

Neuro Next Initiative Seminar Series

Engaging the Experts: A Conversation on Lived Experience

March 11 | 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Suddath Seminar Room (Room 1128), Petit Biosciences Building

Join us in person or online

<https://gatech.zoom.us/j/96309849813>



Babs McDonald



Colby Higgins



Mak Yost



Brandy Ellis

Babs McDonald experienced an ischemic stroke in 2017. She has engaged in over 36 therapies over the past 6.5 years, many of them self-styled based on extensive research and experimentation. Babs has a Ph.D. in adult learning, and says that she has learned more about learning since having her stroke and engaging in rigorous recovery than she learned in four years of academic study.

Colby Higgins acquired a T4 incomplete spinal cord injury in the spring of 2016 after a fall from a 3rd story balcony. Since sustaining his injury, he returned to school to pursue an MS degree in Recreational Therapy and now works as a recreation therapist at the Shepherd Center. Colby has participated in various SCI-related research projects, provides peer support to community members, and is actively involved with the Shepherd Center's wheelchair racing team.

Mak Yost sustained a hemorrhagic stroke in March 2018 when he was 18. He was born with a Brain AVM (arteriovenous malformation) located deep in his left frontal lobe, in his speech center. He spent 3 weeks in ICU, 8 months with a feeding tube, and has had to re-learn how to move every muscle in his body. Mak is now immersed in adaptive sports and is pursuing a college degree. He has abundant love and encouragement from his family and his ride or die buddies, who have not left his side since his brain bleed.

Brandy Ellis gained global recognition for her journey as a patient-participant in neural device trials. Enrolling in a 2011 Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) trial for treatment-resistant depression at Emory University, she embarked on a transformative path to a new life in remission. Brandy now advocates for those navigating neuromodulation and mental illness, embodying a sincere commitment to making a positive impact during her "extra life."

