



We acknowledge the land we meet on is the traditional lands of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and we pay our respect to elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the First Nations people of this country and recognise them as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters. We acknowledge the strong and enduring connection to land and culture for First Nations people.



A clinician guide to supporting families after brain injury

Acknowledgements

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Contributions also from:

Enlightening Films – XX

Steering Committee

Brain Connect

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Forword



A clinician guide to supporting families after brain injury

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A clinician guide to supporting families after brain injury

About this resource

Who this resource is for

This *Clinician Guide* is designed for allied health and nursing professionals supporting children, adolescents, and adults affected by familial brain injury. Whether in acute, rehabilitation, or community settings, it offers structured guidance to navigate the emotional, cognitive, and social challenges families face. Ideal for interdisciplinary care, it equips clinicians to support both the individual with the injury and their family throughout recovery and adjustment.

How to use this guide

This resource provides a structured approach to interventions for families affected by brain injury, tailored to the developmental and emotional needs of three key age groups: young people (11–14), teens (15–18), and adults. Designed to support age-appropriate care, it outlines targeted sessions and topics aligned with the *Brain Connect* platform. Grounded in research and clinical practice, it helps clinicians address the unique challenges faced at different life stages, promoting understanding, resilience, and adjustment through recovery.

Overview of Brain Connect content

Brain Connect is the core educational and therapeutic framework of this guide, offering age-appropriate information and activities to help children, adolescents, and adults understand brain injury and its effects on individuals and families. It includes accessible explanations of brain function, injury, recovery, and emotional responses. Designed for flexibility in one-on-one or group settings, Brain Connect complements clinical conversations and supports psychoeducation. All materials needed for delivery are included in this guide, minimising preparation time for clinicians.





A clinician guide to supporting families after brain injury

Key considerations before you begin

While these resources address the serious topic of brain injury, they are designed to be engaging and age-appropriate. Clinicians should consider each family member's unique context – cultural background, communication style, and emotional readiness – especially in cases involving trauma, grief, or limited health literacy. Sessions should be paced sensitively, with a focus on creating a safe, supportive space. Where needed, involve the broader interdisciplinary care team for holistic support.

Before starting, use the *Child Trauma Readiness Check-In* sheet (page 5) to ensure the child feels safe and ready to talk.

What's inside the Clinician Guide

- Structured session outlines for young people (11-14), teens (15-18) and adults
- Age-appropriate topics and activities aligned with the Brain Connect platform
- Psychoeducational tools to enhance understanding of brain injury and emotional responses
- Conversation prompts and guidance to support sensitive and effective communication
- Practical tips for clinicians to reduce preparation time and adapt sessions to individual needs
- Visual cues and instructions



lalk



Click



Plav



Print



Complete

What you'll need

- Access to a computer, tablet or mobile phone with internet
- Headphones (optional, if working in a public or clinical space)
- A printed copy of this guide to support delivery
- Printed worksheets for the children or adults you're working with (worksheets cannot be completed online and must be filled in by hand)
- A pen



A clinician guide to supporting families after brain injury

Session structure

Young people, 11 - 14 y/o

Session 1: All about your special person (XX min)

- Hospitals
- Brain Injury

Session 2: All about you (XX min)

- Impact on you
- Personal stories

Teens, 15 - 18 y/o

Session 1: All about your special person (XX min)

- Hospitals
- Brain Injury

Session 2: All about you (XX min)

- Impact on you
- Personal stories

Adults, 18+ y/o

Session 1: All about your special person (XX min)

- Hospitals
- Brain Injury
- Long Term

Session 2: Impact on you (XX min)

- Challenges
- Support
- Grief and loss

Session 3: (optional) Supporting children (XX min)





Child: Trauma readiness check-in

Many discussions or activities involve participation between a child and a trusted adult, such as a caregiver or clinician. Adopting a trauma-informed approach means waiting until everyone is both physically and mentally ready to engage in the conversation. When deciding whether to introduce a new coping skill, or address an important issue, it's essential to assess what true readiness looks like.

