



# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual UF Brain Injury Research Symposium

Concurrent with

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual BIF Education Conference

Supporting and Empowering Florida's Brain Injury Action Plan



Earn up to 12 CME/CE/CEUs  
Thursday May 14<sup>th</sup> & Friday May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
University of Florida Research & Academic Center  
at Lake Nona, 6550 Sanger Road, Orlando, FL 32827

Register here:  
[Conference Registration](#)

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION BROCHURE**

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Thursday May 14<sup>th</sup> & Friday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2026

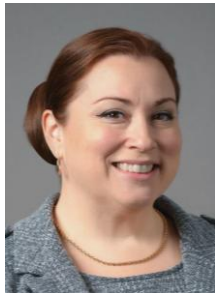
University of Florida Research & Academic Center at Lake Nona

**Brain Injury Florida (BIF)** is an advocacy/service non-profit organization operating statewide in Florida that represents and serves the over 4.9 million Floridians living with Brain Injury from all causes – traumatic and non-traumatic. **BIF** is a chartered state affiliate of the **Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA)**.

The **Florida Brain Injury Research Symposium** is the inaugural statewide research-focused meeting hosted by the **University of Florida Brain Injury, Rehabilitation, and Neuroresilience (BRAIN) Center**. The symposium is designed to bring together researchers, clinicians, rehabilitation specialists, emergency and trauma providers, trainees, and community partners from across Florida and beyond to share advances in brain injury science, clinical care, and systems of recovery.

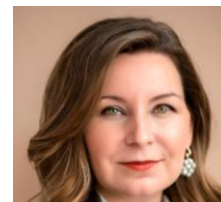
Please plan to join us for **BIF's** 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Brain Injury Education Conference – being held in conjunction with the **University of Florida's Brain Injury Research Symposium!** Presentations were sought that will empower the new Florida Brain Injury Action Plan. All are welcome, including people with brain injury, family members, support groups, brain injury professionals, researchers, advocates, state agency staff, and legislators.

## FEATURING:



**Rebecca Montalvo-Campbell, PhD**

Assistant Professor  
University of South Florida



**Rita Lenhardt, DHSc, CCC-SLP, CBIS-AP**  
Assistant Professor, Gannon University

**Arielle Resnick, PT, DPT, NCS**  
Director of Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency  
Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation



**Carrie Rayburn, CTRS, CBIS**

Recreational Therapist  
HCA Florida West Rehabilitation



**Jolie Haun, PhD, EDS, LMT**

Research Health Scientist, James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital  
Adjunct Associate Professor, Internal Medicine,  
University of Utah



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### 11:00 AM REGISTRATION & EXHIBITS

Arrive early and check out Exhibitors from around the state of Florida, providing brain injury rehabilitation and related services.

### 11:45 AM WELCOME by Denny Armington, MHA, Founding Board President, *Brain Injury Florida*

### 12:00 PM OPENING KEYNOTE

*Invited Speaker: Arielle Resnick, PT, DPT, NCS*

Director of Neurologic Physical Therapy Residency, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation

#### **The Plastic Brain: Reimagining TBI Recovery Through Interdisciplinary Innovation**

Traumatic Brain Injury challenges clinicians to rethink traditional rehabilitation approaches. This session explores how principles of neuroplasticity and motor learning can be leveraged through interdisciplinary collaboration and innovative technology. Physical, Occupational, and Speech-Language therapists will examine evidence-based tools such as robotics, virtual reality, biofeedback, and augmentative and alternative communication to promote recovery across motor and cognitive domains. Case examples will illustrate how technology-enhanced, team-based interventions drive meaningful functional change and optimize outcomes. Participants will leave with practical strategies to integrate neuroplasticity-driven innovation into everyday clinical practice.

