

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026

ISSUE 02



BRAINFIT

GUEST ARTICLE

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LEARNING &

Growth

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Support Groups

A safe space for people with Brain injury and their whaanau to connect

Navigation support

Help for people with Brain injury to find services that fit their needs.

Education workshops

Learn practical skills for life after Brain injury

Navigating the Newsletter

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Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

A warm welcome to Autumn from the Brain Injury Waikato team

Membership - How to become a member of Brain Injury Waikato

We have changed how we structure our membership to make it more available to more of the people we support.

Some of the benefits of membership include being able to attend AGM's and having your voice and vote count.

Being a member also helps us when we need to address issues facing our community.

The Membership form is attached on the last page of the newsletter. fill it in and email it back to us or hand it in at a group meeting.

For your Koha donation you will also get a membership certificate emailed to you to confirm your membership. Details on making donations to Brain injury Waikato are on the last page of this newsletter.

We have a busy year planned and have a number of amazing speakers and educators booking in for the support and education groups. We will update these in the calendars as they are confirmed and we are adding their information to emails we send out.

We are trialling texting people to remind them of upcoming meetings as life gets busy and these reminders can be helpful. Please let us know if you do not want the reminder - or if you do want it and are currently not receiving it.

If you know anyone who has had a brain injury, or supports someone with a brain injury, and who would like to come along to a support or education group for the first time, please get them to get in touch with us via:

support@braininjurywaikato.org.nz or Phone 07 - 839 1191.

Fiona's Favourite Quote for this quarter

"A good life is not defined by limits, but by possibilities."



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Learning and Growth

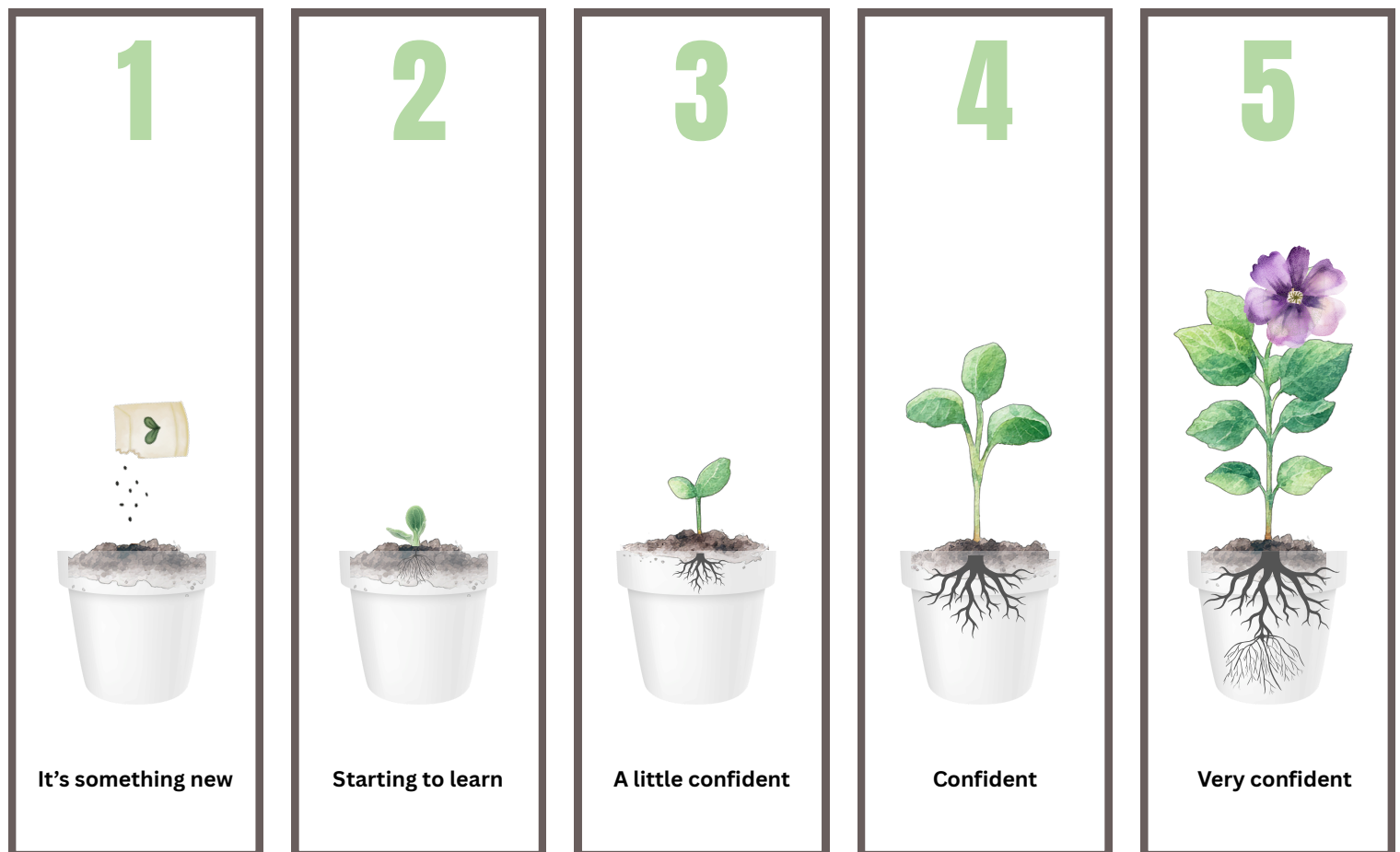
Kia ora everyone.