Use the checklist below to evaluate the child's facial expressions, body language, and voice to determine if they're ready to talk and engage.

Child readiness signs		Ready to talk?	
What does the child's face look like?	(0,0)		
Smiling			
Calm	(<u>6</u> 8)	Yes	
Looks frustrated or angry	(<u>o</u> <u>o</u>	No	
Crying or teary-eyed			
Other?			
What is the child's body language ?	_		
Facing me and engaged			
Relaxed, no tension		Yes	
Pacing or fidgeting with hands / feet		No	
Shoulders slouched			
Other?	∥ U		
What is the child's voice like?			
Normal tone and volume			
Easy to understand (not speaking quickly)		Yes	
Agitated or upset	<u> </u>	☐ No	
Yelling			
Other?			



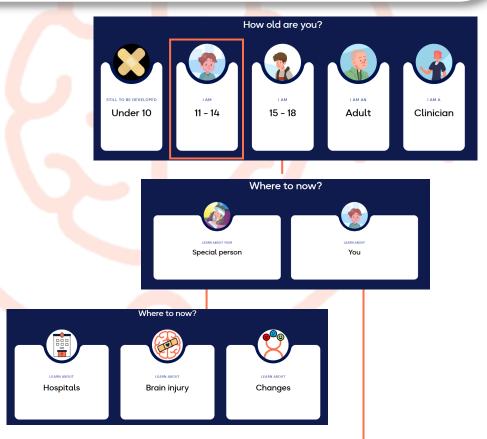
Below is a visual overview of the Brain Connect platform learning options for young people aged 11-14 years.

Session 1: All about your special person

Overview: Children are introduced to concepts related to their special person and will learn about hospitals, brain injury and potential changes to their special person.

Worksheets:

- Timetable
- My guestions
- What's the same? What's changed?
- Before Now After
- Spoon Theory



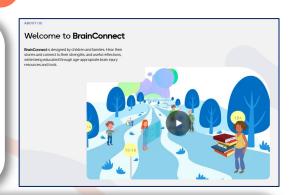




Session 1: All about your special person

Step 1: Landing Page

- Go to www.XXX.org Read the information on the landing page to help set the tone for what *Brain Connect* is. Then, scroll down to the 'about us' section and play the landing page animation.
- Scroll down and select '11-14 y/o' learning pathway.



Step 2: Important bits first

Read the dot points with the young person and have discussions around their current thoughts.

- Prompts for discussion:
 - Have you ever thought about any of these topics?
 - If so, what ones?

Step 3: Your special person

- Scroll down and click 'learn about your special person'.
- Talk about who the young person's special person is. Prompts for discussion:
 - Who is your special person? Tell me about them.
 - What do you love to do with them?
- Scroll down and click to watch 'brain injury journey' video which describes the journey from injury to discharge from hospital. Discuss.



Step 4: Hospitals

Scroll down to 'where to now' and click 'hospital'.

- Watch the introduction video for the page.
- Play the 'Hospital Hero' game to understand what happens in hospital.
- Scroll, read and talk through each area of the hospital.
- Activity: Complete and discuss the 'Timetable' worksheet.

Scroll down, click and discuss the staff and what they do.



Talk



Click











Session 1: All about your special person

	Step 5: Brain Injury
(3	Scroll down to 'where to now' and click 'Brain Injury'

- Watch the introduction video for the page. Scroll, read and talk through each area of the page.
- **Activity:** Click on the guiz button. Support the child to select ABI or TBI for each example. Do not correct them if they choose the wrong answer. Results will be shown at the end of the quiz.
- Scroll down to 'The brain'. Click on each lobe, state what lobe it is and discuss what it does.
- Prompting questions: Where is the lobe located in the skull? Where is your XX lobe?
 - What lobe is the biggest?
 - If the XX lobe was hurt, what might your special person find hard to do?
- Scroll and talk about how the lobes work together. Examples are given on the screen.
- Scroll to 'What questions can I ask?'. Talk through the dot points to encourage the child to get informed.
- **Activity**: Complete and discuss the 'My questions' worksheet.
- Scroll down and discuss the questions that are hard to answer.
- Watch Bella's videos.
- Prompting questions: Video 1: Importance of adults telling kids what's going on (6 mins)
 - What stood out for you about Bella's story?
 - Do any of her stories match your own? Tell me about that.

