



What's Happening at MLRA... October 2010



Some tips from the individuals we serve....

Brain Injury affects us all. Whether it is a loved one, a neighbor, or you, finding your way back to a stable and joyful life after an injury can be a challenging journey for all. We recently surveyed our consumers to find out what tools and strategies they use that help them in their daily lives. The following are excerpts from our consumers...tips and strategies they would like to share.

-Main Line Rehabilitation Associates

HELPFUL TOOLS....

- From Robert -* Write things on the **calendar** to help you remember appointments
- From Linda -* An **online calendar** and a **tape recorder** that you can connect to the computer are two great tools for remembering information and appointments. Cell phones also have calendars to use. Use a **pillow** on your lap to hold the computer keyboard or books, so you don't have to strain a lot. A **calculator** is helpful every time you go shopping to keep track of what you spend.
- From Catherine -* The most practical tool I use is my **calendar** where I track my symptoms, the medications I've taken, how busy the day was, etc. to show the doctor. Use the calendar to track appointments and other important information. It kind of keeps your life in a book. Get a **journal** and express yourself in it.
- From Anna Marie -* Use a **planner**. Place a **whiteboard** in the kitchen with list of things to do for the day or week. Erase as you achieve/complete each task.
- From Eric -* A **wall calendar** and **recorder**.
- From Tyrell -* I use my **calendar** on my **cell phone** to remind me what day it is and other things.
- From Jennifer -* Keep a **journal**. Seek out help for **depression and anxiety**.

WORKING WITH OTHERS...

- From Linda -* All attendant care must have a schedule and rules with what you expect and what you won't put up with.
- From Catherine -* Get an advocate (a family member or other trusted person) who can help you tell the doctors when "enough is enough."
- From Ben -* Take advantage of opportunities and helpful hands. Try to be nice to the people who are helping you. Treat staff with respect. Don't be a "patient", be independent as much as possible.

Main Line Rehabilitation Associates is a

CARF Accredited Home & Community Based Brain Injury Program



More tips from the individuals we serve

SUGGESTED STRATEGIES...

- From Lisa -* Follow a **schedule** for daily routine, getting enough rest, taking breaks.
- From Linda -* Get plenty of **sleep**. If you don't get enough sleep at night, your mind gets very fuzzy! Put all your **receipts** in one place when you get home from shopping. Use **labels** to help with where you put things, so they're not hard to find. Start calming down at 6 p.m. so your mind has time to unwind and you can sleep better. Don't do too much after that time.
- From Catherine -* Break things down into **smaller tasks**, and give yourself enough **breaks** so that things are more manageable.
- From Frank -* Try to improve memory and coping skills. **Walk** as much as possible.
- From Anna Marie -* Play "**brain games**" that can be found on the AARP.com website. Try **getting involved** in a support group, or volunteer. Access abin-pa.com for all kinds of information, legislation, spreading the word that those with brain injury can be worthwhile and help others. **Meditate. Exercise.**
- From Dan -* Find out if your town has a monthly meeting for brain injury survivors and attend.
- From Darlene -* When I am out in the community doing things, it makes more of an impression on me rather just being at home with my everyday routine. The **photo album** helps me to remember names, faces, and places I have been.
- From Michael -* **Repetition, Repetition!**
- From Carl -* Always **leave plenty of time**. My speech is not clear so I have learned to purposely **speak slowly and clearly** and enunciate each word. **Write things down** – but remember where you put the note!

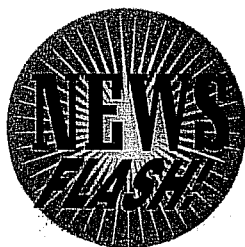
POSITIVE THINKING...

- From Latshanya -* I've come to see that I can still make a difference by just being me. You can do it, my peers! Even though it takes time to heal, the experience of healing is worth it. Try to endure the work you are doing now for later results.
- From Linda -* Positive thinking is helpful in getting the right outcome and helping you be determined to do something.
- From Catherine -* Find a way to keep your spirits up, such as using positive thinking, yoga, walks, friends.
- From Ben -* Keep a positive attitude. Know that rehab will be hard, but you need to try.
- From Dan -* Brain injured people can still be productive with the proper help. Being brain injured doesn't mean you can't live a normal life – you just might have to work a little harder.

