

Kootenay Boundary BC SCI Workshop

On July 9 and 11, 2024 the *BC Kootenay Boundary Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Workshops* took place in Nelson and Trail, British Columbia. The purpose of the workshops was to bring together healthcare professionals and people with lived SCI experience (PLEX) to learn, share experiences, and build connections to support SCI health and implementation of care in the Kootenay region.

The workshops were facilitated by Praxis Spinal Cord Institute by a clinician (Shannon Rockall, OT) and two PLEX team members (James Hektner, Spring Hawes). Scott James, PLEX and peer mentor from SCIBC also shared his expertise throughout the workshops.

The workshops were attended by 27 in-person participants. Attendees included occupational therapists, physiotherapists, rehabilitation assistants, nurses, working in intensive care, acute care, rehabilitation, and long-term care. Additionally, there were representatives from ICBC who provide support services for those injured in motor vehicle incidents. The diversity of the attendees provided an opportunity for sharing among various stakeholders.

Over the course of the workshop, clinical and PLEX experts shared their knowledge and experience on a variety of topics including secondary complications, pressure injuries, transfers, and skin checks. The full schedule of topics can be found in the Appendix.

The Kootenay Workshops Team



James Hektner PLEX,
Regional & National Community
Liaison



Shannon Rockall
OT, Regional
Clinical Liaison



Spring Hawes, PLEX
Regional PLEX Engagement
Liaison



Scott James, PLEX,
SCI-BC



PRE + POST WORKSHOP SURVEYS

Participants completed a pre-workshop survey about their learning goals from the workshops, existing SCI knowledge in a multitude of areas, and any comments they wanted to share. The pre-workshop survey had 18 participants, while the post-workshop survey had 13 participants.

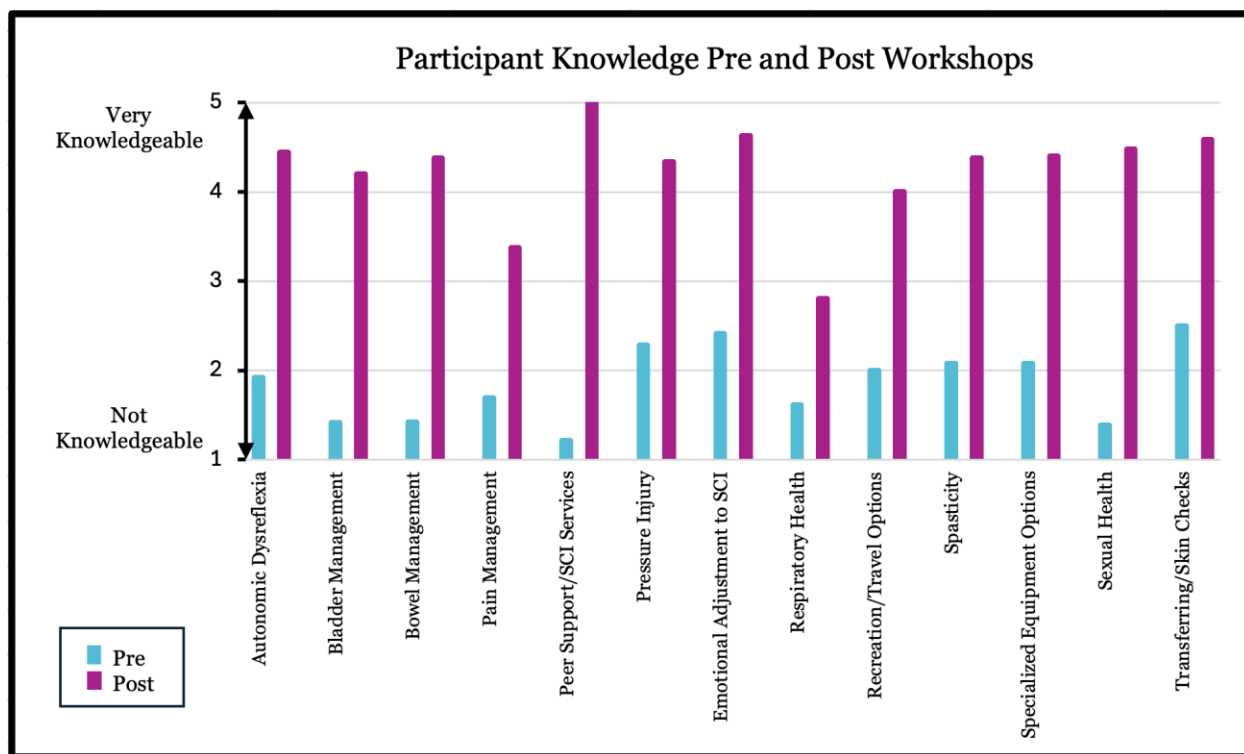
Most participants indicated that their goals were to learn more about PLEX perspectives (100%), clinical best practice (94%), followed by networking with other clinicians and SCI resources available in the Kootenays (for example, SCI-BC) (83%).