Play

- Would you like to be more, or less, involved with what's happening? Tell me about that.
- What questions do you have?







Click











Session 1: All about your special person



Step 5: Brain Injury (continued)

Video 2: What was it like having a different Dad? (15 mins)

- What stood out for you about Bella's story?
- o What differences do you notice about your special person?
- o Do you have any funny stories about your special person?
- o How do you communicate with your family? What things do you talk about?
- What do you do when you're sad, annoyed or frustrated?
- How has your life changed since your special person's brain injury? What are the positives, and challenges?
- (3)

Scroll down to 'common questions'. Read through the questions and ask the young person to click on any that they have. Discuss.



Step 6: Changes

Scroll down to 'where to now' and click 'changes'



Read the information on the screen. Watch the 'survivor film'.



Prompting questions:

- What stood out for you about their stories?
- How do you help your special person?
- How do you remain connected with your family?



Changes to your special person: discuss the visible and invisible changes that can occur. Use the flip cards to go through each area of change. Use the back of the card to discuss the area, the list of examples, and whether the changes are visible or invisible. Play the voice example for changes to 'how they talk'.



Activity: Print, complete and discuss the 2 worksheets:

1.What's the same? What's changed?' – this worksheet helps the child to understand how their special person may have changed in different areas. Ask the young person how they are the same (ask for examples) and how they have changed (ask for examples)

2.Before – Now – After – this worksheets helps the child to reflect on life before the injury, now and what they would like the future to be like. The aim of this worksheet is to help focus on positives





Click



Play





Session 1: All about your special person

Step 6: Changes (continued)

Scroll, read and discuss the different sections.



- Why do these changes happen?
- What other things change after a brain injury?
- Can people with a brain injury continue living at home?
- **Behaviours**



Activity: Complete and discuss the 'Spoon Theory' worksheet



Changes to your family: Read and discuss the dot points. Prompting questions:

- What are you experiencing in your family?
- What worries you the most?
- Who have you talked to about these changes?
- What helps you when you experience these changes?



What your family and friends may be thinking and going through? Click on the flip cards and read through each. Discuss each with the young person.



Watch the 're-building brain power' video. Prompting questions:



- What stood out for you in the video?
- What could you try at home or with your special person?



(Optional) Other worksheets that may be helpful in this section "all about your **special person**" that you can access via the clinician portal are:

- Changes and how to help: Helps children to understand the possible changes to their special person and how they can help
- Circle of control: Helps children to focus on what is within, and outside of their 'circle of control' which can reduce stress and improve their problem-solving abilities
- Let's talk: Print, laminate and use the conversation cards helps children with prompts for authentic and meaningful conversations with others
- Letter to my special person: Helps children to write a personal letter to their special person
- My worries: Helps children to write down their worries to support their adjustment. It also includes a hand for the child to list the 5 people they trust and will listen to them in times of need

















Session 2: All about you

Aim: to educate the young person about themselves.

- Step 1: You
 Click on the about 'You' button. Read the introduction and scroll down to 'Where to now?'
- Click on 'Impact on you'.
- Step 2: Impact on you Scroll, read and discuss.
- Are any of these changes happening in your life? Read and click on any relevant for the young person. Discuss.
- How can you look after yourself? Hover your mouse over the flip cards and discuss.
 - Have you felt any of these feelings? 2 options are recommended:
 Go through the list and ask the child if they've experienced the emotion. If so, get them to click on it. Discuss the examples and additional information. Ask if the young person has other examples.
 - 2. Go through the list and click on each emotion. Discuss the examples and additional information. Ask if the child has other examples.
- Scroll down to 'Where to now?', click on 'Share your story'
- Step 3: Share your story
 Scroll, read and discuss the introduction to the topic.

