to the basement. Exit the elevator and turn right. The Café Conference Room is the 2nd door on the right. (We'll have signs taped to the walls, too.)

If you get lost, call me (805-402-5744) and we'll send out a search party for you. ☺

Message from the Director

Another new year, another set of resolutions. Will you break or keep yours?

Every New Year's Eve, my friend Marie throws a party. My favorite part of the evening is when we all sit down and review last year's resolutions.

We all rejoice in the resolutions where someone has been successful. (We finally cleaned out the garage - hurray!) (Although, truth be told, that was my 2008 resolution.)



And we all sympathize when someone has failed at a resolution. (No, I'm still not exercising enough ... but my plan is to walk the dogs at least five nights a week, starting tomorrow!)

Which leads me to point out something that a lot of people don't realize: **It's actually okay to fail.** For starters, it means you tried! And you know what they say: You're guaranteed never to succeed if you don't at least try.

So this year, in 2012, I want you to pick something you want or need and then go for it. This may involve overcoming some fear, or reluctance, or laziness, but get out of your comfort zone and TRY.



As always, I'll be there as your rah-rah cheerleader, urging you onward. I'm going to push you to meet with me, one-on-one, to make a **PLAN** that will help you achieve that first goal.

Why do I need a plan?, you're thinking to yourself. (Yes, I know what you're thinking, and at all times. I'm a mother, so I have eyes and ears in the back of my head. Plus moms can read minds.)

There's a great quote that goes like this: **A goal without a plan is just a wish.** In other words, you need to know how you'll get from here to there. What are the steps? Without a plan, you're just dreaming. Which will get you exactly nowhere.

So I'm challenging you, here and now. Pick a goal, big or small. Maybe you want to be a volunteer; maybe you want to tie your shoes. It's your choice - whatever is right for you, at this stage of your recovery or your life.

Then call me, or grab me at a meeting or activity, and tell me your goal. Together we'll lay out the steps to make it happen! How's that for a plan, Stan? 😊



Cherie

Find us on the web at [www.Life After Brain Injury.org](http://www.LifeAfterBrainInjury.org) or contact us at Life After BI @ gmail.com ✦ (805) 493-5555
P.O. Box 1556 Thousand Oaks, CA 91358

Meetings & Activities



Bright Idea!

Don't miss hanging out with LABI because of a poor memory. Post the calendar on your fridge or bulletin board right now!

Saturday Social Potluck Lunch



**January 14
11:00 – 2:00
Kilpatricks' home**

*(call Cherie for
address and directions)*

Theme: "Breakfast for Lunch"

Bring a dish to share to serve 8 people – fruit, cereal, donuts, muffins, sausage – whatever you'd like to see on *your* breakfast table!

Important: RSVP and let us know what you're bringing by Thursday the 12th.

**Attitude is a little thing
that makes a big difference.**

~ Winston Churchill

LABI Lunch

**January 2, 16 & 30 (yes, 3!)
12 noon - 1:30**

Our lunches are a great opportunity to...

- ◆ Meet people who understand your life and "get you";
- ◆ expand your circle of friends;
- ◆ enhance your social life; and
- ◆ get out into the community!



On a budget? We understand, and we don't judge. You don't have to order a thing. In fact, some people just show up for a glass of water and enjoy our most excellent company! We hope to see you there... 😊

Game Day

(includes lunch)

**Monday, January 9
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**



*RSVP to Cherie at 805-493-5555
(so she has enough food!).*

Call it brain exercises, call it cognitive rehab, come to practice your social skills – all we know is, it's fun!

Join us for good times and skill-building games like Scrabble, Sequences and Scruples, as we work the ol' neurons and hang with our posse. (And YES – there is such a thing as a free lunch!)

THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP AFTER BRAIN INJURY



Stephanie A. Kolakowsky-Hayner, PhD, CBIST

From the current **Brain Injury Association of California** newsletter. Find it online at <http://tinyurl.com/76pmyn4>.

Sleep disturbance is extremely common in the general population. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), common sleep disorders include insomnia, narcolepsy, restless leg syndrome, and sleep apnea.

Insomnia is the inability to fall asleep or stay asleep. Narcolepsy is extreme daytime sleepiness with sudden attacks of sleep.