Our support groups in May focused on “making it safe to learn and grow.”

Life after a brain injury can be seen as a learning journey. Seeing ourselves as people who can still learn is not always easy, so together we explored how we can support each other along the way.

A key idea that came through was that making mistakes, putting in effort, and trying new things matter more than having all the right answers. This connects with the idea of “intellectual humility,” a term used by education psychologist Guy Claxton. It means that not knowing something is okay, and often where learning begins.

The important role we all share as a community to encourage and support each other on our individual journeys of learning and growth was also highlighted. A bit like how a seed beginning to grow is influenced by its surroundings.



Learning and Growth. Image credit: Brain Injury Waikato.

Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

Learning and Growth

A key reason that learning is possible is because of how our brains work. Billions of special cells called neurons form connections with each other, and these connections support learning over time. Amazing! Learning can feel like hard work because these connections take time to form. Like the roots of a plant growing beneath the surface, we are not able to see these new connections forming in our brains. This ability of the brain to form new connections is called neuroplasticity.

One of the strengths of our groups is that they are becoming a place where people can talk about and even celebrate their mistakes, the effort that can sometimes go unnoticed, and the new ways we are all finding to learn and grow.

By the end of our time together, a number of ideas about how to support each other's journeys had been shared. These included celebrating small steps, being curious and asking questions, sharing hobbies or achievements, finding ways to connect outside of the group, being okay with not having all the answers, and even creating a session to acknowledge the role of family and supporters.

A massive thank you to everyone who comes along and makes these groups possible!

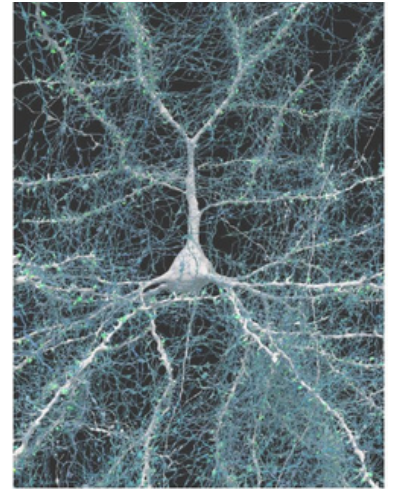
Before you go, here's a question:

What's something you've learned, and what helped you get there?

Ngaa mihi nui,

Josiah Ploeg

Community Education and Support Officer



Single neuron reconstruction. Image credit: D. Berger, Harvard University (NIH).



Interested in coming along to a group? Get in touch using the details below.

We'd love to connect.

Email: Support@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

Website: WWW.BRAININJURYWAIKATO.ORG.NZ

Wellness

Your Brain Can Rebuild:

Small habits can support recovery. Recovering from a brain injury can feel like an unpredictable journey. Many people describe it as two steps forward and one step back. But there is one powerful message that science continues to confirm: the brain has an incredible ability to adapt, rewire and rebuild.

This ability, known as neuroplasticity, means the brain can form new connections and strengthen existing neural pathways throughout life.