New Brain Injury Support Group for Young Adults in Philadelphia

A new support group geared towards the unique needs of young adults with brain injury formed in Philadelphia in May. The group's focus includes peer support, sharing experiences, problem solving, the opportunity for socialization, and the development of social relationships among members. In keeping with the social nature of the group, the members have decided to hold meetings in a local coffee house.

Additionally, occasional group social activities are planned, the first of which was a gathering to see a movie. The group's self identified goals are "to create a place where we can be ourselves" and "to have fun." Group member Tiffany Pitts stresses that value of being around peers. "It is really helpful to be around other young people with brain injuries who are experiencing similar things. It's different from the other group I go to." Tiffany continues to attend a support group with members of mixed ages as well as attending one for young adults. The group of 5 core members meets in Center City Philadelphia on the first and third Monday of each month, and welcomes individuals with brain injury between the ages of 18 and 35. For more information or for directions, please contact group facilitator Erin Abrigo at eah48@drexel.edu.



**** AN EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT ****

ABOUT COGNITIVE REHABILITATION THERAPY (CRT)

We are very excited to report that long overdue recommended changes to the language contained in the **Pennsylvania CommCare Waiver** were recently officially finalized. This change in language and requirements found under the Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy service will allow brain injury specialists to provide this essential part of rehab.

Our last newsletter featured an article from our Clinical Director entitled "**What Exactly is CRT?**" As many of you may know, **Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy** is an essential part to brain injury recovery. It is also an element of rehabilitation that has been widely overlooked and undervalued. The war in Iraq has brought the repercussions of brain injury to the front page around the country. You now see brain injury featured in magazine ads, and hear about it on commercials, on 20/20 Specials, on Public Radio, from Politicians, celebrities and the like. The increased public awareness has helped the brain injury community to be heard.

The exciting news is that this change in language means that we can provide Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy through the waivers NOW!!!

You can learn more about the waivers at <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/>.

WHAT'S COOKING AT MAIN LINE?

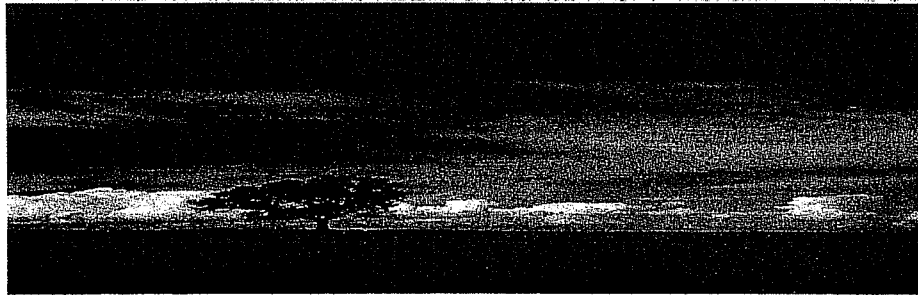
A Cookbook for and by the individuals we serve....coming soon!



Grocery shopping, money management, and meal planning and preparation are among the life skills our clients and their Community Integration Specialists regularly work on during sessions. With all those great recipes out there, we thought it would be a great idea to compile them into a cookbook so our clients and their families can share their favorite dishes with each other.

This cookbook is currently in production and will be ready soon. When your copy arrives, be sure to try out some of the delicious favorite recipes recommended by our Main Line "chefs" with your own friends and family.

ENJOY SOME TIME OUTDOORS



Remember last winter? Before we know it there may be snow on the ground again, so now is the time to get outside and get some exercise while exploring some of the beautiful and interesting sites in our area. Here are a few suggestions....