Gather - Check - Practice - Decide - Talk

- Topic can be done on the screen (conversation only), or print (recommended) the worksheet 'Share your story'
- Gather Discuss the table and questions posed. Give the young person an opportunity to answer the questions based on what they know. You can provide additional details in the next part 'Check'.



















Session 2: All about you

Step 3: Share your story (continued)

- Check Read and discuss the text. 'Check' involves checking the details about what happened. It also includes checking with family how much information they are comfortable to be shared with others who will ask. Checking with family can be done after the session.
- Practice Read and discuss. Offer for the young person to practice telling you their story and you pretend to be a friend, teacher or someone else.
- Decide Read and discuss. Support the young person to add names into the trust table (worksheet only). Talk about each person and transfer their name into the young person's trust ladder.
- Scroll down and discuss how much information the child may discuss with people in each level of trust.

Talk – Reiterate that children can tell their version of their story. Read through the examples on the screen of suggested comments they could say to others, if asked what happened, and aren't comfortable talking about it. Ask the young person what else they could say.

- Step 4: Videos
 Ask if the child would like to watch Bella (25 min) and/or Sam's (9 min) videos.
 They talk about their experiences from injury and reflect on the past 6 years.
- If the young person would like to submit their own story to Brain Connect, they can do so via the link on this page.
- Scroll down to 'Where to now?' and click on 'Library'

Step 5: Videos

A table of Australian services for children is listed.

Scroll down to 'What would you like to look at?' and show the young person that they can click on 'Worksheets & Activities' or 'Videos'. Let them explore as they deem appropriate.





Click











Worksheets

<u>Timetable</u>



Worksheet: A week in rehabilitation. Write down what your special person, your family and you are doing

A week in rehabilitation

Many young people wonder what their special person's days are like in rehabilitation.

With help from your family, parent, or caregiver, you can fill out the timetable of what your special person's days look like.

You can write information like:

- When your special person's therapies are
- When you go to school
- What other activities you and your family do during the week

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			8
Friday		3	
Saturday			
Sunday			

My Questions



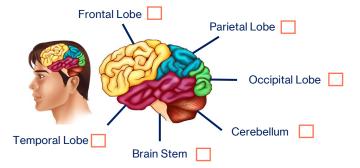
Worksheet: Get the information you need to understand what happened to your special person

Questions

The more facts you know, the less you have to imagine.

You may like to ask questions like:

- What happened?______



What else would you like to know about your special person's brain injury?

Write or draw your questions below.

What's the same? What's changed?



Worksheet: Work through what you have noticed has remained the same, and what has changed about your special person

Changes to your special person

To start understanding how the brain injury may have affected your special person, list the things that are the same about them, and what has changed.

	What's the <u>same</u> about my special person?	What's <u>changed</u> about my special person?
How they think?		
How they feel?		
How they talk?		
How they react to things?		
How they move?		3
How they eat?		
How they look?		

Before - Now - After



Worksheet: Reflecting on life before the injury, now, and what you would like the future to be like can help focus on positives

Think about you and your family. It's normal for relationships and routines to change when someone has a brain injury. Your special person might be in hospital, your parent(s) may be going back and forth, or you might be staying with other family members or friends.

Reflecting on your relationships can help open safe and honest conversations. It's okay not to know exactly what the future will look like – but starting to think about it, and imagining what you hope for, can help create positive changes. Remember, it's always okay to ask questions – to your parents, other family members, or the staff caring for your special person.

Write or draw your thoughts in the boxes below.

