



Good Vibes for the Arkansas Brain Injury Community

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MEDICATION REMINDERS for Traumatic Brain Injury

There are many medications used to manage conditions after a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Whether prescribed or over-the-counter, it is important to read the labels and have a good understanding of your medications, herbals, and supplements to make the best of them and minimize unwanted side effects or unnecessary risks.

One of the most common and potentially dangerous side effects is drowsiness. Drowsiness from medicines can be especially problematic after a TBI because they:

- Can make it challenging to do tasks that require concentration, like driving.
- Can increase the risk of falls and injury. TBI survivors are especially prone to re-injury.
- Can affect concentration and performance at work.

Examples of medications (meds) that may cause drowsiness are antidepressants and mood stabilizers, seizure prevention meds, meds for high blood pressure, sleep and anxiety meds (especially the “Benzo” class), and muscle-relaxants.

Some over-the-counter products (OTC) can also cause sleepiness, such as allergy medications, sleep aids, and medicines for nausea or vomiting. Sometimes the sleepiness can fade with time, but at first try to avoid activities that require alertness and observe how much drowsiness one experiences with each medicine.



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You might need to change the time of day that you take something that makes you tired, or have a dose adjusted to make things tolerable. Discuss this with your physician and pharmacist.

It helps to avoid alcohol and mixing OTC products that can add to the drowsiness. It's also good to develop good habits around bedtime, such as avoiding caffeine and turning off lights, television, and tech gadgets to get enough rest at night.

Some of the same medications that cause drowsiness can also affect cognition, concentration, and memory. In addition, TBI patients sometimes have difficulty remembering if they already took their medication doses, or may take too many on impulse or for symptom relief. In this case, it is best to enlist the help of caregivers and supportive family members to keep track of medications.

There are also special pillboxes and phone apps that can give reminders on when and how to take medications.

For more info on medications, a good resource is the College of Psychiatric and Neurologic Pharmacists (CPNP) website at www.cpn.org.

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STORIES FROM THE TBI COMMUNITY: CRYSTAL PAYNE AS TOLD TO KIMBERLY LAMB



Crystal with her husband and children.

On March 17, 2017, Crystal was seriously injured when the ATV side-by-side in which she was riding flipped and landed on her. Her rural location made it difficult for emergency services to find her. With extreme care, her husband, Danny, and several friends loaded Crystal, who was unconscious at the time, into the back of a pickup truck and drove to the parking lot of a local church where an ambulance met them. The ambulance then drove to a golf course where a Baptist Med Flight transported Crystal to the hospital.

At the hospital, Crystal was placed in a medically-induced coma. After a month, she woke up in ICU on a ventilator. As she became more aware, her father explained that she had been in an accident and assured her that the children were fine.

Crystal had sustained several injuries including a broken neck (c5, 6, 7, and t1), bruised spinal cord, broken chest bone, ribs, and jaw, blood clot in arm, stint in main artery of arm, shattered shoulder blade, and a traumatic brain injury.

After two months in the hospital, Crystal began to receive rehabilitative services at the Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute (BHRI). For a month, she worked with speech and occupational therapists.

It was during this time that the extent of damage to her arm was recognized, and she began receiving treatment for a brachial plexus injury. Healthcare professionals told Crystal that she only had a one percent chance of ever using her right arm again.

Even with so much to overcome, Crystal was determined to be home in time for her daughter's pre-school graduation. In May, she achieved her goal.

However, once she returned home, she began to realize how much she could not do for herself. She said, "I looked at my children and knew I had to get better. I did not want them to see me fail. I wanted to teach them that if they worked hard at anything in life, they could achieve it. I wanted them to be proud of me and believe that if mom could do it, they could do it, too."

For ten months, Crystal saw her physical therapist, Amy Cadmus, for help with the injuries to her right hand, arm, and shoulder. Although the therapy was painful in the beginning, Crystal was determined to improve and get back to her family and career as a hairdresser. Amy was determined to help her get there.

“I looked at my children and knew I had to get better.”



Crystal and Joe Reynolds, one of the flight paramedics who transported her.

To help Crystal reach her goal of returning to work, Amy turned to her woodworking hobby. She built a special step stool that allowed Crystal to have better access to her salon clients. Today, you can find Crystal doing what she loves at her salon in Lonoke, Hair By Crystal.

Crystal cannot share her story without mentioning the remarkable support that she received from her community. Friends and family organized a BBQ fundraiser and silent auction to raise money for the Payne family. Thanks to the support of her community, Crystal faced less financial stress on her path to healing.

