



SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS

REHABILITATION SERVICES

Individuals after brain injury may notice a wide range of changes due to differences in the brain's communication with the rest of the body. Luckily, the brain's connections can actually change and adapt based on repetition and experience through a process called neuroplasticity. Rehabilitation services are often available through in-patient care or outpatient treatment. Some services may be a part of housing/residential services or available through state funded programs (such as Medicaid) but on a limited number of appointments for the year.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical Therapists evaluate and treat a person's ability to move their body. The physical therapist focuses on improving physical function by addressing muscle strength, flexibility, endurance, balance, and coordination. Functional goals include increasing independent ability with sitting, walking, getting in and out of bed, on and off a toilet, or in and out of a bathtub.

Speech/Language Pathology (SLP)

Speech/Language Pathologists evaluate an ability to comprehend what is seen or heard, as well as express oneself through speech, writing, or other forms of communication. In situations where the individual is unable to speak, SLPs will train them to use assistive technology (a piece of equipment/product) as an alternative form of communication. They may also assist with cognitive skills such as memory or attention.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapists use purposeful activities as a means of preventing, reducing, or overcoming physical, cognitive (thinking), and emotional challenges. Occupational therapists address activities of daily living (referred to as ADLs) such as feeding, swallowing, bathing, dressing, and using the bathroom. They often assist individuals regain movements for transferring, as well as addressing vision, sensation, driving, and fine motor skills (movement of small body muscles, such as in the hands).



Vestibular/Balance Therapy

Vestibular therapy is an exercise-based program primarily designed to reduce vertigo and dizziness, gaze instability, and/or imbalance and falls. With proper treatment, individuals can regain function as the brain learns to use other senses to substitute for the damage to the vestibular system.

Recreation Therapy

Recreational Therapists provide activities to improve and enhance self-esteem, social skills, motor skills, coordination, endurance, cognitive skills, and leisure skills. For example, a recreational therapist may plan community outings to allow a person to apply their learned skills in a real-life situation. Additional benefits might be relieving isolation or mental health issues.

Vision/Ocular Therapy

Vision rehabilitation after brain injury is usually initiated by the neuro-ophthalmologist. Efforts range from the hospital to the community settings with treatment involving specialized glasses or devices (i.e. magnification, glare-control), assessment for abnormal eye movements, and discussing medical/surgical options. An individual may be prescribed exercises to improve vision (i.e. visual field, movement).

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive Rehabilitation Therapy (CRT) is used to describe treatments that address the cognitive problems that can arise after a brain injury. Methods might include restorative (whose goal is to improve function with repetition of activities) or compensatory (which trains solutions to specific problem areas such as using memory notebooks or learning self-cuing strategies) treatment. Many different types of professionals deliver services described as CRT including SLPs, OTs, PTs, rehab counselors, or neuropsychologists.

Art Therapy

Art therapists use creativity in ways like painting, sculpture, and writing to explore and help with depression, medical illnesses, past traumatic events, and addiction.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

- Brain Injury Association of America: www.biausa.org
- Brainline: www.brainline.org
- Art Therapy Association: arttherapy.org
- NC Occupational Therapy Association: www.ncota.org
- NC Physical Therapy Association: ncpt.site-ym.com
- NC Speech Hearing & Language Association: www.ncshla.org