Even after injury, the brain can continue learning, adapting and sometimes finding new pathways around areas that have been affected. Importantly, this capacity doesn't disappear with age or injury - it remains throughout our lives. The key is supporting the brain with the right habits and supportive environment.

Recovery is rarely linear. Challenges with memory, attention, fatigue and emotional regulation are very common after brain injury, and these changes can make everyday tasks feel harder than they once were. Encouragingly, research shows that small daily habits can support the brain as it heals and adapts.

At Brainfit®, we often talk about building cognitive reserve - the brain's resilience. Over the past 16+ years, more than 18,000 people have taken part in Brainfit® programmes, and one consistent lesson we see is that the brain responds remarkably well to the right kind of stimulation and support. The more connections and pathways the brain develops, the better it can cope with challenges and adapt to change.

That idea sits at the heart of a new initiative we launched this year called Brainfit® Tricks for '26. Each Wednesday we share a short, science-based tip designed to support attention, memory and brain health.

These strategies take less than two minutes and are freely available on the Brainfit®.World [YouTube](#) channel and [social media](#), making them an easy starting point for building healthy brain habits over time.

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Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

Wellness

One of the most important foundations for memory is attention. When the brain is fatigued, overloaded or distracted, which is very common after brain injury, information often never gets fully encoded, making recall much harder later.

That's why many rehabilitation programmes focus first on strengthening attention through strategies such as single-tasking, reducing distractions, and pacing activity with regular rest breaks.

Another powerful strategy is the use of external memory supports. Research shows that tools such as lists, calendars, reminder apps, alarms and visual cues can significantly improve day-to-day functioning and support independence after brain injury by reducing the brain's cognitive load.

Movement also plays an important role in recovery. Physical activity increases blood flow and oxygen to the brain and supports chemicals that help brain cells grow and connect. Even gentle activities such as walking, stretching or balance exercises can support thinking, mood, mental energy and recovery.

For people recovering from brain injury, and those supporting them, the most important thing to remember is that progress often comes from small steps repeated over time.

Recovery doesn't require perfection. It requires patience, encouragement and consistent support. Some days will feel easier than others, and that's part of the process.

With the right habits, structure and support, the brain can continue to adapt, strengthen and rebuild.

You can explore more about the Brainfit® Tricks for '26 series here:

<https://www.brainfit.world/brainfit-tricks-for-26/>



Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

Wellness

About Brainfit.World

Brainfit for Life™ is New Zealand's leading memory educator and has been running for over a 16 years.

Their programmes draw on the internationally acclaimed research into age-related memory loss by New Zealander, Dr Allison Lamont. Together with her sister Gillian Eadie, a career educator, and a network of accredited coaches, the Brainfit® programmes have supported more than 18,000 people with their brain health journey to date. Brainfit® has a range of support options to suit including face to face classes, online training books & resources.

To find out more go to <https://www.brainfit.world/>



Jude Walter (left) and Ina Meeten (right), Brainfit World Directors and Coaches – proudly helping people to build stronger brains and better memories since 2008

If you would like to share an article on Wellbeing for our quarterly newsletter please email:

manager@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

We are keen to share knowledge, tips and resources

Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

News and Updates

Your Voice is Important to us

At Brain Injury Waikato, your voice matters.

In 2026, we want to listen more and keep improving what we do.

Everyone's journey is different and that's why your feedback is so important.

Help shape what we offer

We would love to hear your thoughts about:

- *Our groups
- *Our workshops
- *Our navigation and support services

You know what is most helpful in your life and your ideas help guide our work.

Easy ways to share your thoughts

At our Support and Education Sessions, there will be:

- *Simple feedback forms
- *Space to share as much or as little as you like
- *There are no right or wrong answers.
- *Email us at support@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

Looking ahead

Later in the year, we will run a more in-depth survey.

This will help us better support you, your whaanau, and your journey.

Thank you for being part of our community.

Together, we can keep growing and learning

Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

We would like to thank the following organisations for their generosity which allows us to continue to serve our community, making a meaningful difference in the lives of those impacted by brain injury in the greater Waikato region.



- Paeroa Hotel
- Royal Oak Hotel
- Pitch Sports Bar
- Star & Garter
- The Lucky Lizard



Thank you for your support

Glenice & John Gallagher
Foundation

Thank you for your support
Gallagher Charitable Trust



Waikato Wdff
Karamu Trust

Tidd
Foundation

Make a donation

We are a not-for-profit organisation and it is through your support and the support of our funders we can continue to provide our services. If you would like to donate information is below.