The **American College Arboretum in Bryn Mawr** is located within the 35 acre campus of beautiful buildings positioned to create a frame of open space, accented by a small interior valley with a pond, and includes about 600 trees of a wide variety of species. The grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk, and admission is free.

The **Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown** is conveniently located near all major roads in our area. The Zoo houses seven different exhibits that display several different types of animals ranging from simple Pennsylvania woodland creatures to large Central/South American jungle cats. The Zoo is

Linvilla Orchards in Media is a 300-acre farm dedicated to agriculture, entertainment and education. They raise their own fresh fruits and vegetables. You can "pick-your-own" or purchase them in the Farm Market. Various special events are offered seasonally. Hours are generally 9-6 p.m., and the orchards are handicapped accessible.

The Pagoda on Skyline Drive in Reading features a 72-ft. tall Japanese-style brick and tile structure on Mount Penn's southwest slope. The Pagoda was built in the early 1900's to add some beauty to the slopes of Mount Penn, which had been excavated for quarrying. Admission is free to walk around and enjoy the beautiful trails. At the bottom of the hill you will find Reading City Park, another nice area to enjoy.

Main Line Rehabilitation Associates Strategic Planning Survey Results

Each year, we send out a survey to a group of consumers, family members, staff, advocates, funders and members of affiliate agencies and networks in an effort to identify barriers to service, identify accessibility issues and address the concerns of individuals with neurological impairments.

Although we use some of the information in our organization to address training and service voids, we wanted to share some of the information we gathered, since it represents a common concern for all of us.

Nine of the 63 surveys that were sent out were returned. The responses reflect an overall satisfaction with the services that Main Line provides and indicate that community integration is meeting the needs of the consumers.

Transportation limitations and restrictions continue to be an ongoing concern in the area of community access. The feedback also suggested that service voids include poor access to clubhouses and peer mentoring programs.

Responses identifying the barriers to obtaining services included:

- a need for an "organizer or social worker" to assist with generating ideas for community integration ideas
- a lack of program funding
- transportation limitations
- availability of services in rural areas
- housing options
- consumers being able to recognize that they need services and then knowing what services may be available to help
- lack of brain injury related education and training for the families and support systems
- physicians failing to diagnose the consumers appropriately and therefore resorting to "psychiatric meds and mental health referrals instead of to brain injury services"

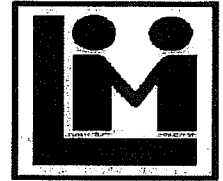
Feedback suggests that the following issues should receive the greatest focus in staff training:

- potential physical, cognitive and emotional changes after ABI
- brain anatomy and physiology
- developing compensatory strategies
- behavior management
- understanding the unique abilities and disabilities of each consumer and individualizing the therapy approach accordingly

DID YOU KNOW...?

- You can contact any MLRA Administrator or Clinical Coordinator by emailing them using their first initial and last name @ mainline-rehab.com. For example, the Executive Director, Jessica Chappell, can be emailed at jchappell@mainline-rehab.com
- MLRA serves many counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania, including Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Philadelphia, Montgomery, Northampton, and York.
- MLRA's team of talented Community Integration Specialists and Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapists continues to grow! We now employ 41 unique and exceptional clinicians.
- MLRA runs a quarterly recreational support group...stay tuned for details on our next event!

**Check out our website! Visit us
at www.mainline-rehab.com**



Election Day is Tuesday, November 2nd

Provisions for Voters with Disabilities

<http://www.vote411.org/bystateresult.php?state=PA?>

Any voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

For those voters who have a disability or are elderly and assigned to an inaccessible polling place, the Secretary of the Commonwealth has directed the county boards of elections to make available to those voters, upon their request, an Alternative Ballot. An Alternative Ballot may be cast with the county board of elections by 8 p.m. (or the close of polls) on Election Day. However, an application for an Emergency Alternative Ballot may be submitted until 8:00 P.M. on Election Day. The prescribed form by which an eligible voter might apply for an Alternative Ballot is available by contacting your county board of elections or by downloading the Alternative Ballot Form.