

Coping Interventions

Coping Strategies are an important part of recovery after Traumatic Brain Injury, particularly in the developing brain. Below are some important examples of some strategies, including Concussion Action Plans, stress reduction techniques, and mental relaxation and cognitive exercises.

PROBLEM FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off not being able to go back to sports or my usual activities. (Action Plan)

To keep your mind off not being able to go back to sports, distract yourself with fun, healthy and productive activities and keep a daily and weekly planner.

2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about my concussion. (Action Plan)

Concentrate on actively managing your concussion. Here are some recommendations:

- a. During your appointments with Dr. Mo, address any questions you have about concussions and the rehabilitation plan we have for you (write them down).
- b. Create a daily schedule for yourself and include the days and times of your rehabilitation exercises so you don't forget.
- c. Make a list of activities that can slow your healing or make your symptoms worse, so you're always aware of what to activities (TRIGGERS) to avoid.

Download the Concussion Action Plan and Daily Rehab Plan from our website (www.sparcctucson.com).

3. I've been trying to see my situation in a different light, to make it seem more positive (Cognitive Restructuring)

Change the way you think about your situation and challenge yourself to think about positive things that have happened. Here are some recommendations:

- a. Write down 1-2 challenges you've had in the past and what strategies you used to overcome them.

4. I've been learning to not blame myself or getting a concussion and praise myself for recovery. (Cognitive Restructuring)

Reflect on the activities you did that was a part of your recovery (rehab exercises, decreased my TV/computer/phone time, ate a healthy meal, went to bed early, etc.). Congratulate/reward yourself for accomplishing any of these tasks (no matter how small), because recovery will be gradual and it's important to pace yourself.

- a. Journaling on paper at night before bed instead of electronics
- b. Reward structure system for meeting goals
- c. Gradual approach to progress (PACING) with 10-20% a week

EMOTIONAL FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

1. I've been accepting the fact that it has happened. (Acceptance)

Part of the healing process means accepting what has happened so you can move on to recovery. Here are some recommendations:

- a. Understanding what a concussion is, what you can do to recover, and how to prevent it from the future will make it easier for you to accept your situation.
- b. Journaling can help you process, accept, and overcome this process.

2. I've been praying or meditating. (Relaxation/Stress Reduction)

Relaxation and stress reduction techniques are essential for PCS recovery. They can also help you regulate your emotions and attention. Here are a few free, easy to use apps that we recommend:

- a. Relaxation/meditation exercises: SAM, Headspace, SMILING MIND

3. I've been getting emotional support from others (Support Structure)

Surround yourself with your close family and friends and talk to them about how you are dealing with your concussion. Discussing your feelings is an important part of healing, consider these options:

- a. Counseling
- b. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)
- c. PCS support group

4. I've been saying or doing things to channel my negative emotions (Channeling)

Keeping negative feelings or negative emotions inside of you is harmful and slows down your healing process. Transform your negative feelings into something positive. Here are some recommendations:

- a. Breathing, relaxation, and Sport Imagery exercises (see SAM app above)