Restless leg syndrome, also known as RLS, is an extremely uncomfortable feeling (e.g., itchy, creeping, burning, aching, cramping, crawling) in one's legs while lying down that interrupts sleep. Sleep apnea is when breathing pauses or stops repetitively throughout the night interrupting sleep.

Sleep difficulties often result in extreme fatigue and sleepiness if not addressed.

Sleep disorders are also a tremendous issue after brain injury. Commonly reported brain injury-related sleep issues are similar to the general population, like those mentioned above.

Additionally, reports of hypersomnia, delayed sleep phase syndrome, and alteration of sleep-wake cycle are also noted throughout the literature. Hypersomnia is excessive daytime sleepiness, regardless of having a full night's sleep, causing individuals to fall asleep at inappropriate or unfavorable times like during a meal or at work.

Delayed sleep phase syndrome (DSPS) occurs when sleep doesn't start until approximately 2 hours past an expected bedtime, commonly between 12-midnight and 2 am. Individuals with DSPS start sleep later, regardless of trying to get to sleep early, sleep soundly through the rest of the night, but experience extreme difficulty waking in the morning.



Alteration of sleep-wake cycle occurs when an individual's sleep pattern or internal clock do not line up with the normal day and night/light and dark cycles.

Sleep disorders, and difficulties often lead to ongoing physical and cognitive fatigue, increased depression and anxiety, impaired function in activities of daily living (e.g., work, school, self-care, productivity, etc.), and other issues that occur already as a common symptom of the brain injury itself.

However, there is very little information in the literature with regard to the connection between sleep disorders and their relationship to fatigue and/or sleepiness after brain injury, or what individuals with brain injury should do to help alleviate these issues.

Based on a compilation of suggestions for the general population and literature on insomnia and other sleep disorders after brain injury, here [next page] are the top 10 tips for maintaining good sleep habits.

The Top 10 Tips for Maintaining Good Sleep Habits

1. Stick to a consistent sleep and wake schedule, targeting 7-9 hours per night.
2. Avoid taking naps during the day.
3. Make sure your environment is sleep-ready: quiet, dark, comfortable, cool, good air flow.
4. Establish a relaxing evening routine. Practice calming yourself down 30-60 minutes before your planned bedtime e.g., yoga, a warm bath, listening to calm music, etc.
5. Increase activity and exercise during the day, even walking helps promote sleep.
6. Stay away from coffee, soda, and other stimulants near bedtime.
7. Avoid alcohol and nicotine use – nicotine is a stimulant and while alcohol may help relax you and start sleep, as the body processes the alcohol, it could cause stimulation.
8. Avoid large meals and restrict liquids close to bedtime, try not to eat or drink within 2 hours of you planned bedtime.
9. Sleep in a comfortable supportive bed.
10. Do not use your bed to work, read, or watch TV – only sleep in your bed.

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Nic's Notes by Nicole de la Cruz



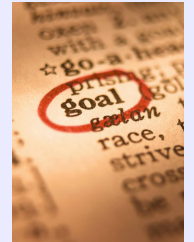
With the new year just starting out; it's a time to start fresh and not dwell on what you did wrong last year. the new year. Whatever you remember you did wrong last year, try not to do it again in the new year.

Since it's the new year, make a goal sheet of new things you would like to do or try. You can have someone help you too. It's a new year so think of it as a brand new piece of paper you can write your new ventures on for 2012.

With a helping hand, *Nicole*

Nicole's Goals for 2012:

1. Travel more (national and international)
2. Not to be so afraid of trying different things out of my traditional routine
3. Really push on my own business plan of tutoring more people
4. Practise walking more
5. Lose about 15 pds.
6. Practise math skills more
7. Come to a *Life After Brain Injury* meeting
[We can't wait, Nicole!]



A giant Thank You to our donors and our volunteers!

A start-up nonprofit relies heavily – and in our case, solely – on donations from the community and volunteers who do much of the actual work of the organization.

In this tough economy, when our nonprofit is “running on fumes” and not even making ends meet, we appreciate your support more than ever.

Because of you, survivors attend support group meetings, where they learn compensatory strategies. These strategies help them live in their community (rather than in institutions).

And **because of you**, survivors take part in community activities, becoming involved in “the real world” and enjoying a richer, more fulfilling life.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

