

Concussion Coach Mobile App

Available now on the App Store. Coming to Google Play in spring 2014.

Concussion Coach provides portable tools to assess symptoms and facilitate coping for individuals with mild to moderate concussions who are currently in treatment with a healthcare professional. It can be used on its own but is not meant to replace professional diagnosis, medical treatment, or rehabilitation therapies. It will most likely not be helpful for those with severe concussions, although caregivers of these individuals may be interested in the educational information.



Concussions have been called the “signature wound” of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since there is no real front line, many more service members are exposed to blasts than ever before. Additionally, better body armor allows service members to survive wounds that may have killed them previously, but the brain, which is delicate and hard to protect within the skull, often sustains injury.

Concussions often come with physical problems (such as headaches, balance problems, and dizziness), emotional challenges (such as getting angry more easily), and cognitive issues (such as concentration or memory problems). Individuals who experienced a concussion can be quite different; they may be fully functional with only a few specific problems that an outside observer may not notice, or they can have significant challenges that are apparent to strangers. The nature and range of symptoms can cause considerable distress and frustration, and training in different coping strategies is often necessary.

Concussion Coach was a collaborative effort between the Department of Veterans Affairs Rehabilitation & Prosthetic Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD), and the Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2).

Concussion Coach Features

Learn provides psychoeducation around six topic areas:

- concussions, related symptoms, and treatment
- ways to improve concentration, thinking, and memory
- types of headaches, how to assess, and available treatments
- sleep and tools to help manage sleep problems
- symptoms of anxiety and PTSD and the relationships to concussions
- irritability and tips to help manage it

Users can select a coping tool or begin by identifying a symptom and indicating subjective units of distress (SUDS) on a 10 point scale.

For levels of 9 or 10, crisis management tools will be offered; for less than 9, a randomly selected tool will be offered.

A SUDS scale is offered after using the tools, and users are given feedback based on the relative level of distress.

Users can give a thumbs up or down to each tool, making it more or less likely to come up again.



The Neurobehavioral Symptom Inventory (NSI), a validated measure for diagnosis and tracking, is the most commonly used concussion assessment in the DoD and VA.

After each self-assessment, users are provided interpretive feedback including symptom severity and information about score relative to last administration.

Users can view previous assessments on a graph and can schedule reminders for future administrations.

Connects user with public and private resources to contact when support is needed, information to help user find professional care, and links for more extensive education.

Includes:

- Goal Setting: a hierarchical to-do list of goals and sub-goals
- Wellness Journal: allows user to track occurrences of symptoms and record what has been effective in managing them
- Make a Plan to Reduce Isolation: facilitates planning social activities by offering a list of activities and the options to add individuals from personal contacts list and to set up a reminder
- Use Technology: provides information about smartphone features that may make it easier to keep up with daily activities and help with recovery