Female Speaker 1: I have a story to tell.

[ background music ]

Group Speaking: Out front.

Female Speaker 2: Kind of the only picture we have together.

Male Speaker 1: Yahoo, it doesn’t get any better than that.

Male Speaker 2: I just don’t understand how anyone could think of it as any more than a way to collect a paycheck.

Female Speaker 3: This is Out Front.

[ music ]

[ background music ]

Gary Hayes: I am Gary Hayes.

Hamid Nouri: I am Hamid Nauri.

Tom Taney: I’m Tom Taney.

David McAdam: I’m David McAdam.

Mike Vetter: I’m Mike Vetter.

Hamid Nouri: We are five crazy guys.

Carolyn Lemsky: And one leader.

Mike Vetter: Welcome to Out Front.

Gary Hayes: Welcome to Hell.

[ laughter ]
[ background music ]

Tom Taney: I mean if we can't laugh at something or ourselves then we're in trouble.

Carolyn Lemsky: I'm Doctor Carolyn Lemsky, and this is my group.

Hamid Nouri: Call it five brain damaged group, or five crazy brain damaged group. We meet every Thursday afternoon at CHIRS.

Men all together: That's Community - Head Injury - Resource Services - Of Toronto.

Hamid Nouri: You recording?

Carolyn Lemsky: Today you're going to hear Hamid's story.

Hamid Nouri: What machine is this?

Carolyn Lemsky: This is the -

Hamid Nouri: Silver one.

Carolyn Lemsky: It's a tape recorder.

Hamid Nouri: Okay, digital recorder.

Carolyn Lemsky: It's pretty good. And I'm supposed to look at the battery, which has two bars.

David McAdam: We're not allowed to have bars [inaudible].

[ laughter ] We're not allowed to have anything to do with drinking.

David McAdam: Rice Krispy treat bars.

Hamid Nouri: The problem with alcohol for example, not to go to the bottle of alcohol, or go buy alcohol.

Hamid Nouri: I haven't been in bars for some time. I don't know how many [inaudible]. But I am being good in drinking.

Carolyn Lemsky: You have been good in drinking.
**Hamid Nouri:** I like the group. We know each other, we [inaudible] each other better than the person that is not injured, you know?

**Carolyn Lemsky:** Your mood is better?

**Hamid Nouri:** I don’t go after it. It’s not in my mind. When I go a few times they tell me get out of here, so they don’t want me there.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** So they don’t want you at the bar.

**Hamid Nouri:** No.

**Hamid Nouri:** It’s more comfortable in the room, that bring the problem up and try to solving it, you know?

**Gary Hayes:** A couple months ago maybe he had money and I was getting paid from work, so I said I’d come and meet him. So I got there late, and Hamid had been, I guess he had been drinking a little bit. And then when it came for him, time for him to leave, and he was paying with his debit card, he was saying he has to go to the other side of the bar to pay.

**Hamid Nouri:** Yes, I hate that.

**Gary Hayes:** And you could hear him, this is ridiculous, you make me go all the way over here to pay by debit card. And I’m thinking oh my gosh.

**Hamid Nouri:** Cause my mouth is no good. I was really looking for trouble this way.

**Hamid Nouri:** I don’t have problem with people, you know? But if I am drunk I am mean. My mouth is mean.

**Hamid Nouri:** Did anybody call [inaudible] kick your ass ahead.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** And this is a problem you’ve been having is that you don’t realize what, how poor your judgment is until after the fact.

**Hamid Nouri:** I’m [inaudible]. I have response not in a good way.

**Hamid Nouri:** No patient.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** No patience. And if you had patience before you started drinking, any patience you did have?
Hamid Nouri: Gone.

Gary Hayes: Gone.

Hamid Nouri: I am from Persia, Iran. Originally I born in Iran. After the revolution and after I did my two years army time in Iran, war with Iraq that we had, I left. So I came as a refugee.

