



INSWABI Progress Report

Vol 9, Issue 2

July 2015 – December 2015

1. Introduction

Welcome everyone. This Progress Report features contributions from members all around the globe. Our member profile features Lyly Chenh, a Senior Social Worker at the Liverpool Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit in Sydney Australia. Thomas Strandberg from Örebro University reports on a conference organised by the Sweden Association of Brain Injury. Bob Lomax then provides a report on two programs/resources developed by the brain injury service at the Parkwood Institute, St Joseph's Health Care London, Ontario Canada. Jyoti Chandra from the Westmead Brain Injury Rehabilitation Service in Sydney Australia reflects on a recent article she discovered that explored how poetry can be used as a means to process grief and loss. We round it off by looking forward to the 8th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health which will be held in Singapore in 2016 and provide an update on news from the INSWABI Committee. We hope you enjoy reading the report.

Grahame Simpson Patti Simonson

2. Membership Profile



Lyly Chenh

**Senior Social Worker,
Community Rehabilitation
Team, Liverpool Brain Injury
Rehabilitation Unit in Sydney
Australia**

Lyly Chenh came to Australia as a refugee from Laos in 1979 at the age of 13. Many years later, she now works at the NSW Liverpool Brain

Injury Service as a senior community social worker. Prior to this, she worked at the Westmead Brain Injury Service on a part time basis as an outreach case manager (1997-2015). Before joining the brain injury rehabilitation field, Lyly used to work for the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, Australia from 1990-2005 for 15 years. She can speak Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese, Chiu Chow), Lao and Thai languages fluently and has been interested in cross cultural studies.

Once joining the Westmead Brain Injury Service in 1997, Lyly quickly engaged herself with the already existing Chinese Brain Injury Support Group. She co-runs this group with our well known Dr Grahame Simpson and our colleague, Irene Ko.

This unique trilingual ethno-specific support group has been in existence for the last 19 years (since 1995). Clients with an acquired brain injury and their carers/family members of Chinese background (Mandarin and Cantonese) meet four times a year on a weekend. The group is facilitated by Lyly and her colleague Rosetti Li, who is a Cantonese speaking registered nurse from the Westmead Brain Injury Service. Group sessions typically include a formal and informative seminar followed by an informal Chinese meal/lunch gathering. Core group numbers have grown steadily over the years as new members have been incorporated into the group structure. Attendance at group meetings can range from 8 to 28 participants. The group remains strongly responsive to the changing needs of long term carers and carers newly facing the challenges of living with a family member with an acquired brain injury.

INSWABI Progress Report

July 2015 – December 2015

Lyly has also run the monthly English Speaking Carers Support Group at Bankstown Headway for the last six years. The group was initially funded for 12 months by the South Western Sydney Area Health Service Carers Program to set up a specialised brain injury carers support group. Group activities included 2 sessions of guest speakers (a neuropsychologist and a clinical psychologist providing information and effective strategies for carers on how to handle challenging behaviour); 4 carers' group talk sessions; 4 social recreational sessions (Outing to Calmsley City Farm, a Xmas lunch, a river cruise and a picnic on the beach). Additional program activities for this group of carers have involved a brief session of body massage, gentle exercises and self care talk by qualified masseurs and an instructor. The program has been a success to the extent that the carers have continued to meet once a month up to the present despite the lack of ongoing government funding.

Lyly also co-runs the Vietnamese brain injury carers support group with Helen Huynh, another INSWABI member and case manager/social worker from the Liverpool Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit with a Vietnamese background. The goals of this group are to improve carer accessibility to information and education; to develop improved emotional support models for carers; and consideration of the wellbeing/physical health of carers. The group was established in June 2013 and is funded by the New South Wales Better Practice Program. The group started with 7 carers initially and now has 12 carers who attend regularly.

Lyly's strong passion and enthusiasm to run carer support groups has recently been recognised and awarded. In 2014, the Liverpool Brain Injury Rehabilitation Unit was selected to receive the New South Wales Carers Award with Lyly was nominated to receive the award in

person (see Picture). This has become the highlight of her professional career.

