VIRTUAL MIDWEST CONCUSSION CLINIC | MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

BETTER CONVERSATIONS. BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS, FAMILIES & SUPPORTERS

Recovering from a concussion can be difficult to explain. Supporting someone through that recovery can be just as difficult to understand.

One day, a person may feel capable of working, spending time with family, or completing everyday activities. The next day, those same activities may feel more challenging. Sometimes, that change happens within the same day.

The person recovering may struggle to find the words to describe what they're experiencing. Family members may see someone who looks completely fine but is having difficulty with activities that once seemed simple.

> **NEITHER PERSON HAS TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.**
> At Midwest Concussion Clinic, we believe better care begins with understanding. That's why we created the accompanying communication checklist.

HOW TO USE YOUR CHECKLIST

START WITH WHAT YOU NOTICE.

If you're recovering from a concussion, begin by describing what you're experiencing, how it's affecting your daily activities, and what you think might help.

You don't need medical terminology or a perfect explanation. A simple observation is enough to begin.

ASK QUESTIONS TO UNDERSTAND. NOT TO CHALLENGE.

If you're supporting someone, use the questions on the checklist to learn more about their experience.

Instead of focusing on whether they could do something yesterday, try to understand what made it difficult today. Listen to the answer before offering solutions.

WORK TOGETHER ON ONE SMALL ADJUSTMENT.

Use the "Try This Together" section to identify a current challenge, discuss what you've learned and agree on one practical change.

That might mean reducing distractions, adjusting an activity or allowing breaks. The goal isn't to solve everything in one conversation. It's to find a reasonable next step together.

REVISIT THE CONVERSATION WHEN NEEDED.

Concussion symptoms and daily capacity can fluctuate. An adjustment that helps today may need to change tomorrow.

If something doesn't work, that doesn't mean the conversation failed. It means you have more information to work with.

ONE IMPORTANT REMINDER

Communication should lead to understanding, not an argument about whether symptoms are real.

The person recovering deserves to be heard. The people supporting them deserve information that helps them understand.

You don't need to agree on every detail to begin working together. And you don't need all the answers to have a productive conversation.

Educational Disclaimer: This resource provides general concussion education and communication strategies. It is not intended to diagnose a condition or replace individualized medical evaluation, treatment, or recommendations from a qualified healthcare professional. Changes in symptoms or functioning should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional when indicated.

VIRTUAL MIDWEST CONCUSSION CLINIC | MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

BETTER CONVERSATIONS. BETTER UNDERSTANDING.

A CONCUSSION COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST FOR PATIENTS & FAMILIES

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Concussion symptoms and daily capacity can change. It can be hard to explain what you're experiencing or to understand what someone else is going through. Use this checklist to ask, listen, and plan together.

The goal isn't to prove who's right. It's to understand what's happening.

3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 SYMPTOMS CAN BE INVISIBLE

Someone can look okay while experiencing real difficulties

2 CAPACITY CAN CHANGE

Symptoms and capacity may change throughout the day or from one day to the next.

3 UNDERSTANDING TAKES TEAMWORK

Both people contribute to better communication.

FOR THE PERSON RECOVERING

HELP ME UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE EXPERIENCING.

1. **WHAT AM I EXPERIENCING?** "I'm having trouble concentrating."
2. **HOW IS IT AFFECTING ME?** "I lose track when several people talk."
3. **WHAT WOULD HELP?** "Could we talk somewhere quieter?"

You don't need perfect words. Start with what you notice.

FOR FAMILY & SUPPORTERS

ASK QUESTIONS BEFORE MAKING ASSUMPTIONS. Check each question after you discuss it.

- ☐ What part was the hardest?
- ☐ What was happening around you?
- ☐ What would make this easier?
- ☐ When did it become difficult?
- ☐ What was different today?

LISTEN FIRST. DON'T RUSH TO FIX.

These questions clarify the challenge, timing, circumstances and next steps.

TRY THIS TOGETHER | TURN THE CONVERSATION INTO A PLAN

TODAY'S CHALLENGE: _____

WHAT WE LEARNED: _____

ONE THING WE'LL TRY: _____

LET'S CHECK IN AGAIN: _____

WHAT SUPPORT CAN LOOK LIKE

Reduce distractions | Allow breaks | Adjust the environment | Check in without pressure

YOU DON'T NEED ALL THE ANSWERS.
YOU NEED A BETTER PLACE TO START.