In November 2019, Eddie Williams, a nurse educator with the Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program, contacted Crystal to invite her to attend the Brain Injury Regional Workshop that was being held in Jacksonville. In a hurry to get her day going, Crystal almost didn't answer her phone. After speaking with Eddie for a couple of minutes, she quickly realized that she had been waiting to receive this call.

Eddie Williams said, "As Crystal began recounting the details of her injury, recovery, and motivation for working as hard as she could, I knew that I had to share it with a team member. We put Crystal on a speaker phone and sat in amazement as we listened to her story. We knew we had to meet her face-to-face, so we set up a lunch meeting, and things moved forward from there."

Crystal, now managing her health and living her best life, was ready to begin sharing her story and helping others. Instead of being a participant at the workshop, she became the keynote speaker. Workshop organizers were able to connect her with flight paramedic, Joe Reynolds, who helped save her life.

Since speaking at the Brain Injury Regional Workshop in Jacksonville, Crystal has continued to share her story.

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Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program



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Crystal and Joe Reynolds spoke to healthcare professionals at BHRI about her brachial plexus injury. During the presentation, she met Lee Ann Reynolds, another flight paramedic on her transfer flight.

Crystal has also shared her story at the quarterly meeting of the TBI Advisory Board Workgroup and accepted an invitation to join the group. The TBI Advisory Board Workgroup is working to build a stronger infrastructure and support system for the state's TBI population.

Even though Crystal has had to adjust to a



new normal in some ways, her hard work during the recovery process has resulted in a positive outcome. Not only did she meet her goal of setting an example for her children, she has become an advocate and a voice for the needs of those recovering from traumatic injuries.

Crystal on her first day of therapy, 2 months after her injury.

Crystal is an inspiration to us all.

Crystal's Tips for Survivors:

- Never give up on yourself. Take it one day at a time, and remember that baby steps are actually big steps.
- Never give up hope and faith. Pray every day.
- Push yourself. Your body can handle it. It may be hard and painful, but you will get results.

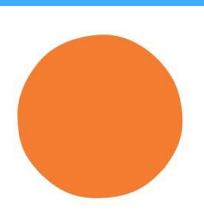
Want to tell your story? Email us at

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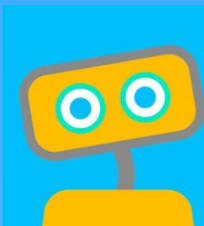
MENTAL HEALTH

APP HIGHLIGHT

In this unique time of uncertainty and stress, it is important to take care of your mental health. There are several phone apps that can help you find peace of mind. Check out a few suggestions here.



Headspace: Meditation has been shown to help people stress less, focus more and sleep better. Headspace is meditation made simple, teaching you life-changing mindfulness skills in just a few minutes a day. *Free with in-app purchases available. Apple & Google Play.*



Woebot: An app that talks to you through messages. Woebot teaches you about self-care, assists with mood tracking, and helps you learn how to manage stress. *Free. Apple & Google Play.*



Rootd: Rootd is a female-led app for those struggling with panic attacks & anxiety. This app helps you overcome anxiety and regain confidence. You'll learn about where anxiety comes from, how our bodies and minds experience panic attacks, and why they might be happening to you. *Free. Apple & Google Play.*

Don't have a smart device and want one?

You could be eligible for a free phone or tablet. Call the Arkansas Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) for free assistance. 1-800-981-4463 or 501-686-9693 Visit <https://arktap.org/> for more information.

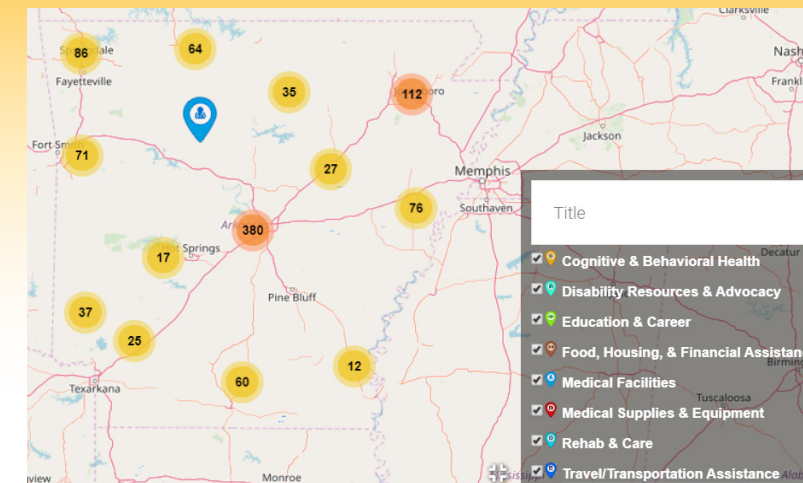
RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

www.atrp.ar.gov



Visit our disability resource website for digital copies of our newsletter, upcoming events, and even a searchable map for resources in your area. You can also click on the "Resources" tab and then "resource links" for even more resource categories, including:

