

Lessons Learned from the Impact of COVID-19 on Organizations Providing Services to People with TBI

What is the purpose of this plain language document? To share what is known from academic research about lessons learned from the impact of COVID-19 on organizations providing services to people with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Who is this plain language document designed for?

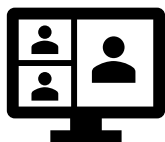
- Leaders at organizations providing community-based services to people with a traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their caregivers

How can organizational leaders use lessons learned from COVID-19 to better plan for the future? Here are some things to consider:



1. **Assess and improve the effectiveness of online services for people with TBI.**

Studies about online services during COVID-19 revealed both benefits and challenges. They also highlighted the need to better understand what works for different populations and different services—for example, what makes online learning effective for students with TBI, and what makes telehealth for occupational therapy effective.^{i,ii}



2. **Ensure online support for caregivers of people with TBI.** Caregivers of people with brain injuries faced significant stress during COVID-19 but benefited from telehealth services.^{iii,iv,v} Research indicates that organizations should consider investing more in quality telehealth services for these caregivers.^{vi}



3. **Plan for the unexpected.** Community-based organizations serving people with TBI adapted to COVID-19 challenges by implementing wellness checks, providing devices and technology training, and developing tailored safety information.^{vii,viii} Research suggests that organizations should advocate for more funding and develop plans to prepare for possible future emergencies.^{ix}



4. **Facilitate people's ability to return to work.** As workplaces adjust post-COVID-19, employers may need to acknowledge and address the mental health challenges experienced by people with TBI during the pandemic.^x Community-based organizations should consider efforts to educate employers and support people with TBI in the post-pandemic workplace.

Your ideas about what leaders of community-based organizations need to do based on lessons learned from COVID-19 are important. You can share your ideas and suggestions with Nebraska VR's Brain Injury Advisory Council and the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska.

- Email addresses:
 - vr.infobiac@nebraska.gov for the Nebraska VR (Vocational Rehabilitation) Brain Injury Advisory Council
 - info@biane.org for the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska

ⁱ Palusak, C., Dart, L., Ciccio, A., Nagele, D., & Lundine, J. P. (2024). Caregiver and student perspectives on school services for students with traumatic brain injury during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine*, 10.3233/PRM-230021. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.3233/PRM-230021>

ⁱⁱ Petersen, T., & Soeker, M. S. (2024). An exploration of the experiences and perceptions of TBI survivors about accessing vocational rehabilitation during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Occupational Therapy International*, 2024, 8414358. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2024/8414358>

ⁱⁱⁱ Roberson, C. J., Hagues, R., White, B., & Robbins, D. (2024). Addressing caregiver needs of brain injury survivors through telehealth: A pilot qualitative study. *Family Relations*, 73(3), 1920–1932. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12971>

^{iv} Beal, E. M., Pelsner, C., & Coates, P. (2023). Lockdown life-experiences of partners of individuals with an acquired brain injury during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative study. *Brain Impairment*, 24(2), 260–273. doi:10.1017/BrImp.2023.7. Note: This study focuses on caregivers of people with ABI, which includes but is not limited to TBI.

^v Roberson, C. J., Hagues, R., White, B., & Robbins, D. (2024). Addressing caregiver needs of brain injury survivors through telehealth: A pilot qualitative study. *Family Relations*, 73(3), 1920–1932. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12971>

^{vi} Same as above.

^{vii} Salazar, A. P., Bottari, C., Lecours, S., McDonald, M., Gignac, M. A. M., Swaine, B., Schmidt, J., Lemsky, C., Brosda, A., & Engel, L. (2023). Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on community-based brain injury associations across Canada: A cross-sectional survey study. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1166106. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1166106>

^{viii} Salazar, A. P., Lecours, S., Engel, L., Gignac, M. A. M., Rotenberg, S., Zarshenas, S., McDonald, M., & Bottari, C. (2023). Understanding the early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on brain injury associations across Canada: A qualitative study. *Inquiry: A Journal of Medical Care Organization, Provision and Financing*, 60, 469580231209161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00469580231209161>

^{ix} Same as above

^x Hanafy, S., Colantonio, A., Mollayeva, T., Munce, S., & Lindsay, S. (2023). Employment and accommodation needs and the effect of COVID-19 on men and women with traumatic brain injury. *Work*, 75(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-220437>

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