

## What exactly is a brain injury?

A brain injury is described as damage to the brain that results in impairments in one or more functions. Common symptoms of brain injury survivors include cognitive, physical, and social problems and/or social deficits. However, it is important to remember that each person who sustains a brain injury will experience a **unique set of symptoms**, some lasting a few weeks while others may last for years or a lifetime.

### PALS Guidelines

As a PAL, you make a commitment to contact each other once a week by telephone or email and to socialize, one-on-one, at least once a month.

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# BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

## PALS Program

- ◆ Providing a link for ◆ survivors

"To me, volunteering is a source of joy that you would never get from any professional career. "

-John Ruff

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

-Aesop



# PROVIDING A LINK FOR SURVIVORS: THE PALS PROGRAM

## Quick Facts

- ~ Every 22 seconds, an individual in the United States sustains an injury to their brain.
- ~ A little over 2% of the U.S. population currently lives with disabilities resulting from a traumatic brain injury.
- ~ Accidents, assaults, stroke, and coma are just some of the causes of brain injuries.
- ~ Thanks to medical technology, more people now survive brain injuries and go on to lead productive lives.

## What is PALS?

PALS (Providing a Link for Survivors) is a program of Brain Injury Services that strives to connect our consumers with community volunteers in a mutually enriching friendship. The hope is to strengthen social skills while engaging with a new friend in recreational activities or simply enjoying one another's company. The PALS volunteers commit to twelve months of outings, with a minimum of one per month. Support and training provided by the Director of Volunteer Programs at Brain Injury Services as well as the PALS case manager.

## Who is eligible to receive a pal?

PALS reaches out to brain injury survivors residing in the Northern Virginia area who are currently receiving case management services with BIS.

## How can I become involved in the PALS Program?

Contact **Michelle Thyen**, Director of Volunteer Programs

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## Some things you can do with your PAL!

- ~ Watch movies
- ~ Play cards or board games
- ~ Watch/attend sporting events
- ~ Listen and/or exchange music
- ~ Arts and crafts
- ~ Outdoor activities (fishing, sports, etc.)
- ~ Go out to eat