	What was it like to spend time before the brain injury with?	What is it like to spend time now with?	What do you think it will be like to spend time in the future with?
Your special person			
Your parent(s)			
Your brother / sister			
Your family			
Your friends			

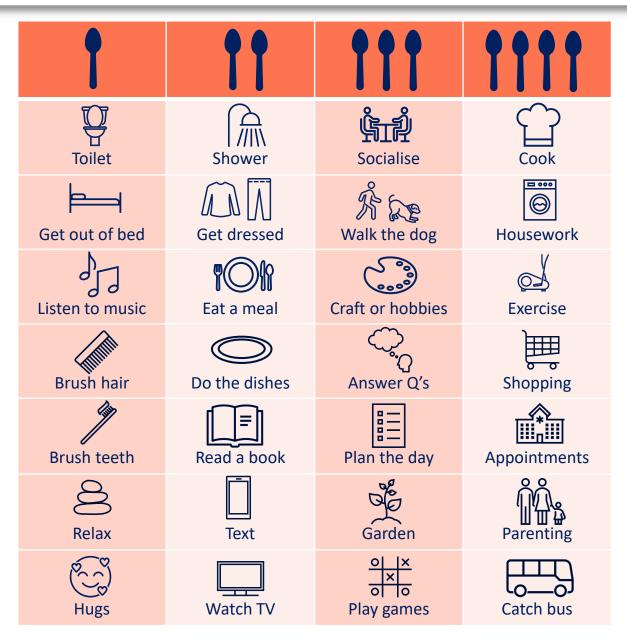
Spoon Theory



Worksheet sheet: Understand how your special person may use their energy throughout the day

How will your special person use their energy?

After a brain injury, most people have about 20 spoons of energy to use each day. This means they need to choose how they use them carefully. If your special person goes over their daily limit, they may be borrowing spoons from tomorrow's supply, so they could feel extra tired or overwhelmed later.

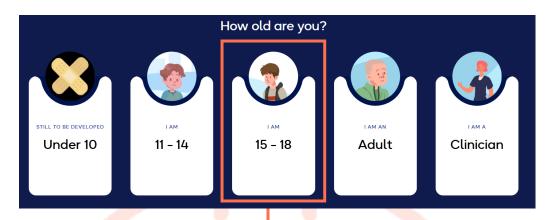




Stop here—instructions for 15-18 and adults still need to be developed

Instructions: Teens, 15 - 18 y/o

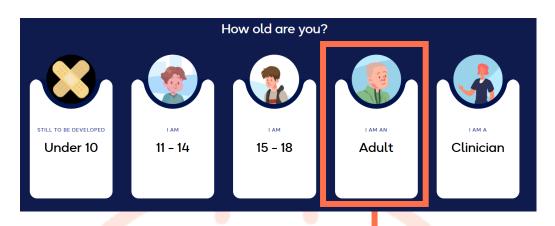


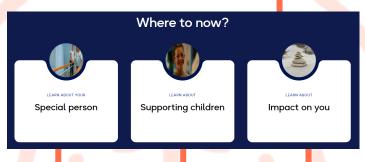


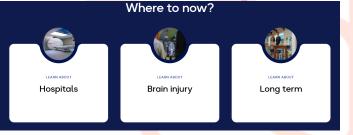


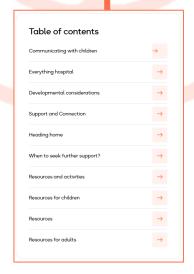
Instructions: Adults, 18+ y/o

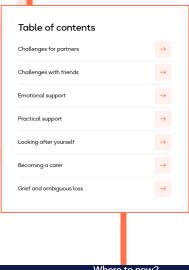














Enlightening Films:

Background, partnerships, values





Background

Previous research demonstrated the need for the development of age-appropriate educational technology, using flexible pathways and multi-media approaches. Through co-design, the digital solution '**Brain Connect**' was developed, aiming to address the gap of timely intervention and support.

Funding has been secured through the **Lifetime Support Authority** to enhance 'Brain Connect' through 2 parts:

- the production of additional digital resources, and
- 2) run usability testing on the full suite of resources



Partnerships

We have partnered with **Enlightening Films**, who align their goals to create narratives that resonate and connect deeply. This, coupled with their distinctive approach to capturing images, defines their unique brand of storytelling. They've formed meaningful partnerships with many clients.





Set the Australian crowdfunding record with a 4-minute film, raising \$330,000 with 6 million views.

[Link to view]

Values

Integrity is paramount. They foster positivity, collaboration, and win-win outcomes.



