

Fact Sheet – Choosing Therapies

Introduction

Families are often confused about which therapy to choose and are bewildered that a standard development or rehabilitation plan is not available from medical practitioners. There are several reasons for this:

- the physical, cognitive and psychological outcomes following brain injury are extremely diverse, therefore making it difficult to produce a standardised therapy protocol.
- there are a limited number of therapists specialising in this area, and
- there is still a limited understanding of the brain's potential for recovery following brain injury or developmental delay.

As a result, the main carer in the family usually finds themselves in the role of researching, evaluating and selecting therapies and services.

The Developing Foundation is of the opinion that there are some important points to consider when determining the most appropriate therapies including:

- Suitability of the therapy
- Intensity, frequency and duration of the therapy
- Experience of the therapists
- Funding of the therapy

Suitability of the therapy

Due to the complexity and diversity of brain injury, often a multi-discipline approach is required. Our families often choose a combination of services from each of the following main treatment categories:

- Assessment
- Development Therapy
- Rehabilitation
- Behaviour

Assessment

These are the types of assessment:

- Developmental
- Functional
- Neuropsychological
- Neuroscience - EEG, Brain Scan, etc
- MRI
- MRI spectroscopy

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Developmental Therapy

The human brain has a capacity for repair and/or reorganisation following either congenital or traumatic brain injury. Development programs seek to develop the brain following the patterns of normal brain development.

Developmental therapy programs include:

- Sensory motor developmental programs
- Paediatric Physiotherapy
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy

Functional

Functional assessments and therapy seek to recover function after function has been lost.

Rehabilitation programs include:

- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Assisted Communication
- Neuro chiropractic
- Conductive Education (CE)
- Physical Therapy
- Laser Point Percussion Therapy (PPT)
- Advanced Bio-Mechanical Rehabilitation (ABR)
- Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy
- Hydrotherapy
- Sound Therapy
- Muscle Neurology Therapy
- Pharmacological Therapy (Medicines)
- Biofeedback

Behaviour Therapy

Behaviour therapies range from:

- Cognitive Therapy
- Behavioral Therapy
- Art Therapy
- Educational Psychology
- Music Therapy
- Neurofeedback

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Intensity, frequency and duration of the therapy

Depending on the age of the person and the severity of their injury, it is generally accepted that for treatment to be effective, it must be intense, frequent and be undertaken for an appropriate period of time. There are no "quick fixes" and again, depending on the age of the patient and the severity of the injury, the rate and amount of progress will vary from individual to individual.

Experience of therapist

It is important to choose a therapist who has had previous experience with brain injury. Therapy is available through:

- Hospitals may provide therapy but usually for a limited length of time as an outpatient. It is important to start planning ahead to access community services.
- Some Government funded service organisations provide free or low cost therapy services but again these are generally limited services and may be difficult to access.
- Community-based private therapists.

To assist families, we have compiled a list of therapists and services used by our families which is available in our information resources section.

Funding of therapy

As treatment for brain injury usually involves a range of therapists over a long period of time, it is important to assess how you will fund your selected programs.

Home therapy programs designed and monitored by an experienced therapist and delivered in the home by family and volunteers, provides an affordable alternative.

To assist families, The Developing Foundation facilitates fund raising and offer a funds management program.