Hamid Nouri: I remember when I was a kid, if someone was brain damage or something, people all this oh he's brain damage. You know, like they didn't know that much time, at that time much about it. And for sure now we know [inaudible]. We are not that much crazy, we are just, our life changed. Mine [inaudible], I became very damaged.

Mike Vetter: I remember that, I do.

Hamid Nouri: You know, so we just have to try to bring it back.

Hamid Nouri: My accident happened. About two years after I came to Canada I was working, driving cab. The weekend I was driving a cab. The police report said, they said they were chasing a stolen car, and they said their speed was hundred and seventy to a hundred and seventy-five kilometers [inaudible] stolen car with no brake light hit the taxi. It hit the back door and the trunk side. I got thrown on the windshield of a stolen car, fifty meters in the air. Then I don't remember anything. Four weeks in coma, four weeks in coma I was. That's how my accident happened. October 13, 1991. You know, I learn different in life because of my disability. Different Hamid than before. I can't do or be the one I used to be, because of you know, my brain damage. So I don't know what else to say. I can't go to a school to get the degree or award because of the injury that I have. Anyway, it's not my turn to talk, so.

Mike Sutter: Always your turn.

Gary Hayes: It's always your turn.

Hamid Nouri: Okay, so everybody quiet, I want to talk.

[ laughter ]

[inaudible].

Carolyn Lemsky: Don't go there Gary, cause we know what happens.

[ laughter ]
**Hamid Nouri:** I am just me, and my brain is injured. Even twenty years here, I get sometimes lost. How do I go home? Based of the seven days that each one Hamid is the Monday to Friday. Why? Because CHIRS is open. Hamid can go there, have a twenty-five cents coffee, or get involved with the guys or girls that [inaudible] understand each other. And that's something good.

**Hamid Nouri:** Lots of people I know, I know them well. So every time I see them, what was your name? They say like how many times I have to tell this guy, every time I see him I have to tell him my name. Even my family names, sometimes I call them wrong names, you know, I call them wrong names, you know?

**Mike Vetter:** I think a hundred lashes with a wet noodle would be sufficient.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** You're not inclined to be too [inaudible].

**Mike Vetter:** One fifty.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** If the goal, when something like this happens I think okay, what's the goal? And the goal is, has always been Hamid you, to have a place to come where you're sober, where you're looking forward to things and you're productive and you enjoy yourself, right?

**Hamid Nouri:** Yes.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** Okay. But also too you've been helping out a lot with the lunch program.

**Hamid Nouri:** Thank you.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** And -

**Mike Vetter:** The work week program?

**Carolyn Lemsky:** People miss you when you're not here.

**Hamid Nouri:** Like lunch, lunch like today on Mondays.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** Making a difference in their lives is important, right?

**Hamid Nouri:** Yes. But when we are here we do much better. But then we go out. Like I said I [inaudible] then I go out of this stool I am on my own. So when we go out, it's different world outside. I am in outside now, so I act like different Hamid. I just
waste my time and you know, just hang around and work, and that's it. Do nothing really. You're just in your cloud.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** Stuck in the moment.

**Hamid Nouri:** Time is going, but I'm not going, you know? It's like I think, I mean it's hard to explain it, but I mean time is going. So Hamid sits, so I'm just at the TV or music, or that's it. Nothing. Oh I have my dog, sorry. I have my love. I take my dog for a walk.

[ silence, door unlocks and opens ]

**Hamid Nouri:** Half lab, half pit bull. Labrador and American red nose pit bull. Won't you give me five? Give me five Lucky. Come on, give me the five. Give me the long, yes my Lucky, here you are. You want a T-bone? Yes sure. Yes. That's my boy.

[ silence ]

**Hamid Nouri:** This is for reminder for me. It says Hamid turn on cold water before hot water. That's the sink on my kitchen. It's my worker, case worker put it there because almost every time I come to the sink I open the hot water first, burn myself, because I forget. I don't know why. You know, I almost every time burn myself. And I kind of, not kind of, I know better. It's cold water. This is my schedule for the daily that you know, the time it tells me, and that what this time I have this appointment. That's why I said Blackberry is more important than my head, because my head gets lost. You don't know what the hell is up, and you're just, you're taught and you're taught [inaudible] good taught.

**Carolyn Lemsky:** If you practice taking your emotional temperature more frequently, then you know that you might be getting upset or angry a little sooner, and then you can catch it a little faster.

**Hamid Nouri:** I don't have money. So I just watch the bears, watch the water fountain, or in the winter I watch the skating, you know. Sometimes I go to the balcony and, I love cars. Cars are my passion. And I see sometimes cars, I say man I can't even have a car. They don't insure me because they say I'm in the risky categories. So it just like sometimes it bugs me I can't go make what I can. I can't earn my life.

**David McAdam:** Having emotions is part of being alive.

**Hamid Nouri:** You have to control that.

**Gary Hayes:** I'd much rather have no emotions than be on the roller coaster and have emotions that I am since my accident.

**Mike Vetter:** You think.
Carolyn Lemsky: Really?

Mike Vetter: You wouldn’t. You have to learn how to re-control it again.

Carolyn Lemsky: Mm-hmm. What do you do to do that?

Mike Vetter: Or just like when you’re a kid, like little kids, you get upset over nothing and think small things, right?

Carolyn Lemsky: Mm-hmm.

Hamid Nouri: I think there is a higher power that you know, I can ask for help. Why not, you know? If it’s help, why not? I ask him, you know, maybe it works maybe not, but it’s not, I don’t think it’s bad trying it. But I don’t that much pray any more, you know?


Carolyn Lemsky: That will set you up for being angry and testy.

Hamid Nouri: Well I don’t mean why, like why am I brain damaged because brain damage is done. Done deed, you’re brain damaged. But I mean why, why why? Why is you know like, why is it like this? Why it’s not like that, you know?

Carolyn Lemsky: Oh okay. Wanting things to be different than they are.

Hamid Nouri: Like [inaudible] a job, why is that my life changed so different? You want to call it jealousy, yes I can call it jealousy too. I see everybody have their life, their living, their business, or their cars, or their houses. And I see I can’t have really anything. I can’t even go apply for a job. [inaudible] once, you know? We have only one time to live our life. You know, so - That one time that I live I’m brain damaged now.

Mike Vetter: We ran out of do overs.

[ laughter ]

Carolyn Lemsky: We’re a minute to four, so we’ll call it a day. I’ll pose this as a question for next time, and try and remember to bring it up. How do you shift your focus away from being angry?

Hamid Nouri: We’ll remind you.
Carolyn Lemsky: Okay. Will you remind me?

Hamid Nouri: Yes.

[ music ]

Carolyn Lemsky: I'm Carolyn Lemsky at the Community Head Injury Resource Services of Toronto. In tomorrow's show you'll hear Mike's story.

Mike Vetter: Personally I've been living with a head injury for more than half my life now, which is inspirational and depressing. Inspirational, dealing with what has happened to me, and how has it affected my life, and not giving up. Depressing, things aren't going well, they all, if I didn't have a brain injury this wouldn't be happening to me.

[ music ]

[ background music ]

Male Speaker 3: Now if you'd like to tell your story on Out Front, we'd love to hear from you. Here's what you do. Go to our Web site, cbc.ca/outfront, then click on pitches. There's all kinds of information on what we look for in a pitch. It doesn't have to be complicated, it doesn't have to be long. Give it a look, then pitch us your story. And one other note. We've got a terrific weekly newsletter. You can read what's coming up on the show, hear some of the behind the scenes details about how the shows are made. And you can also be the first to hear about special contests. Sign up online at the CBC member center. You can find that on the top left corner of cbc.ca. Thanks for listening.

[ music ]