### 1:00 – 1:15PM - Message from Premier Exhibitors

### 1:15 – 1:30 PM - Break to Visit with the Exhibitors, Move to Next Session

### 1:30 PM Concurrent Workshop 1 – Nathan Flores, PhD, MAT

#### **Understanding and Treating Grief and Sleep Disturbances Post Acquired Brain Injury**

Grief and sleep disturbances are often overlooked yet profoundly interrelated challenges following acquired brain injury (ABI). This presentation explores how neurological, psychological, and existential factors converge to disrupt restorative sleep and complicate the grieving process for individuals adjusting to cognitive, emotion, and identity changes post-injury. Drawing on current research and clinical insights, the talk examines the bidirectional relationship between disrupted sleep and unresolved grief, highlighting how these experiences impact recovery, adjustment, and quality of life. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between brain injury, loss and sleep, fostering greater empathy and informed clinical awareness.

### Concurrent Workshop 2 – Candace Gantt, Founder, Mind Your Brain Foundation

**Drew Nagele, PsyD, ABPP, CBIST-AP, FACRM**

#### **Communicate with Confidence: Public Speaking and Advocacy after a Brain Injury**

Using Toastmasters International guidelines, Candace will empower brain injury survivors to speak clearly and persuasively in any setting. This workshop provides three practical communication tools for preparation. You'll learn to confidently discuss medical needs with providers and be a champion for the brain injury community with legislators. Develop your voice, share your story, and become a powerful advocate.

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

**2:30 PM – 3:00 PM Beverage and Snack Break**

Visit with the Exhibitors, Move to Next Session

**3:00 PM Concurrent Workshop 3 – Lauren Bilski, PT, DPT, & Briana Elson MS, OTR/L, BCPR, CBIS**

**Sensory Synergy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Visual and Vestibular Rehab**

This presentation explores best practices in vision and vestibular rehabilitation for adults with neurological impairment, grounded in McGuire's (2022) practice guidelines. Key topics include interdisciplinary assessment strategies, evidence-based interventions for oculomotor dysfunction, visual field deficits, and vestibular hypofunction, and the integration of occupational and physical therapy approaches. Emphasis is placed on functional outcomes, patient-centered care, and clinical reasoning to support recovery and participation. Case examples and collaborative treatment planning illustrate how targeted interventions can enhance balance, gaze stability, and visual processing. Attendees will gain practical tools to address complex sensory-motor challenges in brain injury rehabilitation.

**Concurrent Workshop 4 – Ayse Torres, PhD, CRC, LMHC**

**AccessTECH: Advancing Career Choices for Employment Success in Technology**

Florida Atlantic University's AccessTECH project aims to broaden access to advanced technology careers and create a 21st-century workforce for youth and adults with disabilities. This nationwide initiative focuses on three high-demand tracks: Cybersecurity, Cloud Computing Solutions, and Computer-Aided Design & 3D Printing. By collaborating with vocational rehabilitation agencies, community organizations, and leading technology companies, the project provides specialized training, paid internships, and employment opportunities.

**4:00 PM – 4:15 PM Break to Visit with the Exhibitors, Move to Next Session**

**4:15 PM FIRST DAY CLOSING PLENARY**

**Invited Speakers: Carrie Rayburn, CTRS, CBIS + Panel of Persons with Lived Experience**

**Beyond Surviving: Life After Acquired Brain Injury**

This workshop explores the practical, emotional, and social challenges faced by survivors and caregivers. Attendees will gain insight into caregiver support, peer and community connection, and navigating identity changes following brain injury through discussion of recreational therapy, peer support, and structured social engagement. Participants will gain practical strategies for enhancing daily life and well-being, illustrated through personal stories. This presentation helps survivors and caregivers reclaim meaning in their lives by building confidence through connection and action and will also feature survivor perspectives.

**5:15 PM Joint Conference Reception View Posters, Visit with Exhibitors**



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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## FRIDAY May 15, 2026

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**8:00 AM REGISTRATION & EXHIBITS – Continental Breakfast**

**8:30 AM Brain Injury Florida Annual Meeting – *All are welcome!***

Review of BIF 2025 Annual Report, highlighting accomplishments of the year. Nominations and elections for new Board Directors/Officers will be conducted.

