

# Northeast Arc The Benefits of Age Parity and ABI

By: Ashley Sacco  
Healthcare Studies

## What is an Acquired Brain Injury?

- An acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain that is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. This type of brain injury is one that has occurred after birth.
- The injury results in a change to the brain's neuronal activity, which affects the physical integrity, metabolic activity, or functional ability of nerve cells in the brain.
- Causes of ABI: infectious disease, endocrine disorders, brain tumors, stroke, external brain trauma, etc.

## What is Northeast Arc?

- Northeast Arc is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people of all abilities to reach their full potential.
- Northeast Arc has a mission to help people with disabilities become full participants in their community, choosing for themselves how to live, learn, work, socialize and play.



## Related Literature

- “Every 13 seconds, someone in the United States experiences a brain injury.” Brain Injury Association of MA
- “Brain Injury affects those of all ages and is the leading cause of long term disability.” Brain injury Association of Ma

## Objectives of The Internship

- Working one-on-one with one individual with ABI
- Implementing a physical therapy plan by making it fun
- Weekly check-in through email to see what is working and what is not

## The Physical Therapy Plan

- The goal is for the participant to maintain physical, mental, and emotional wellness
- Stander 3x per week for 60 minutes - helps weight bearing
- Standing is an important activity which helps improve the overall function of the body.



## Age Parity

- More willing to participate in activities with someone close in age
- Stated “This internship has been a lot more fun with someone my age, we have much more in common.”
- We have been able to build a connection and friendship, which is so important to him to have someone his age that he can call a friend.

## How Exercise Benefits the Brain

- Exercise contributes to the improvement in mood and quality of life.
- Exercise should be considered an approach for treatment in ABI.



## Results

- More enthusiasm when participating in physical activity.
- Improvement with mental health and quality of life.
- Increase in independence and motivation to complete exercises.

## Conclusion

Northeast Arc provides a great hands on learning experience for interns. I have learned many new skills such as forming relationships with other professionals, forming relationships with the individuals they support, and how to work in a healthcare setting.

The overall experience was extremely rewarding and inspirational. I learned the true impact of what a brain injury can cause from a survivor himself. His strength and smile have inspired me throughout this journey.