

Classroom Concussion Management Plan

Situation –

John is usually a good student who is typically interactive and engaged during class. For the last three days since his team lost a big game, he has been acting lethargic and withdrawn.

Usual thought – “He is just upset and too focused on athletics.”

When questioned, he states “he has a headache and is very tired” Now what?

- Student-athletes in the secondary school setting interact with a wide range of adults who affect their daily activities.
 - When a student is also an athlete with a concussion, it’s important for all those adults to come together and make coordinated decisions in order to obtain the best results for that youth, both academically and athletically.
 - Health care professionals are learning more about how to recognize and manage the physical demands and restrictions associated with concussions.
 - However, when the athlete returns to the role of student, close scrutiny, care and management does not always accompany him or her.
 - Academic accommodations need to become part of the overall management plan for student-athletes in order to ensure their health as well as to promote educational growth.
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Effects – not limited to the field of play

- When an athlete suffers a concussion and their activity is restricted during recovery, the traits that drive success can lead to frustration, denial or depression, and often can impact their personality, social interaction and scholastic performance.
- It is important to remember that the majority of concussions are relatively short-lived and produce no lingering effects, some concussions result in long-term, even devastating, disabilities.
- Every concussion is a brain injury.
- Injuries need evaluation, adaptations in routine and time to heal.
- Physical rest has been known for years as important.
- We now know that cognitive rest is equally important.
- On-line cognitive test are now available to help appraise the status of an individual.

- Educators are in a very advantageous position to notice changes that can lead to early intervention.
 - Teachers are often the first to notice subtle changes in the student's ability to concentrate, remember new information and interact with classmates or simply wonder what is wrong with the student.
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Problems –

- Headaches may cause trouble concentrating
 - Brain injury fatigue may make it harder to complete assignments or pay attention
 - The short-term memory loss can make learning new information difficult
 - Low scores in major exams may be devastating
 - This academic stress also has the potential to prolong recovery
 - 2 major procedures by which schools may meet specific needs of those students with learning disabilities - 504 Plan or IEP
 - Both of these are time consuming and tedious and the student is probably recovered by the time they can be implemented.
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Solution –

- A lot of school districts we are in the process of creating a Classroom Concussion Management Plan. This falls within the scope of the ADA laws and are not difficult to implement.
 - This is easy and very productive for everyone.
 - List of accommodations that may be utilized
 - A chain of resources including the physician, athletic trainer, campus nurse, administrators, guidance personnel, classroom teacher, coach, parent and the student.
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- Someone from within the campus system will contact each teacher if you have a student who is suffering from a concussion and offer suggestions to help you and the student get through this period.
 - Each situation will be individualized. [short-term / long-term]
 - Please feel free to contact any member of the resource team in this regards.
 - Remember, this is a work in progress and your input is appreciated.

Classroom Concussion Management Plan

IN THE CLASSROOM

Be prepared to help this student –

- Pay attention and concentrate
 - Plan ahead and work to achieve good organization
 - Verbalize, repeat and recall recent information
 - Manage time effectively
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Concussion Symptoms in the classroom

- Poor attention and concentration
- Irritability and low frustration tolerance
- Differences in following directions or answering questions
- Reduced short-term memory recall
- Delayed processing
- Easily distracted
- Inability to follow through with routine assignments
- Disproportional reaction to situations
- Repeating themselves
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Sleeping or dozing in class

Concussion Symptoms in general

- Dizziness
- Disorientation
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Blurred, fuzzy or double vision
- Unbearable headache
- Unequal pupil size
- Balance problems
- Fatigue
- Drowsiness
- Feeling slowed down
- Feeling “foggy” or “not sharp”
- Numbness / tingling
- Ringing in ears
- Poor concentration
- Change in sleep pattern / Trouble falling asleep / Excess sleep
- Concentration or memory problems
- Irritability / Nervousness
- Sadness / Depression
- Feeling more emotional

Classroom Concussion Management Plan

Accommodations

- Processing Accommodations
 - Increased time to complete assignments and tests
 - Breakdown complex directions into steps
 - Decreased length of assignments
 - Colored overlays for written material
- Memory Deficits Accommodations
 - Written as well as verbal instructions
 - Posted schedule and directions
 - Frequent review of information
- Attention Accommodations
 - Visual prompts
 - Frequent breaks
 - Preferential seating (avoid distractions)
- Organizational Skills Accommodations
 - Study guide and/or timeline
 - Graphic organizers
 - Provision of color coded materials
 - Daily calendar for assignments and tasks
- Additionally
 - One-on-one instruction
 - Extra class time
 - Allow visits to nurse to treat headaches
 - After class time to reinforce and clarify (use the athletic period)
 - Classroom/hallway buddy system
 - Written instructions for homework
 - Fax/email homework assignment to parent
 - Utilize small group instruction
 - Repeat and present new information slowly
 - Take time to show the entire class what good homework for this assignment would look like
 - Allow tape recorder

 - Monitor and share progress and difficulties with athletic trainer, nurse, guidance personnel
 - They as needed will share with other teachers
 - They will communicate with the parents
 - Consider an abbreviated day (periods in the clinic to rest)
 - State, district and course mandated tests can be adapted for this individual's needs. This allows for ADA compliance and permissions for these modifications are usually granted with notification to the powers-that-be for that test.