Ways to donate:

- Bank Deposit: Please note that we have updated our bank account which is now with ANZ
Brain Injury Waikato Inc. 06-0433-0700045-00 - please use Name as a reference
- Via our website <https://www.braininjurywaikato.org.nz/donate/>

Visit our website for resources and upcoming events

APRIL

Upcoming Events Calendars

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
		1	2 Taupō Brain Injury Support Group 10:30am-12pm	3 Good Friday	4	5
6 Easter Monday	7 Cambridge Brain Injury Education 10.am-12pm	8 Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	9 Hamilton Brain Education 10am-12pm	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Te Awamutu Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	17	18	19
20	21 Cambridge Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	22	23 Hamilton Brain Support Group 10am-12pm	24	25	26
27 Anzac Day Observed	28	29	30			

Cambridge Brain Injury Groups:
1st and 3rd Tuesday of the Month
 10am-12pm
 Cambridge Community Centre,
 193 Shakespeare Street, Cambridge

Taupō Brain Injury Support Group:
1st Thursday of the month
 10.30am-12pm
 Taupo Women's club,
 2/12 Storey Avenue, Taupo

If you know someone who would like to come along please get them to contact:
support@braininjurywaikato.org.nz

Hamilton Brain Injury Groups:
2nd and 4th Thursday of the month
 10am-12pm
 Western Community Centre, 46 Hyde Avenue,
 Newton

Te Awamutu Brain Injury Support Group:
3rd Thursday of the month
 10am-12pm
 St Johns Hall, 81 Palmer Street, Te Awamutu

Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group:
2nd Wednesday of the month
 10am-12pm
 Saint Marks Community House, 81 Bridge Street,
 Tokoroa

MAY

Upcoming Events Calendars

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
				1	2	3
4	5 Cambridge Brain Injury Education 10.am-12pm	6	7 Taupō Brain Injury Support Group 10:30am-12pm	8	9	10
11	12	13 Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	14 Hamilton Brain Education 10am-12pm	15	16	17
18	19 Cambridge Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	20	21 Te Awamutu Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	22	23	24
25	26	27	28 Hamilton Brain Support Group 10am-12pm	29	30	31

Cambridge Brain Injury Groups:
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 193 Shakespeare Street, Cambridge

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3rd Thursday of the month
 10am-12pm
 St Johns Hall, 81 Palmer Street, Te Awamutu

Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group:
2nd Wednesday of the month
 10am-12pm
 Saint Marks Community House, 81 Bridge Street,
 Tokoroa

JUNE

Upcoming Events Calendars

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 Kings Birthday	2 Cambridge Brain Injury Education 10.am-12pm	3	4 Taupo Brain Injury Support Group 10:30am-12pm	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Hamilton Brain Education 10am-12pm	12	13	14
15	16 Cambridge Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	17 Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	18 Te Awamutu Brain Injury Support Group 10am-12pm	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Hamilton Brain Support Group 10am-12pm	26	27	28
29	30					

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2nd and 4th Thursday of the month
 10am-12pm
 Western Community Centre, 46 Hyde Avenue, Nawton

Te Awamutu Brain Injury Support Group:
3rd Thursday of the month **
 10am-12pm
 St Johns Hall, 81 Palmer Street, Te Awamutu

Tokoroa Brain Injury Support Group:
2nd Wednesday of the month
 10am-12pm
 Saint Marks Community House, 81 Bridge Street, Tokoroa

BRAIN INJURY ID CARD

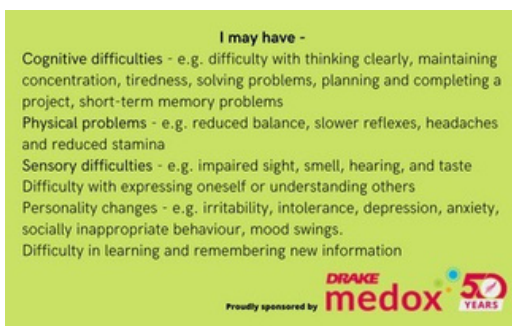
Our Brain Injury ID cards help explain your condition in situations where others may not understand. Carry one for a discreet way to communicate your needs and ensure better support.

