

# NEUROPLASTICITY AND THE POST-ACUTE LEVEL OF CARE

## What is neuroplasticity?

Neuroplasticity is the amazing ability of the brain to re-learn lost skills after an acquired brain injury, such as a traumatic brain injury or stroke. Research shows that the brain has the ability to rewire in order to recover function after injury.

This recovery of function is dependent on the promotion of neuroplasticity through rehabilitation experiences and the environment. The post-acute brain injury program is vital to providing these experiences and environment.

## What is a post-acute brain injury program?

A post-acute brain injury program provides intensive physical, occupational and speech or cognitive therapies in a supportive environment.

The goal is to help the individual return to the most independent level of functioning as possible, working towards resuming their former social roles and activities. The program does this through promoting neuroplasticity with an intense and individualized plan.

## How does it benefit neuroplasticity?

Studies show there are 10 principles of promoting neuroplasticity and our post-acute brain injury program upholds these principles in order to help people recover function.

**\*Please see reverse for additional information.**



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Here are examples of some of the principles of neuroplasticity and how our program promotes them:

- Intensity Matters  High intensity practice during therapies and activities 4-6 hours/day
- Repetition Matters  Practicing tasks and functions frequently and consistently
- Salience Matters  Practice tasks that are important to the person and their goals
- Principle of Specificity  Practicing tasks that are targeting the areas of the brain that are impaired
- Use it or Lose it  Using a skill repeatedly to fire that connection in the brain
- Use it And Improve it  Using a skill repeatedly to strengthen the connections in the brain

## Why choose a post-acute program instead of going straight home?

Once a person returns home, the frequency and intensity of rehabilitation will drop significantly in home health or outpatient therapy environments. This decreases the opportunity for neuroplasticity to occur. An individual may only receive therapies 2-3 times per week in these programs, compared to a post-acute program which provides at least 4-6 hours of therapeutic activities a day.

**A post-acute brain injury program helps to bridge the gap between a hospital setting and returning home so that an individual can feel successful and their family can feel supported and safe.**