**9:00 AM DAY 2 OPENING PLENARY**

***Invited Speaker: Rebecca Campbell-Montalvo, PhD***

Assistant Professor and AQUASS Lab Director, University of South Florida,  
Department of Emergency Medicine, Morsani College of Medicine

### **The Hidden Architecture of TBI Recovery: What Social Networks Teach Us About Neuroplasticity**

Social support strongly influences Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) outcomes, yet the field rarely applies sophisticated social network methods long used in sociology. Instead, TBI research relies on vague, inconsistent definitions of social support, limiting usefulness for providers, survivors, and care partners. Preliminary VA findings suggest that TBI survivors have smaller, more vulnerable social networks, often reduced by marital strain, job loss, and other disruptions. Drawing on emerging neuroanthropological data, this talk explores how network attributes shape treatment response and daily well-being, and offers practical implications for care.

**10:00 – 10:15 AM – Message from Premier Exhibitors**

**10:15 – 10:30 AM - Break to Visit with the Exhibitors, Move to Next Session**

**10:30 AM Concurrent Workshop 5 - Paige Salinas, MS, MHA, LCSW, CBIST-AP**

### **Cultural Awareness in Brain Injury Rehabilitation**

It is critical for rehabilitation professionals to develop the skills necessary for greater awareness, knowledge and understanding of the specific culture of patients they are treating. This includes identifying biases that may exist for the professional as well as knowing how to gather information about culture, differences and experiences from their patients so that an effective treatment plan may be implemented. Therapeutic alliance is important as this allows clinicians to familiarize themselves with the patients, fostering a patient centered approach. Throughout the assessment process, the interdisciplinary team can identify strengths and barriers in the context of psychosocial uniqueness and acculturation. As the patient, family and team are measuring progress, this will be inclusive of cultural factors that may be contributing to treatment planning and clinical outcomes.

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

**Concurrent Workshop 6** – Kimberly Mountbleau, OTRL, CBIS & Erika Unger, OTRL, CBIS  
**Advancing Therapeutic Use of Self Through Lived Experience Integration: Implications for Outcomes in Brain Injury Care**

Various practitioners enter their fields after experiencing powerful personal or caregiver experiences which shape their empathy, motivation, and need to assist others through their hardships. While insight may be enhanced in some social aspects, establishing a rapport may be difficult. This session will explore how practitioners can utilize their therapeutic use of self to increase functional outcomes in patient care.

**11:30 AM Lunch with the Exhibitors** – can use high tops in lobby and can use classrooms to sit and mingle!

**12:30 - 1:30 PM AFTERNOON PLENARY**

*Invited Speaker:* Rita Lenhardt, DHSc, CCC-SLP, CBIS-AP  
Assistant Professor, Gannon University

**Executive functions: Assessment and Treatment in mTBI**

This presentation examines executive functioning impairments and their functional impact on everyday activities in individuals with mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI). Participants will review practical approaches to assessing executive function disorders and explore evidence-based intervention strategies aligned with the INCOG 2.0 guidelines. The session emphasizes clinical application to support meaningful recovery and improved outcomes.

**1:30 – 1:45 PM Break to Visit with the Exhibitors**  
Move to Next Session

**1:45 PM Concurrent Workshop 7** – Samuel Kopp & Patricia Kay Reyna, EdD

**Restoring the Narrative: Echoes of Guidance, Threads of Hope with Survivor-Led Insights for Trauma-Informed ABI Care**

Clinical spaces are shaped by protocols and pathology; the lived experience of acquired brain injury (ABI) often remains unheard. This session invites survivors, caregivers, and professionals into a survivor-led exploration of healing, identity, and trauma-informed care. Through personal storytelling, creative reflection, and evidence-based integration, participants will explore gaps in traditional treatment models. Drawing on Samuel's journey as an ABI survivor/advocate and Dr. Reyna's research/caregiving experience, the session bridges emotional insight with clinical relevance, highlighting communication and resilience-building strategies. Attendee case reflection exercises, which apply survivor-informed principles to real-world scenarios, will enhance the capacity to support recovery with empathy and nuance.