ID card front



The front of the ID card has an ID photo, states the person's name, and lists the Brain Injury NZ 0800 number. It says: 'I have a brain injury. Please be patient.'

On the back of the card it has a list of different things which people with brain injury may experience. It says:



"I may have -

Cognitive difficulties - eg. difficulty thinking clearly, concentration, tiredness, solving problems, planning and completing a project, short-term memory problems.

Physical problems - e.g. reduced balance, slower reflexes, headaches and reduced stamina

Sensory difficulties - e.g. impaired sight, smell, hearing, and taste

Difficulty with expressing oneself or understanding others

Personality changes - e.g. irritability,

4 intolerance, depression, anxiety, socially inappropriate behaviour, mood swings. Difficulty in remembering new information"

ID card back

The ID cards are made by Wellington Brain Injury Association, who then send the cards to regional offices for collection. We are grateful for the support of Drake Medox, who have sponsored the costs of these ID cards. Thanks to their support, we can supply ID cards free of charge (A \$10 replacement fee may apply for lost cards).

Proudly sponsored by



How to apply:

If you would like a card please fill out this form and return it to Brain Injury Waikato via email - support@braininjurywaikato.org.nz . You can email this form to them or ask for us to send you a printed version via post. We will also need a passport- style photo of you to be provided with the returned form. A photo taken with a phone is fine.



Brain Injury ID Card application form

Personal details

First Name:

Last name:

Name as you would like it written on your ID card (if different above):

Name of your local Brain Injury Association:

Contact details

Contact details will **not** be printed on your ID card.

Address: _____

Region: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please also sign the consent form on the next page





Brain Injury ID card Consent form

I, _____ give **The Brain Injury Association (Wellington) Inc** permission to use the attached photo and details above for an ID card.

These details and photo can be held for future use, in case of a replacement card.

I give permission for my **local Brain Injury Association (Brain Injury Waikato Inc.)** to hold my information for any replacement cards

I give permission as the parent/legal guardian because the person is under 18

or I hold an Enduring Power of Attorney that has been invoked.

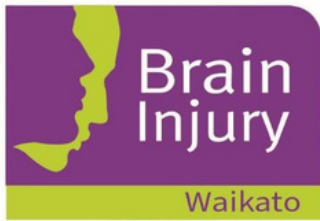
I have read and understand the Terms of Use of this consent as listed below.

Terms of use

Photos and personal information may be kept on record to be to create a national Brain Injury ID card, that may be reproduced if requested by owner. This information is not accessible for any other purpose.

There may be a replacement cost for each card requested.

Signature _____ Date _____



4 Tennyson Street, Enderly, Hamilton
PO Box 1168, Hamilton, 3240
Phone: (07) 839 1191
Email: admin@braininjurywaikato.org.nz
Website: www.braininjurywaikato.org.nz
Facebook: www.facebook.com/BrainInjuryWaikato

Brain Injury Waikato Membership - New/Renewal

Being a member means that you will get the following:

- Our quarterly newsletter emailed to you
- Priority registration for educational workshops and seminars.
- Voting rights at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- **Sense of Belonging** – Be part of a supportive community.

Personal Information:

Full name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Membership Type (please select relevant membership):

- Brain Injury(BI) survivor Family/support of BI survivor Allied Health provider Board member

Brain Injury Waikato Membership is on a Koha basis. Would you like to make a donation? Yes/No

If you wish to make a donation please select an option or specify amount:

- \$5.00 \$10.00 \$50.00 Other \$ _____

To make a donation you can pay via internet banking to: Brain Injury Waikato inc. with your name as the reference. Account number 03 1355 0691730 00 or go to our website to the donate page.

Do you require a GST receipt? Yes/No

Privacy Statement:

Brain Injury Waikato respects your privacy. Your membership information will be securely stored in our information management system and used solely for membership administration, including sending newsletters and updates. We do not share your details with third parties without your consent.

If you request additional support or wish to join specific communication mailing lists, we will add you with your consent.

Consent to becoming a member:

I agree to becoming a member of Brain Injury Waikato Incorporated. I agree to being added to the quarterly newsletter emails and being added to the Brain Injury Waikato membership database.

Signed:

Dated: