



Brain Injury and COVID-19

Summary of Resources & Support – last updated June 2023

Background

Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) developed a workgroup focused on brain injury and COVID-19. This was done as part of a supplemental funding opportunity through the Administration for Community Living.¹ One task of the workgroup was to help identify resources, supports, and information that could be shared. This document outlines what the workgroup members identified.

General Information

These websites offer general information about COVID-19. Many of these are geared toward individuals with brain injury.

Entity/Organization	Website
Administration for Community Living	https://acl.gov/covid19/resources-people-experiencing-long-covid
American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine	https://acrm.org/resources/coronavirus-pandemic/coronavirus-resources/
Brain Injury Alliance Arizona	https://biaaz.org/covid-and-the-brain/
Brain Injury Association of Virginia	https://www.biav.net/resources-and-information-on-covid-19/
Brain Injury Association of America	https://www.biausa.org/brain-injury/community/covid-19-resources-for-brain-injury
Long COVID Alliance	https://longcovidalliance.org/
National Rehabilitation Information Center	https://naric.com/?q=en/covid-19-special-collection

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Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis	https://medicine.wustl.edu/news/covid-19-infections-increase-risk-of-long-term-brain-problems/
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Research & Journal Articles

In addition to identifying resources and supports, the workgroup also conducted a literature review to better understand what's known about brain injury and COVID-19. A summary of the literature review will be available on the Brain Injury Advisory Council website later in 2023: <https://braininjury.nebraska.gov/>

Below are some articles that discuss the connection between brain injury, COVID-19 and/or long haul COVID.

First Author	Title & Journal	Key Findings
Banu Manickam Rajalu	Traumatic brain injury during COVID-19 pandemic—time-series analysis of a natural experiment BMJ Open (2022)	A significant decrease in traffic accidents, falls, mild/moderate injuries and, an increase in assault and severe injuries is seen during the pandemic period. There was an increase in the proportion of TBI due to assault during the period of lockdown.
Stephani Sutherland	Long COVID Now Looks like a Neurological Disease, Helping Doctors to Focus Treatments Scientific American Magazine (2023)	Long COVID, a condition that affects individuals who have recovered from acute COVID-19 but continue to experience persistent symptoms, is now being recognized as a neurological disease. Research suggests that the causes of long COVID may converge in the brain and nervous system, leading to the wide range of symptoms observed in affected individuals. By understanding long COVID as a neurological condition, doctors and researchers can focus on developing targeted treatments that address the underlying neurological mechanisms.
Jaycie Loewen	Mild COVID Linked to Brain Damage: What That Means for You Cognitive fx (2023)	COVID-19 can cause cognitive symptoms in some patients, even in mild cases, leading to a condition known as long COVID. A study published in Nature by Smith et al. focused on patients with mild COVID-19 cases and found changes in the brain that corresponded to common symptoms such as loss of smell and taste, headaches, and memory problems. The study revealed that some patients had lost up to 2% of brain volume and gray matter thickness in specific areas of the brain, which may explain the cognitive symptoms experienced by COVID-19 patients. The brain changes observed in mild COVID-19 cases may be caused by neurovascular coupling dysfunction, inflammation, and direct viral infection of brain cells.

Materials

Linked below are materials that can be used with clients, schools, etc. to increase awareness around COVID-19.

Entity/Organization	Website
Get Schooled on Concussion & COVID-19	https://www.getschooledonconcussions.com/
COVID-19 Information By & For People with Disabilities	https://a765e76e-058c-4ab0-85e5-cf6760bf54b7.filesusr.com/ugd/88ee10_665aaa7749b34326a9bce2036f4368e4.pdf
Brain Injury & COVID-19: Tips for Successful Navigation	https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2021-07/TBITARC_ImplicationsofCovid19_Final_Accessible_060221.pdf

Supports

Among the supports identified were support groups. Some are specifically around COVID-19 recovery and long COVID.

Entity/Organization	Details	Website
Alia Health	Every Wednesday from 9-9:30 AM PT, Alia Health hosts a live video support group for patients living with Long COVID. In this virtual circle, we come together in a safe, intimate, and supportive space to share stories and connect with one another.	https://www.ailahealth.com/
Bateman Horne Center Virtual Support Groups	BHC hosts bi-monthly support groups for those with ME/CFS, FM, long COVID and related comorbid conditions. Meetings are held the second and third Tuesday of every month from 1 to 2 PM mountain time. See the event calendar for registration details: https://batemanhornecenter.org/events/	https://batemanhornecenter.org/provider-s/long-covid/disability-support/#support-resources
Blooming Magnolia Network	looming Magnolia's mission is to empower others by providing a platform to strengthen & protect mental health and support those afflicted with Long-Covid through education and funding of therapeutic research.	https://www.facebook.com/groups/2864283107173756
COVID-19 Recovery Support Group (National)	Meetings occur the second Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm. Rehabilitation Institute of Washington is hosting a virtual support group for survivors at any point in recovery to share information and support. If interested in joining, email communications@rehabwashington.com for the meeting link.	https://www.biawa.org/covid

Mayo Clinic	Post-COVID Recovery and COVID-19 Support Group. Offers a social support network to talk about COVID-19, long haul COVID and post-COVID recovery. Following the group to be notified when new posts are made.	https://connect.mayoclinic.org/group/post-covid-recovery-covid-19/
Post-COVID Support Group (Lincoln Campus)	Fourth Tuesday of each month from 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Meeting is in the Clay Conference Room or Zoom Contact Jade Bertsch at jbertsch@madonna.org or 402.413.3881	https://therapyplus.madonna.org/programs/post-covid-assessment-clinic
Post-COVID Support Group (Omaha Campus)	Second Thursday of each month from 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m. Meeting is in the Dodge Conference Room or Zoom. Contact Allison Carson at acarson@madonna.org or 402.401.3645	

Nebraska Specific

These are resources or support options that are specific to Nebraska.

Entity/Organization	Website
Madonna Post-COVID Rehabilitation Clinic	https://therapyplus.madonna.org/programs/post-covid-assessment-clinic
Post-COVID Support Group (Lincoln Campus)	<i>See table above for details</i>
Post-COVID Support Group (Omaha Campus)	<i>See table above for details</i>