

fact sheet

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Shepherd Center

SPINAL CORD AND BRAIN INJURY PROGRAM

Special Care for People with a “Dual Diagnosis”

Someone who has experienced a spinal cord injury may also have a brain injury. This “dual diagnosis” can be very difficult because while regaining movement and strength, this person also has to cope with learning and memory problems caused by a brain injury. This requires a special rehabilitation program to address all of these needs.

Experience counts. Studies show that patients are more likely to experience fewer medical complications, achieve more functional independence, and return to home and work if they go to a hospital that treats a high volume of patients with brain and spinal cord injury.

At Shepherd Center, we have a specialized team of people who understand the unique needs of a person who is recovering from both types of injuries.

WHAT WE DO

We help patients move from the point of injury, through inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient day program and finally back into the home or community, with follow-up services as needed. Each patient’s treatment program is different because it is designed specifically for the needs of that person. When you are admitted to Shepherd Center, you will be assigned a case manager. He or she will be one of the most important members of your team and will be the person contacting you about education and training needs.

OUR GOALS FOR EACH PATIENT INCLUDE:

- Treating and minimizing medical complications related to the injury or other trauma.
- Getting each patient to the point where they can return home or to their community with the skills needed to live as independently as possible.

- Working on learning, problem-solving and memory skills and other skills as needed due to the brain injury.
- Training family members and caregivers so they understand everything about the injury and the needs of the person.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Recovering from two different types of injuries is hard on your body, and you may require more time to recover. We take your medical concerns into account. Your therapy moves forward when we know you can do the therapy and benefit from it. We work with each patient and their family members to create a treatment plan that has the patient’s specific needs in mind. Our program includes:

- **Goal setting:** The treatment team puts together a set of goals based on your injuries and long-term needs. These might include returning to work or school, driving or functioning independently. These goals will be reviewed and modified with your input.
- **Team treatment:** Your interdisciplinary team works together to accomplish your goals and allows you to practice all of your newly acquired skills. Your team consists of a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, nurse, case manager, occupational, speech and physical therapist, recreation therapy specialist, dietician, neuropsychologist/psychologist and specialists in assistive technology, vocational counseling, seating clinic and brace clinic, as required to address individual needs. A patient with a brain injury and spinal cord injury will have to relearn many tasks and skills

- **Cognitive/Behavioral treatment:** People who experience a brain injury have to relearn many tasks and skills. You also have to work to regain the ability to concentrate, remember, solve problems, relate to other people and take care of personal needs. You may have problems with being tired, controlling your behavior and exercising good judgment. Learning to live with a newly injured body is tough, and having a brain injury makes it more challenging, but our team has the experience in helping people achieve as much recovery as possible during rehabilitation.
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It is important to be in the care of a special treatment team who knows and understands dual diagnosis.

- **Family involvement:** Family members and other caregivers are an important part of every patient's treatment team and can make a huge difference in how fast you recover. We encourage every caregiver to be actively involved in their loved one's care, and we also provide many classes to educate them about your injury and individualized needs. We work with you to ensure your transition back into our home or community is as smooth as possible.
- **Individualized and team community outings:** Community outings into the neighborhood around Shepherd Center give you the chance to practice skills like shopping, ordering from a restaurant or purchasing movie tickets.