

# Post Concussion Action Group: Session 3

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Self Care & Managing  
Symptoms

# What's needed to be successful in trying times?

- Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Taking good care of yourself & getting support when you need it
- Finding meaning or purpose to the challenges you face
- Good communication skills
- Remaining flexible and willing to problem solve



# Developing Self Awareness

- Keep a journal of symptoms, strategies, and success
- Ask those you trust for feedback
- Feeling will surface & that's ok. Recognize that it is difficult to accept change & explore how you are dealing with that
- Be sure to consider the strengths you have, and how can be used to counteract any challenges you may face.

# Self Care

- Making yourself a priority (getting enough sleep, eating well, exercise, etc.)
- Don't "push through" – give your brain time to rest and heal.
- Accept that you may not be able to do it all alone and explore options for help
- Give yourself permission not to do it all (at once)



# Finding Support

- People hate to ask for help – but love to give it!
- Ask for help and be specific with what you need
- Look at what supports are available in the community (can be formal or informal)
- Be creative in finding ways to give yourself a break.



# Learning Skills



A concussion is a serious event that can have long term consequences on the brain. You may not be able to recover overnight, but you will see gains being made over time.

For some people, the concussion is serious enough that you are left with some long term effects. Even if your symptoms don't go away entirely, you will be able to get back to doing what you want to do. Sometimes this just means learning to do so in a new way.

# Returning to Activity: Step by Step

- Pay attention to your symptoms and work below the level of activity that causes them to come out in full force. If they flare up, pace yourself and try again more gradually.
- Use Pacing to gradually improve your endurance
- Gain insight by taking note of symptoms in a dayplanner and look back for patterns. Sometimes it takes a few days to see the impact of overexertion.

# How do I start gently?

- Use a timer, don't go beyond your time limit
- Use the points system
- Following your rules for planning and pacing
- Don't start from where you left off pre-injury
- Monitor intensity

# How can I measure intensity?

Use a Borg Scale

- Rate your perceived effort, scale 0-10
- Start at 5 or less



# Involve Professional Support

Turn to professionals such as:

- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Athletic Therapists
- Psychiatrists
- Counsellors
- Sports Medicine Physicians
- Psychologists
- Social Workers
- Psychiatrists

# Get Equipped!

Look at incorporating equipment or altering environments

Some quick fixes: sunglasses, ear plugs, curtains to block the sun, turning off a tv's or radios in the background.

Professional fixes: weighted/compression vests, body tensors, binasal occlusion glasses



# Relationships & Mood

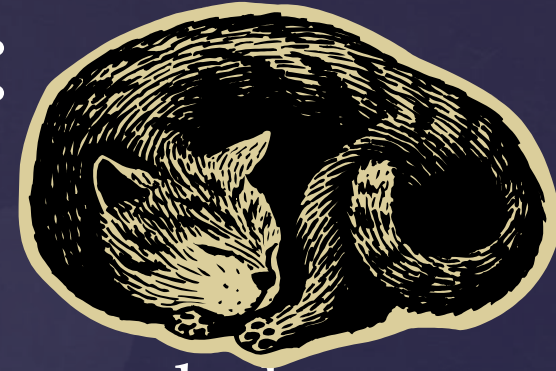
Sometimes your symptoms will affect your relationship with family and friends. You may suffer irritability and mood swings. For some, a concussion may trigger mental health symptoms like anxiety or depression, or if you have had these difficulties in the past, they may get worse again.

If your concussion is impacting your mood and relationships with others, professionals can help you to learn tools to manage better.

# Keep a regular bedtime (and waking time)

Get up and go to bed at the same time each day. Don't push your limits, or you may end up losing in productivity what you gain in time awake. If you have trouble sleeping try avoiding bright lights and screens close to bed time, relaxation strategies, and a quiet bedtime routine.

# Good Sleep Practices:



Have a relaxing evening routine.

Keep the same bedtime and rising time each day.

Avoid bright lights, screens, and caffeine close to bedtime.

If there is a low point in your day where you can't go on, respect that. Give yourself time for a nap - but make it time limited. Too much during the day may impact your ability to get to sleep at night, so don't overdo it.



# Caring for yourself as you heal



You will need to take extra good care of yourself as you recover. This means making you a priority. Eating healthy food, getting enough sleep, and learning strategies to reduce your stress level and the impact of post concussion symptoms will help you get on the right track.