

Memory / Thinking Skills

Pain, lack of sleep and emotional distress will all reduce your ability to pay attention, concentrate or remember things. In the first few months you will not be able to do the multi-tasking and management you did before.

- A. Do not rush back into full time work
- B. Expect to make notes / write things down
- C. Ask people to repeat information for you
- D. Limit what you do each day – e.g. one task a day or one task in the morning and then a smaller one in the afternoon.

If memory/ thinking problems persist, you can have an assessment carried out by the Acquired Brain Injury Service.

Remember

- You have suffered a major **shock**. You have pain and poor sleep. You may have to work with the Police, Insurance Companies, Lawyers, Doctors, Employers and Therapists. All of this will add to your **stress**.
- Lots of symptoms are natural after all you have been through.
- You will also be putting pressure on yourself to get back to work. You may be worrying about money.
- Most healing and emotional recovery happens in the first 6 months. Life will most likely return to normal.

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Feedback

We welcome any suggestions you have, please send your **comments, concerns, complaints and compliments** to: Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, **PALS, Complaints and Incidents Team**, Trust Headquarters Redesmere, Liverpool Road, Chester, CH2 1BQ.

For more information see www.cwps.nhs.uk

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Post concussion syndrome

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Service
Acorn Suite
1829 Building
Countess of Chester Health Park
Liverpool Road
Chester CH2 1HJ
Tel: 01244 389252
Fax: 01244 389255

What is Post Concussion Syndrome (PCS)?

PCS is the cluster of symptoms you may experience after a blow to the head which may include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Sensitivity to noise or light
- Anxiety
- Poor sleep
- Panic attacks
- Poor memory

What causes all these symptoms?

The best explanation to date is a combination of some physical changes to the brain or its transmitter system PLUS emotional and psychological factors. These are normal following an accident or trauma.

NB: You do not need to have lost consciousness to have PCS, but if you did, it may take longer to recover.

How long will these symptoms last?

Symptoms occur within the first 7 – 10 days. Some resolve within 3 months, most resolve by 6 months but a few can persist for longer.

What can help?

Getting treatment for all 3 corners of the triangle – health, emotions and thinking skills - as they are all connected. For example, if you are stressed or in pain, you are more likely to forget things.

Headaches

- **Do not** swallow lots of Paracetamol – this can make matters worse. Ask your doctor about pain medication and **take it regularly**; it is not addictive.
- Muscle tension in head, neck and back can cause headaches. Ask for a physiotherapy referral or see a chiropractor.
- Learn some relaxation techniques.

Anxiety / Panic

You have probably never been on longer term sick leave before this happened. Recovery from PCS takes longer. Worrying if you will get back to work or normal will only cause more **stress** and **delay your recovery**.

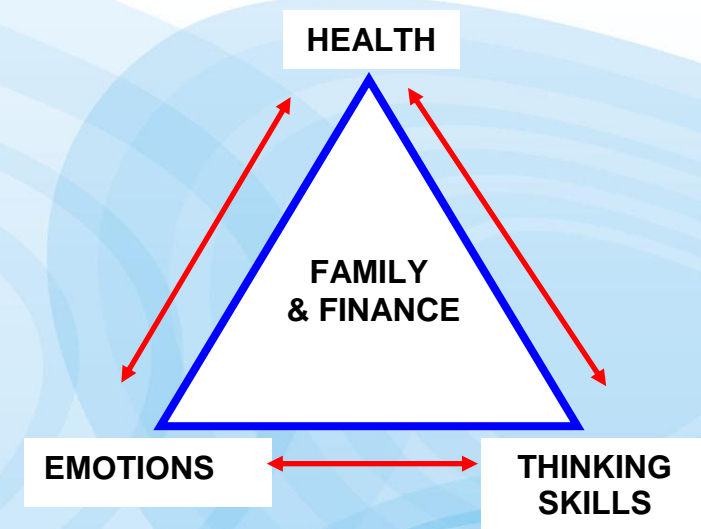
- It is only natural to feel shaken by the sudden and unexpected nature of your accident. **Try to be positive**. This is likely to be the only time in your life you will have such an injury.
- Do something about the headaches and poor sleep. It is all connected.
- Set yourself one task to do each day
- Seek **counselling support** if your worries are causing **panic attacks/ flashbacks**, or are stopping you from living your life.

Poor Sleep

Firstly, make sure you are managing your pain – you won't get a good night's sleep if you are in pain.

- Keep to a set bed time
- Try your relaxation techniques in bed
- Avoid caffeine / alcohol
- If necessary, ask your GP about tablets to help with sleep and racing thoughts.
- Take short, planned rests every day.

How symptoms are related



People who access our services are welcome to talk to the Team Manager if they are experiencing any problems with their care.



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