

# 2026 National Brain Injury Conference and Awareness Day Agenda

*Agenda is subject to change*

Monday, March 9	
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Registration and Check-In
12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	Survivor and Caregiver Meet and Greet
2:00 - 2:30 p.m.	<p><b>Opening Session: Why We Gather, Why it Matters, What's Possible</b></p> <p><i>Rick Willis, President and CEO, Brain Injury Association of America</i></p> <p>BIAA's President and CEO will kick off the conference by exploring what happens when the brain injury community comes together with intention and purpose. Hear why this moment matters, what we hope to accomplish together, and how your voice and participation can help shape the future of brain injury advocacy, programs, and support.</p>
2:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Exhibits and Networking
3:00 - 4:15 p.m.	<p><b>Plenary: Communicating Better Together: Putting New Brain Injury Messaging into Practice</b></p> <p><i>John D. Corrigan, PhD, Professor, Department of Physical Medicine &amp; Rehabilitation, Director, Ohio Brain Injury Program</i></p> <p><i>Kelly Lang, Author, Advocate, Survivor, and Caregiver</i></p> <p>A group of brain injury organizations and brain injury survivors collaborated over the past year and released a statement on how to talk about brain injury. This opening plenary, featuring a panel and interactive roundtable discussions, will ground us in these shared principles as we come together for days of connection and collaboration.</p>
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception



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**Tuesday, March 10**

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.	<b>Plenary: What's Happening in Brain Injury in 2026</b> Learn about the current state of BIAA and brain injury, services, research, and policy. Also, join us in celebrating BIAA's clinical and research award winners!
10:30 - 11:00 a.m.	Exhibits and Networking
	<b><u>Concurrent Sessions:</u></b>  <b>Connection, Loneliness, and Finding Meaning: Supporting Yourself and Your Community</b> <i>Kate Kerkmans, LCSW, CBIS, President and CEO, Brain Injury Association of Colorado</i> Social isolation is far too common for brain injury survivors and their caregivers, and it has profound, lasting effects on health and well-being. This session will delve into the underlying causes of loneliness and highlight practical, evidence-based strategies to strengthen interpersonal connections, foster belonging, and build supportive communities.
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	<b>Turning Experience into Impact: How to Share Your Brain Injury Journey</b> <i>Eric Ganci, Esq.</i> Whether you are a professional, survivor, or caregiver, your personal experience with brain injury is a powerful tool for raising awareness and inspiring action. However, telling your story is very much an art. We want to help you craft and express your story to best engage and connect with the listener. In this session we'll discuss how to sequence and express your story in a way that leaves your listener truly understanding who you are. This storytelling method will empower your listener or audience to take action to benefit the brain injury community.

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## Tuesday, March 10 (continued)

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch (Provided), Exhibits and Networking
	<p><b><u>Concurrent Sessions:</u></b></p> <p><b>Leveraging Your Story to Inspire Support</b> <i>Stacy Mulder, Executive Director, Tennessee Chapter, Brain Injury Association of America</i> After learning how to shape and share your story, this panel discussion facilitated by Stacy Mulder focuses on what comes next—inviting others to be part of the mission. You'll explore approachable ways to engage your personal network, spark meaningful conversations, and encourage people to show their support for the brain injury community. Peer-to-peer fundraising is fun, easy, rewarding, and deeply personal; it gives people a chance to learn, share, engage, and give. Most people want to help—they just need to be asked. This session will introduce you to fundraising tools and help you confidently open that door through social media, texting, email, and in-person interactions.</p>
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.	<p><b>Bridging Research and Real Life: Many Roles for Engagement</b> <i>Michael W. Williams, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Houston</i> Brain injury research should reflect the priorities and experiences of the people it is meant to help. Learn how advocates can partner with researchers, participate in studies, influence what gets studied, and ensure that brain injury research addresses what matters most to people with lived experience.</p>
2:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Exhibits and Networking



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## Tuesday, March 10 (continued)

2:15 - 3:00 p.m.	<p><b>Community-Led Excellence: Programs Where Volunteers Drive the Mission</b> <i>Carrie Collins, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Arizona; Kimberly Hill, MS, CTRS, CCT, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Louisiana; June Klein-Bacon, BSW CBIST, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Iowa; Peggy Reisher, MSW, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of Nebraska; Monica Vaccaro, Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Director of Programs</i></p> <p>Hear about impactful, volunteer-led programs in the brain injury community. Panelists will share what works, what doesn't, and what tools you need to get started.</p>
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.	Exhibits and Networking
3:15 - 5:15 p.m.	<p><b>Preparing for the Hill</b> Required training for individuals with scheduled congressional visits on Wednesday.</p>

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## Wednesday, March 11

7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Grab and Go Breakfast
TBA	Group Photo on Capitol Hill
TBA	Congressional Brain Injury Taskforce Event
TBA	Congressional Visits on the Hill
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	<b>The Connection Hour: A Joint BIAA/NASHIA/NABIS Reception</b> Join us for an informal, joint reception to celebrate the conclusion of the BIAA National Conference and the kickoff of the North American Brain Injury Society Conference.