3. Conference



Conference organised by the Swedish Association of Brain Injured

The 15th of January I participated in a conference arranged by the “Swedish Association of Brain Injured”. The conference was arranged in cooperation with others but I can't mention them all. The content of the program was “Co-ordinated brain injury-support – tools during the track” (my translation from Swedish).

The program was very broad and begun with a presentation from a young man with TBI after assault. The story was about his struggling during the track. There was also a great presentation by social worker Catherine Johnson from BABICM (British Association of Brain Injury Case Managers) about case management in Great Britain. It is an important perspective for us in Sweden because case management is just about to be introduced as a social support in Sweden. After lunch there was a debate in full assembly about different perspectives on Brain injury (eg. Cognition, technical, neuropsychology).

After that it was an information and introduction to “The Swedish e-Health Agency (eHälsomyndigheten) which aims to contribute to improved health care, care and the nation's health by pursuing the development of a national e-health infrastructure.

INSWABI Progress Report

July 2015 – December 2015

The agency's activities focus on promoting public involvement and providing support for professionals and decision-makers. The day ended with a presentation about "modern technical support" for the rural areas in Sweden. It was an interesting conference.

Dr Thomas Strandberg, Head of School, School of Law, Psychology and Social Work, Örebro University, Sweden.

4. Programs and Resources

ABI Survivor and Family Education Series



Ongoing education for people with an acquired brain injury (ABI) is important because recovery from ABI is a lifelong process. Access to ongoing education is

necessary even if survivors no longer have access to rehabilitation services/professionals, if they never had access to these resources, or if they live in remote areas.

To provide this education, St. Joseph's Parkwood Institute hosts an eight-week ABI Survivor and Family Education Series from March to May each year that is video-conferenced through the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) to various locations within Ontario. Video-conferencing allows learning, discussion and social interaction to occur at each location.

In the past 10 years, the videoconference locations were limited to South-western Ontario, but the 2016 series will be open to anyone within Ontario with access to an OTN system.

Over the past six years, the series has also been archived through OTN. The archived webcasts on the OTN website allow for viewing of sessions from previous years, as well as the current year's series (each session of the

current year is available for viewing approximately two weeks after the live presentation). The webcasts are often used as a source of education and support for clients and their family members while they are waiting for services, during active treatment and following discharge.

Topics include areas of interest across the life span for survivors (ages 16 and older) and their families and friends. Clinicians (social workers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, audiologists, speech language pathologists, and psychiatrists) speak about such topics as: ABI 101; Practical strategies for coping with a brain injury; Coping with anger and frustration following ABI; Managing fatigue; Pacing and planning after ABI; Psychiatric aspects of brain injury and more. One of the most attended and appreciated sessions occurs in the last week of the series when survivors speak of their MSW RSW experiences of recovery. One survivor said she did the talk because "I wanted them to know they are not alone, and that they'll be OK." If you are interested in viewing some of the past sessions please follow this link for instructions on how to access the archived webcasts on the OTN website.

<https://www.sjhc.london.on.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/abisurvivorvideoconference.pdf>

Bob Lomax MSW RSW, Parkwood Institute, St Joseph's Health Care London, London, Ontario, Canada

Acquired Brain Injury 101: Steps to Success. Series for concussion / mild Traumatic Brain Injury

The Outpatient Brain Injury program at St Joseph's Health Care has seen a growth in referrals over the past 4-5 years. We are getting about 30 new referrals a month.

INSWABI Progress Report

July 2015 – December 2015

About 90% of our clients are suffering from concussion/mild Traumatic Brain Injury and a Post Concussion Syndrome. To deal with this we have created groups. One group is called Acquired Brain Injury 101 - Steps to Success. People are encouraged to come to this shortly after we see them for triage. This is a group they would attend while on our wait lists for services.

As we cover a large geographical area we video recorded our presenters who do the 101 talks. There are 5 talks and then the 6th is a session where we have 4 therapists (social work, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language pathologist) in a room with the new clients for 90 minutes to answer any and all questions. Social work does the 4th week of the series. The sessions are typically 90 minutes with a 10 minute break. The videos however are about 40 minutes. We see a strong benefit for clients when they attend the group versus watch the video at home. It helps them to realize that they are not going crazy rather they have issues that others have following a concussion.