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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## Concurrent Workshop 8 – Isaac Tourgemann, PhD, MsCP

### Clinical Implications of the CBI-M TBI Classification System

The Comprehensive Brain Injury–Multidimensional (CBI-M) system provides an evidence-based framework for the acute evaluation and management of traumatic brain injury (TBI). This presentation will examine how the four-pillar model can be applied within an inpatient rehabilitation setting, with particular emphasis on the Modifiers pillar—encompassing medical, behavioral, and environmental factors that shape recovery trajectories. Drawing from clinical experiences at West Gables Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospital, we will explore how the role of the CBI-M in formulation, communication, and care coordination. Discussion will focus on how modifiers can inform therapy dosing, safety planning, and outcome prediction, highlighting CBI-M’s capacity to bridge medical, cognitive, and psychosocial domains. The session will conclude with considerations for extending CBI-M principles to chronic TBI care and long-term management.

**2:45 – 3:00 PM Break - Exhibitor Prizes – Move to next session**

## 3:00 PM CONFERENCE CLOSING PLENARY

*Invited Speaker: Jolie Haun, PhD, EDS, LMT,*

Research Health Scientist, James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital

Adjunct Associate Professor, Internal Medicine, University of Utah

### Partnering with Communities to Improve Access to Care for People with TBI

I-HEAL’s mission is to use implementation science and human-centered design to engage community partners with a goal of improving access to care for people with TBI. This presentation will illustrate challenges through lived-experience stories and subsequent partnerships to promote healthcare quality for people with TBI-related disability. Information about this award and activities engaging people with lived experience are described at [ihealbrain.org](http://ihealbrain.org).

**4:00 PM – CONFERENCE WRAPS UP**

## Special Thanks to our 2026 BIF Conference Committee

Teah Gulley Co-Chair

Denny Armington

Elaine Lecatsas

Wendy Carranco

Drew Nagele Co-Chair

Erika Unger

Rebecca McCarthy

Rebecca Montalvo-Campbell



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# CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

## HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

### Complete Registration Form

- **Online** at [Conference Registration](#) and click on “Get Tickets”  
**OR**
- **Complete and E-Mail** the Conference  
Registration/Payment form found below to: **Brain Injury Florida** c/o Denny Armington  
– [DArmington@BrainInjuryFL.org](mailto:DArmington@BrainInjuryFL.org)
- **Scholarships** – for survivors or family members who are not able to pay the full cost of Conference registration/travel fees to attend the Conference, partial scholarships may be available by completing the Scholarship Application, which is available by scanning this QR code and completing a fillable Scholarship Application form.  
[BIF 2026 Conference Scholarship Link](#)



## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA RESEARCH & ACADEMIC CENTER, LAKE NONA

The UF Brain Injury Research Symposium kicks off the day on Thursday May 14 from 9 AM to 6 PM, and this year’s **BIF** Educational Conference will overlap with the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the UF Symposium, and will start mid-day at the same location, Thursday May 14 from 11 AM to 6 PM and will continue on Friday May 15 from 8 AM to 4 PM. Both conferences will be held at the University of Florida’s Research and Academic Center at Lake Nona, located at 6550 Sanger Road, Orlando, Florida, 32827. Free parking is available right outside! If you also want to attend the UF Symposium, complete your BIF registration and click on “Add UF Symposium (CME) near the bottom of the page.