- Accessible Travel
- Career Resources
- Caregiver Support
- Cognitive & Behavioral Health
- Financial Assistance & Social Services
- Legal Assistance
- Medical Supplies & Equipment
- National Disability Organizations
- Online Support Groups & Communities
- Sports & Recreation
- Trauma Survivor & Disability Publications



If you ever see a broken link or can't find something you are looking for, give us a call at (501) 526-7656 or email us at trrp@uams.edu

STAYING SAFE DURING COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 infection. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, the CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Consider staying at home and away from crowds, especially if you or a family member are an older adult or have underlying health issues.
- Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).

FREE online screening and more info at UAMHealth.com/healthnow



TBI SPP

Traumatic Brain Injury
State Partnership Program

In March, Terri Imus, Kim Lamb, and Joe Page attended the annual meeting of the Administration for Community Living TBI State Partnership Program in Washington D.C.

Joe served on a criminal justice panel with other experts across the nation to discuss TBI within the incarcerated population.

While there, the group also participated in the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) "Hill Day". NASHIA created opportunities for Joe to

meet with Arkansas legislators and be a voice for the state's TBI population. The meetings provided an opportunity for Joe to share his story and discuss the need for a stronger infrastructure of support for Arkansans living with brain injury.

To learn about the TBI State Partnership Program, email Kim at kklamb@uams.edu

To contribute to the AR State Plan for TBI or learn more about our efforts, please complete a survey at our website:

<https://tinyurl.com/ARTBISPP>



EFFECTIVE MARCH 17, 2020, SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICES WILL OFFER PHONE SERVICE ONLY

**** Online Services Remain Available ****

All local Social Security offices closed to the public for in-person service on Tuesday, March 17, 2020. This decision protects the population we serve—older Americans and people with underlying medical conditions—and our employees during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, we are still able to provide critical services.

Our secure and convenient online services remain available at www.socialsecurity.gov. Local offices will also continue to provide critical services over the phone. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local governments, and other experts to monitor COVID-19 and will let you know as soon as we can resume in-person service.

If you need help from Social Security:

- First, please use our secure and convenient online services available at www.socialsecurity.gov/online. You can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more - from anywhere and from any of your devices. We also have a wealth of information to answer most of your Social Security questions online, without having to speak with a Social Security representative in person or by phone. Please visit our online Frequently Asked Questions at www.socialsecurity.gov/ask.
- If you cannot conduct your Social Security business online, please check our online field office locator for specific information about how to directly contact your local office. Your local office still will be able to provide critical services to help you apply for benefits, answer your questions, and provide other services over the phone.
- If you already have an in-office appointment scheduled, we will call you to handle your appointment over the phone instead. If you have a hearing scheduled, we will call you to discuss alternatives for continuing with your hearing, including offering a telephonic hearing. Our call may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. government phone. Please remember that our employees will not threaten you or ask for any form of payment.
- If you cannot complete your Social Security business online, please call our National number at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778). Our National 800 number has many automated service options you can use without waiting to speak with a telephone representative. A list of automated telephone services is available online at www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/contact/phone.html.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please stay tuned for new event dates!
We will update you as soon as we can.**

Love Your Brain Yoga Announcement:

To promote our community's health and wellbeing in the face of the COVID-19 developments, we have canceled all in-person LoveYourBrain Yoga programming until June. We are working on an online program that we will share as soon as it's ready! visit www.loveyourbrain.com and scroll down to sign up for updates.

Check out the existing yoga videos at <https://www.loveyourbrain.com/yoga-videos>



We love to hear from our readers!

Have an idea, story, or suggestion?

OR

Want to receive this FREE, quarterly newsletter by mail or email?

Email us at trrp@uams.edu or call us at (501) 295-6576

Suggest a topic! Email us at trrp@uams.edu

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Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program

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The Trauma Rehabilitation Resources Program offers a Disability Resource Website to connect those with trauma-related disabilities to helpful resources and organizations in the community.

To access the Disability Resources Website, go to:

www.atrp.ar.gov

We also offer a 24-hour nurse call center for people with a brain or spinal cord injury, their caregivers, or medical providers. Call anytime with questions about your health, symptoms, or medical care.

To access the call center, call:

1-855-767-6983



For more information about the Disability Resource Website or the nurse call center, call (501) 295-6576 or email trrp@uams.edu

The nurse call center is a partnership of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the UAMS Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and is funded by the Arkansas Trauma Rehabilitation Program.