Working Group:

Plan and focus





Working Group: Session Plans

П

90 min

Animation (x3 films, 2D, 2 min each)

- 1. Style
- 2. Character build
- 3. Voice of narrator
- 4. Generation of situations
- 5. Extra queries

Interactive Game

Style

ANIMATED EXPLAINER FILMS

Film 1: Landing Page Intro to website

Film 2: Brain injury Basic facts and details to introduce what a brain injury is

Film 3: Journey What to expect for the survivor and family

Audience: 11 to 17 year old's are the target audience, adults to benefit too

Talent: Narrator to be chosen by working group

Option: Choose your own adventure??

Workflow: Animation is the first priority to start building with animator. Each film

takes -/+ 4 weeks to build

2 90 min

Peer & Educational Videos

3 90 min

Interactive Game

Brain Connect

Let's have a quick look!







Short-Animation films:Style





1. STYLE



Brain - medical (4 min)

Click link <u>here to</u> watch

Likes
Dislikes
Score (out of 10)

33

What is a stroke?

Click link here to watch

Likes	
Dislikes	
Score (out of 10)	



Operation Ouch

Click link here to watch

Likes	-
Dislikes	-
Score (out of 10)	_ ,



Amazing things happen (5 min)

Click link here to watch

,	Likes
	Dislikes
(Score (out of 10)



How brain damage works

Click link here to watch

Likes
Dislikes
Score (out of 10)



Other?

Likes	
Dislikes	
Score (out of 10)	

Deciding on the characters





2. CHARACTER BUILD

Cartoon or real





Silly or normal





Family (what sort?)





Who has the brain injury?

Mum

Dad

Son

Daughter

Other?



Building the characters



2. CHARACTER BUILD



<u>Powtoon</u> – Character builder

Mum

Brain Connect

Building the characters



2. CHARACTER BUILD



Dad

Brain Connect

Building the characters



2. CHARACTER BUILD



Son







2. CHARACTER BUILD



Daughter —	







Building the characters

2. CHARACTER BUILD



Doctor

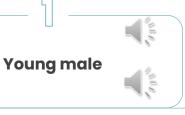






3. VOICE FOR NARRATOR

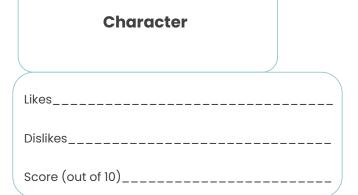




Likes
Dislikes
Score (out of 10)



Likes
Dislikes
Score (out of 10)





Likes	
Dislikes	
Score (out of 10)	

Young female



Likes	
Dislikes	
Score (out of 10)	

Other?	

Likes	
Dislikes	
Score (out of 10)	







Situations/example to use in animation

4. GENERATION OF SITUATIONS

In Film 3 (brain injury basics), the visible and invisible changes are described:

Visible = physical (coordination, weakness, speech)

Invisible =

- Cognitive/thinking (memory, understanding, processing information, motivation)
- Emotional (mood swings, sadness, worry)
- Behavioural (self-centeredness, irritability, impulsive, disinhibited)

We would like to have a visual from the child's eyes, looking up at their special person who has some obvious physical challenges and difficulties thinking (i.e. slowed processing) and talking (i.e. words in the wrong order). Re-show the same situation from the special person's eyes looking at the child and what they hear, their internal dialogue/thinking and what they say out aloud

"Imagine this situation..."

Extra queries





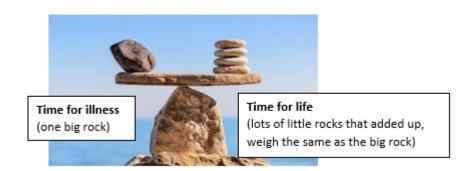
5. Extra queries

Language

Should we use "young person", 'young adult', 'teenager', 'adolescent' or 'child' or other???