## DISCOUNTED HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

For those who require overnight accommodation, a special conference rate is available at the nearby hotels listed below. Reservations for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights can be made by clicking on the link below to get the special BIF Conference rate or if you want to book fewer or more room nights, call the hotel and ask for the Brain Injury Florida Group Rate:

Or click here to [Book your group rate for Brain Injury FL](#) for any of the 3 Marriott Hotels (must book by May 6, 2026):

- SpringHill Suites by Marriott Orlando Lake Nona  
13700 Boggy Creek Road, Orlando FL 32824  
\$149 per night (407-313-3012)
- Courtyard by Marriott Lake Nona  
6955 Lake Nona Boulevard, Orlando FL 32827  
\$179 per night (407-856-9165)
- Residence Inn by Marriott Orlando Lake Nona  
6955 Lake Nona Boulevard, Orlando FL 32827  
\$189 per night (407-888-9974)
- Hampton Inn (must book by April 14, 2026)  
10002 Eagle Creek Sanctuary Blvd., Orlando, FL, 32832  
\$139 per night 407/275-5071  
To book the BIF Group Rate for the Hampton click [HERE](#).



# CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

## BENEFITS OF ATTENDING

- Network with the Florida brain injury community
- Learn the latest advances in brain injury rehabilitation
- Learn about cutting edge acquired brain injury research
- Learn about brain injury rehabilitation services and supports in your community
- Connect to brain injury support groups in your area
- Conference attendance includes:
  - Annual Membership in *Brain Injury Florida*
  - Participation in Annual *BIF* Annual Meeting
  - Afternoon Snack and Reception Day 1
  - Light Breakfast and Luncheon Buffet Day 2



Please Register on-line at: [Conference Registration](#)

If you cannot register on-line, you may copy this page and the next, and complete a registration page for each person attending:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization if any \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Please list any medical/dietary restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Type	Cost	Total
Survivor/Family Member Student/Trainee	\$75	\$
Rehab Professional	\$200	\$
Rehab Professional with CEU or Psychology CE or Physician CME	\$250	\$
Psychology with APA CE	\$275	\$
Add UF Symposium (CME)	\$50	\$
Additional contribution to support Survivor Scholarships		\$
<b>Total</b>		\$

**Payment Options (only if not doing on-line registration)**

**1. Credit card:**

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

CVV \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Scan form:** [DArmington@BrainInjuryFL.org](mailto:DArmington@BrainInjuryFL.org)

**2. Pay by check, send copy of Registration Form and Check in Regular US Mail:**

Checks should be made out to **Brain Injury Florida, Inc.** and sent to:

Brain Injury Florida, Inc.  
19321 US Hwy 19 North, Suite 307  
Clearwater, FL 33764

**3. Cancellation Policy.** If for any reason you are not able to attend the Conference in person, you will be given the opportunity to attend via distance learning at a later date, and can earn your credits in that manner. No refunds will be issued if you cannot attend in person.

**Opt-Out Notice**

You have received this email and 2026 BIF Conference information because your email was on a database of people who had previously expressed interest in brain injury. If you do not wish to continue to receive emails from **Brain Injury Florida**, please send us an email at [info@BrainInjuryFL.org](mailto:info@BrainInjuryFL.org) and type “opt out” and you will be taken off the BIF email list.



# BIF CONFERENCE CE/CEU INFORMATION

Continuing education credits or contact hours have been applied for and are pending approval for the disciplines listed below. To receive CE/CEU credits in a specific discipline or a general attendance certificate, you must register, attend, and complete an evaluation after each session. BIF is not responsible for individual CE credits if this process is not followed, and refunds will not be given.

**CEU/CME FEES | \$50**

**PSYCHOLOGISTS CE FEE | \$75**

**Certified Brain Injury Specialists**

**Certified Case Manager**

**Rehab Nursing**

**Occupational Therapists\***

**Certified Rehabilitation Counselors**

**Physician CME Category 2**

**Physical Therapists\***

**Psychologists (APA)\*\***

**Social Workers\***

**Speech Therapist**



\* Florida CEUs only; all others are national.

\*\* This conference offers up to 13 APA CEs. APA Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. APA Division 22 (Rehabilitation Psychology) maintains responsibility for this program and its content. For more information about Division 22 or to inquire about membership, please visit [www.div22.org](http://www.div22.org).

**Brain Injury Florida, Inc., is a 501(c) (3) tax exempt organization incorporated in Florida.**

The official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Florida Department of State at

<https://search.sunbiz.org/>

Registration does not imply endorsement.



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