RESULTS + IMPACT

Attendees had the option to rate their perceived SCI knowledge before and after the workshops from 1 - Not Knowledgeable to 5 -Very Knowledgeable. Data collected from these surveys showed an **increase in knowledge in every topic** (Table 1). The topics with the greatest increase in knowledge were sexual health, bladder management, bowel management, and peer support.

As a result of the workshops, **92%** of participants said they would change their clinical practice to better care for people with SCI.

Table 1. Average score of self-reported knowledge level from pre- and post-workshop.



CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Throughout the workshops there were multiple conversations about the challenges that are unique to the Kootenay region. Due to the vastness and mountainous terrain of the East Kootenays, the regional clinicians reported the following challenges with implementation of healthcare for people with SCI:

- Transportation: access and weather challenges for both clinicians and PLEX
- Isolation in smaller villages
- Steep hills in each of the communities make it difficult for independent mobility in wheelchairs
- Limited resources, including vacant clinical positions and minimal access to medical equipment
- Access to one medical equipment vendor in the region
- Long wait times for clinical services and equipment repairs
- Lack of clinical experts regionally
- Difficulty accessing clinical experts from the lower mainland
- Cost of travel to attend medical appointments; including additional costs for accommodations for self and care providers
- Lack of professional education in their region
- Decreased wi-fi; equipment for virtual appointments

SCIBC PEER GATHERING

Scott James, the Peer Program Coordinator at SCIBC, hosted a successful social event in Nelson on July 10, bringing together 13 people from across the Kootenays, including one couple who travelled all the way from Cranbrook (a 460km round trip). Most of the attendees did not know each other before the event, but the gathering gave them a chance to talk about the unique challenges and opportunities of living with a spinal cord injury (SCI) in the region. They also shared helpful resources, discussed the importance of staying connected, and left looking forward to future meetups.



SCIBC Peer Gathering, Nelson, BC



LESSONS LEARNED

Facilitation of regional workshops requires flexibility to meet the needs of the local clinicians. Listening to the uniqueness of health care service providers within each region allows the facilitators to provide relevant suggestions that could practically and realistically be implemented. Ensuring the facilitators are listening to the concerns of the local clinicians is essential and often requires flexibility in the information shared throughout the workshops. Collaborating with community partners such as SCIBC and BC Wheelchair sports is crucial in gathering SCI stakeholders and sharing resources in the implementation of future workshops.

NEXT STEPS

Praxis plans to expand to other regional and rural areas of BC throughout the next year, sharing knowledge and engaging both clinicians and PLEX. There are also plans to develop a toolkit to encourage others to follow a similar model of education throughout Canada to improve SCI care.

Thank you again to our PLEX panelists, clinical experts, and those who attended for sharing their experiences and knowledge!

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Appendix:

Agenda

Time	Session
8:45-9:00	Welcome Remarks
9:00-10:30	SCI 101 & Secondary Complications
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	PLEX Panel
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:45	Pressure Injuries
1:45-3:45	Hands-on session: Transfers, Bed Mobility, Skin Checks & Equipment
3:45-4:00	Wrap-up

