

Brain Injury – Understanding and Support

Congresswoman Gabrielle Gifford; TV news reporter Bob Woodruff; Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department patrol officer David Moore; members of our Armed Forces; any number of athletes, and my own son.

All of these individuals have suffered some form of a brain injury. Currently over 1.5 million traumatic brain injuries (TBI) occur each year to US citizens and over 5 million are disabled due to a TBI.

Even though TBI is talked about more than it has been in past years it is still misunderstood by many and often portrayed in TV and movies as something that goes away.

Fortunately your Bartholomew County Public Library has many resources to aid in understanding brain injury and offer support for survivors and their families and friends.

Our newest acquisition is a DVD entitled *Brain Injury Dialogues*, a documentary film, co-written and directed by a TBI survivor. The film depicts the many invisible aspects of brain injury and the wide range of deficits that survivors must face, both physically and mentally. Viewers learn how no two brain injuries are ever alike.

What's Wrong With My Brain?: Kids With Brain Injury is another new addition to our collection and can be found in the Children's Department. In language kids can understand the book describes what might cause a brain injury and how a brain injury can be very scary and frustrating to the child who has suffered one.

Successfully Surviving a Brain Injury: A Family Guidebook From the Emergency Room to Selecting a Rehabilitation Facility is the type of hands-on book my husband and I would have loved to have had thirteen years ago after our son's TBI. If your loved one survives the doctors usually tell you to hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. Great, now what? This book answers the question now what? by guiding family members step-by-step through the recovery process.

A very personal touch is given to the book *Where is the Mango Princess?* written by the wife of a TBI survivor. She describes how brain injury not only changes the life of the survivor, but also the life of his/her family. And to point out that TBI survivors often say and do wacky things the author shares that the book's title was one of her husband's first utterances after emerging from his coma.

Locked in syndrome is a type of brain injury - a rare neurological condition in which a person cannot physically move any part of the body except the eyes. Marcia Muller writes of this in her 2009 novel *Locked In* featuring private eye Sharon McCone. Her 2010 novel *Coming Back* portrays McCone struggling to regain control over her body.

The novel I am currently reading, *A Time to Love* features a war correspondent recovering from injuries sustained in a car bomb attack. This highlights the fact that many of our armed forces members are suffering from varying degrees of brain injuries as a result of car bombs.

Next month is Brain Injury Awareness Month as well as Disabilities Awareness Month in Indiana. A great time to reflect on the numerous brain injury survivors in our community and what they go through every day—things most of us take for granted.

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