

WEEK 2

CONTENT



CONCUSSION AND MEMORY

10-15 MINUTES

Because a concussion can influence your ability to remember information, we are going to review some skills that you can use to help you remember information better. Do any of you have current strategies you use to help you remember your schedule?

Pass out the handout on Practical Memory Strategies (page 44).

- Take a few minutes to look over the memory strategies suggested on this handout.

You may want to read them aloud, as some participants may have difficulty reading.

- Do any of you use any of these strategies already?
 - Which strategies do you use?
 - How have they been effective?
 - How often did you have to practice them?

If participants are struggling to engage, reassure participants that there is no wrong answer and provide applicable examples to help lead discussion.

After asking these questions, review the remainder of the Practical Memory Strategies handout with the participants to ensure an understanding of the material. Emphasize the importance of establishing a routine when using these strategies in their daily lives. Also, emphasize the importance of writing down information that is essential to remember.

- What are some things that might get in the way of these strategies?
- If you need reminders to use these strategies, communicate this to the people around you. Your friends and family can remind you to practice these skills.

- Now we will learn a game that you can play on your own time to help improve your memory. Think of memory like a muscle, the more you train it, the stronger it will get! On the other hand, if you do not exercise it, then it can get weaker.

Pass out Memory Practice Flash Cards handout.

Ask participants if they have any food allergies prior handing out candy or food.

Go over the name of each shape on the handout. Then pass out the blank answer sheet and flip the handout over and point to each section on the paper and ask participants to name which shape is in that section.

To change things up, switch the task so that participants have to point to where each shape is (i.e. "Where is the star?" versus "What shape was in the top center"?). Do an example of this exercise before handing out the paper to participants to avoid cheating.

Participants ability will vary depending on the severity of their concussion and you may need to adjust the number of shapes memorized depending on their ability level.

- Practicing exercises like this can help you train your brain to better remember new information. I encourage you all to take this handout home and practice on your own time or make up your own games to train your memory. The more you practice, the more your memory will improve.

Note: *Some participants may not be fully competent at writing, in which case they should be encouraged to ask their support person for help in creating reminder notes or other memory aids.*

BREAK

5 MINUTES

Now we are going to take a five-minute break. During this break, we are going to practice a stress management technique that you can use when you are feeling angry or stressed.

Refer to progressive muscle relaxation handout.



INTRODUCE THE TOPIC OF GOAL SETTING

10-15 MINUTES

In the event that participants have not received a neuropsychological screening evaluation, ask them instead to share feedback they have received from teachers, counselors, peers, or family members.

- Now we are going to talk about goals. Studies show that people who organize their day with set events and goals actually have better memory regarding their day-to-day activities and are able to function well and achieve goals.
- Prior to beginning this group, you each met with a clinician discuss the results of your neuropsychological screenings.
- We will attempt to individualize this treatment group for each of you to focus on the recommendations suggested by your individual results.
- Please take out your feedback summaries (or reports). For the next 10 minutes, we will use the information you got as feedback to help us determine goals for you throughout the course of this group.
- During this section, the goal will be to decide the ways in which each group member will measure their progress throughout the treatment group. Everyone's goal will be different; keep your mind on your own goal!
 - For example, if a group member has an identified deficit in delayed memory (e.g., a score of Clearly Below Average or otherwise indicated on the feedback summary) it may be suggested that the client utilize a notebook throughout the treatment group to record information that they will need to recall later. Additionally, it may be suggested that they act as a self-advocate to request additional time from the group facilitator or other participants to allow for more time to record the information.

The over-arching purpose of this treatment group is to empower the participants and instill a sense of self-advocacy as they transition into other settings. Emphasize that the goals they outline for themselves should feel empowering.



DISCUSSION PROMPT

Discuss goal setting and the importance of learning skills to help set goals.

- How do each of you define “goals?”
- A goal is an observable and measurable end result that you intend to achieve or accomplish. A well-planned goal also includes some sort of time frame.



WRITE

Write what the participants identify as the most important aspects of that definition on the white board.

- Why do you think goals are important?

Allow participants some time to process this question in group discussion.

- Goals help us to focus our energy, form plans, live a purpose-centered life, and give us a feeling of accomplishment.
- Sometimes we say that we have specific goals, but they are not defined well.
- For example, I could say that my goal is to become rich and that is it. Why is that a poorly defined goal?

Write participant examples on the white board.



INTRODUCE S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

10-15 MINUTES

Pass out the S.M.A.R.T. Goals handout (page 48).

- S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym that stands for
 - S** – specific, significant, stretching
 - M** – measurable, meaningful, motivational
 - A** – agreed upon, attainable, achievable, acceptable, action-oriented
 - R** – realistic, relevant, reasonable, rewarding, results-oriented
 - T** – time-based, time-bound, timely, tangible, trackable

This style of goal setting helps identify certain aspects of goals so you can achieve them. Setting S.M.A.R.T. goals is important because they break down big goals into smaller pieces that are less discouraging and intimidating. For example, say your goal was to find a job. You know it is going to take a lot of little steps to achieve that big, final goal. If you were going to set out to find a job, you would start by breaking down the steps you need to take to get there into smaller, S.M.A.R.T. steps. Instead of your goal being just to “find a job,” which would be very difficult to accomplish right off the bat, your first S.M.A.R.T. goal could be, for example, “apply to three jobs this week.” This is a S.M.A.R.T. goal because it is Specific (you know exactly what you need to do), Measurable (you will know if you did apply to three jobs or not), Attainable (you know you are capable of applying to three jobs), Realistic (you have the time and ability to do it), and Time-bound (the goal takes place only within the next week). At the end of that first week, you will know if you met or did not meet that first S.M.A.R.T. goal step towards finding a job, and you can make your next week’s goal based on how the first S.M.A.R.T. goal went.