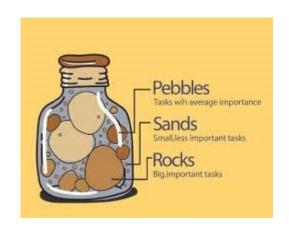
Metaphor

Should we use 'time for life' and 'time for injury'. '**Time for illness**' relates to things like medical appointments, effects, worry about the future, carer responsibilities) and '**time for life**' is enjoying moments, planning events, looking forward)



Jar/rocks/pebbles/sand/water (making time for what matters)

(jar represents your life and the time each of us have in a day, the big rocks signify the really important things such as health, family, friends, passions and self-care (money can't buy). The **pebbles** are other things that matter such as work or school and the **sand** signifies the remaining small stuff like watching TV, social media, material possessions and water represents that through it all, you can make time for a cup of coffee with friends)



Style decisions (to help in session #3)





1. STYLE PREFERENCES

Number 1-3

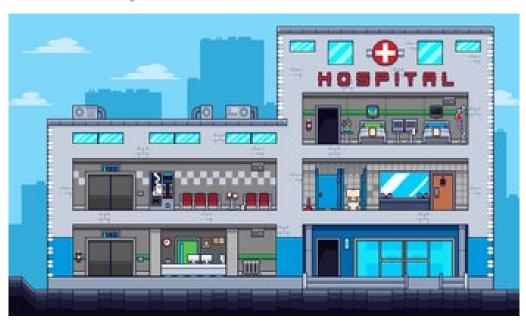
1 = 1st favourite

 $2 = 2^{nd}$ favourite

 $3 = 3^{rd}$ favourite



1. Pixel Art Style



2. Low Poly Isometric Style



Style decisions (to help in session #3)





1. STYLE PREFERENCES

3. Low Poly Style



4. Realistic Style



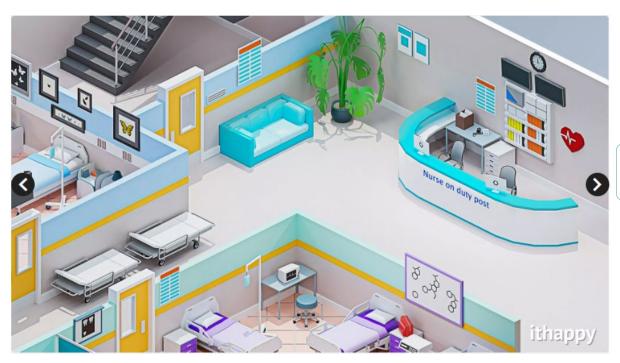






1. STYLE PREFERENCES

5. Stylized Style



6. Realistic Style



Style decisions (to help in session #3)





1. STYLE PREFERENCES

7. Low Poly Style



8. Cartoon Style



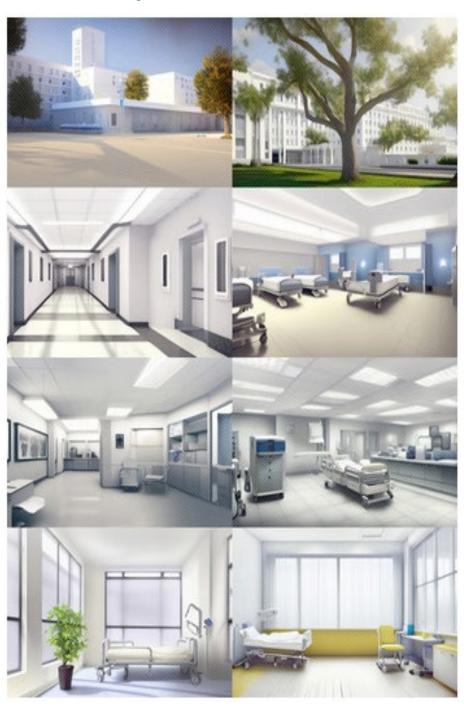
Style decisions (to help in session #3)





1. STYLE PREFERENCES

9. Visual Novel Style







Thank you

We are excited to be co-designing with you to create impactful digital resources for Brain Connect that will resonate with our audience.



SERVICES ENLIGHTENING FILMS PROVIDE

Their approach combines creativity, expertise, and a commitment to excellence, ensuring that the resulting film inspires, educates, and resonates with audiences.







