

What is problem solving?

- Everyone encounters problems many times throughout a day.
- A problem is a situation where any of the following apply:
 - Making a decision, like in managing money, medical needs, or relationships
 - Planning ahead
 - Dealing with something unexpected
 - Something goes wrong
 - Changes in emotions, like feeling nervous or angry
 - Physical changes like being in pain or getting sick
- Common symptoms of mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and concussion can affect thinking and make solving problems harder.
- These symptoms may include poor sleep, pain, stress, changes in mood like anxiety or depression, and changes in other thinking skills.

What can I do to improve problem-solving?

- As common symptoms of mTBI and concussion get better, people usually see problem solving become easier too.
- Helpful tools to solve problems after concussion include:
 - Plan ahead to help you feel in control.
 - Think before you act. Taking the time to think through a problem can help you make the best decision.
 - Ask for help. Talk about problems with someone you trust before making decisions, especially if it is something important.
 - Ask questions. Make sure you understand all parts of the problem.
 - Brainstorm. Think about all possible solutions to a problem, not just the ones that you think will work.
 - Think about what happened after you solved the problem. Ask yourself what went well and what didn't. This helps to remind you what can help to solve similar problems in the future.
 - Change your environment. Remove distractions, sit down, or use relaxation tools to make it easier to think through the steps of solving a problem.

What can others do to help?

- Give plenty of time for the person you are helping to solve a problem.
- Be patient and help them talk through problems if needed.
- Limit the number of possible choices if you are helping someone that gets more easily overwhelmed.
- Look for signs that someone is tired, hungry, or under stress. It is better to wait until someone is thinking clearly before you ask for a decision.
- Avoid rushing last-minute decisions on an issue or topic.
- Remove distractions, like turn off the TV or mute your smart phone, that can interrupt the thinking process.

Additional Comments: