

# Community Brain Injury Program for Children & Youth in British Columbia

## Tips for Attention Problems

Having trouble focusing on activities or tasks is very common after a concussion. This may include your teen or child having trouble staying on task until it is done, paying attention to details, and learning new things at school or in the community.

You may find that your child or teen may seem quite impulsive and easily distracted after a concussion, making it difficult for them to manage being in a classroom or in a crowd, shopping at the mall, remembering to complete daily activities and tasks, doing and finishing homework, and more.

Here are a few tips and strategies which others have found to be helpful:

- Reduce distractions
  - › Turn off TV, radio, computer, cell phone
  - › Use earplugs or headphones
  - › Get rid of clutter, close cupboards
  - › Close curtains or pull blinds
- Avoid interruptions
  - › Turn your phone ringer off while trying to concentrate
  - › Put a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door
  - › Tell friends and others that you are busy during certain time periods of the day or week
- Avoid crowds
  - › Shop during “off peak” times, and choose to go to smaller stores
  - › Hang out with people in small groups, or see friends one at a time
- Manage fatigue
  - › Get enough sleep – more than you normally would
  - › Take lots of breaks
  - › Use an alarm or a timer to remember to take breaks often
  - › Try not to push yourself too hard; avoid being a perfectionist
  - › Don’t give up when it’s difficult; instead, take a break and then return to the task after you have had a rest
- Get enough exercise
  - › Talk to your doctor before starting exercise
  - › Stop if you have symptoms again such as nausea, severe headache, vision problems, or confusion
- Ask for help when you need it
  - › Figure out the times of day when you are at your best, and use those times to work on important or challenging tasks



*Additional Tip Sheets are available on **Memory, Tips for Teachers, and Anxiety & Relaxation Techniques.***