ABI 101: Steps to Success Series

ABI 101 is a 6-week group education series offered to patients referred to the ABI Outpatient Program. This group allows patients to learn how to help themselves, and to share their experiences and strategies that have or have not worked. The series includes sessions done by occupational therapy, speech language pathology, social work, and physiotherapy. The sixth week is a drop-in session to review strategies the group is or is not using, and to answer any further questions.

Go to the website to watch individual sessions from the series.

<https://www.sjhc.london.on.ca/concussion-mtbi/our-services/abi-101-steps-success-series#abiweek1>

- ♦ **Week 1:** Occupational therapy on planning and pacing
- ♦ **Week 2:** Occupational therapy on organization, sleep hygiene, and goal setting
- ♦ **Week 3:** Speech Language Pathology on memory attention/concentration, and word finding
- ♦ **Week 4:** Social work on coping, anger, and mood changes
- ♦ **Week 5:** Physiotherapy on return to exercise, balance, vision changes
- ♦ **Week 6:** Drop-in session

Bob Lomax MSW RSW, St Joseph's Health Care London, Parkwood Institute, London, Ontario, Canada

5. Publications and Resources



An article on poetry as a means of processing grief and loss

I have had strong affinity for literature, both prose and poetry for their value in enhancing my own

emotional and psychological well being since I can remember. I have found great inspiration and comfort in the poetry of Thomas Hardy, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and the Bronte sisters amongst others, and over the years my own amateur poems penned in some turbulent times as cathartic and a source of great solace.

In my professional practice as a social worker in the field of Brain Injury, I frequently encourage my clients to use journaling as a therapeutic tool. So, when I recently came across this wonderful article by Robert A. Neimeyer on

INSWABI Progress Report

July 2015 – December 2015

"When the Personal Becomes Professional: Response Poetry in the Processing of Loss" in the Journal Grief Matters 18(2) 2015, it was an affirming and a validating experience, both professionally as a clinician and personally.

Dr Neimeyer is a Professor of Clinical Psychology and a very well established clinician in the field of Grief Counselling. He is an evocative poet and a very engaging writer who reflects on his use of response poetry in the integration of his client's losses and his own. I liked this article for its honest acknowledgement of the emotions of grief and loss of the therapist and the importance of processing these to enable us to be of service to our clients. This article is as much about a creative technique of grief therapy as is about our responsibility for self care as clinicians/grief practitioners. I am a devotee, highly recommended!

**Jyoti Chandra Senior Social Worker,
Westmead Brain Injury Rehabilitation
Service, Sydney Australia**

6. Conferences: Start planning for Singapore 2016



The 8th International Conference for SW in Health and Mental Health titled "Enhancing Human Condition: Negotiating & Creating Change" will be held

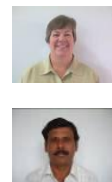
from 19th-23rd June 2016 at the National University of Singapore.

INSWABI was founded at the 5th International Conference for SW in Health and Mental Health held in Hong Kong in 2005. INSWABI has held special symposia on Social Work in ABI at the Hong Kong conference, in Dublin (2010, at the 6th International Conference) and in Los Angeles (2013, at the 7th International Conference). In total, INSWABI members have delivered 31 oral

conference presentations on the topic of SW in Acquired Brain Injury as a part of six themed sessions across the three conferences.

INSWABI members have submitted 12 presentations for Singapore of which nine have been accepted. We will keep our fingers crossed for positive outcomes from the other three submissions. The hunt is underway for a brain injury rehabilitation service in Singapore that INSWABI members can visit, and a venue for the INSWABI triennial dinner.

7. Committee news



The INSWABI committee met in September 2015. At that meeting the official set of Terms of Reference for the committee were signed off. We also agreed to circulate an EOI for two new committee members in early 2016. We are also taking steps towards establishing an INSWABI website. Committee member Gill East from the UK has resigned as she is moving into the golden fields of retirement. Thank you Gill, for all your support and help with the committee over the past 5 years.

8. Membership

A warm welcome to our new members

New members

Marie Lloyd	ISIS New Zealand
Lauren Goodson	Westmead Sydney

INSWABI Progress Report

July 2015 – December 2015

9. Pass this on.

Please circulate the progress report to any of your colleagues who might be interested.

10. Interested in joining INSWABI?

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