



# PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR CONCUSSION

BY GENA FILIP, BHSc, MA, RP(Q)

## WHEN WILL THINGS GET BACK TO NORMAL?

The **biopsychosocial model** can explain why there are different outcomes related to concussions and why some people recover more quickly than others.

**Biological:** Inherited genetic risk factors, physiological differences (endocrine health, hormone regulation), history of neurological issues (migraine, previous head injuries), history of psychiatric health

**Psychological:** Traits (optimism or pessimism, self-compassion or perfectionism), coping strategies (self-regulation/self-care), personal stress (thought processes)

**Social:** Support system (family, friends, colleagues, community), impact of situational stress (living/working environment), availability of resources (exercise, nutrition, mental health assistance)

**Psychotherapy** can help you make sense of your situation, work through these issues and find a way to move forward. Collaboration and trust are fundamental for a healthy and effective therapist-client relationship. This means you are provided a safe, non-judgmental space to share your thoughts, emotions, and perspective, as we work together to help you achieve your goals.

## ANXIETY AFTER CONCUSSION

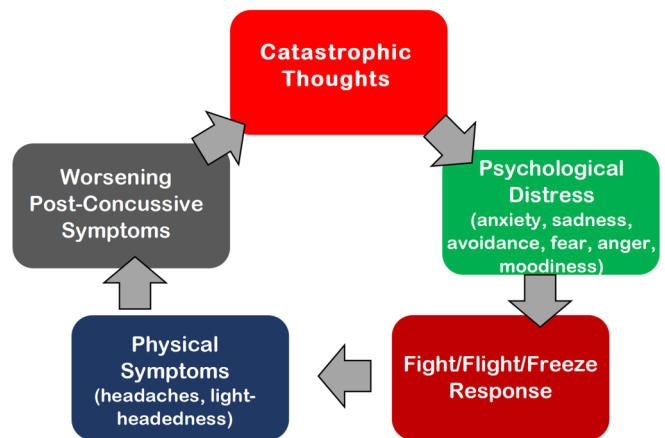
Has your behavior changed as a result of the concussion? If so, how? You may be experiencing a cycle of emotions: anxious about your condition, overwhelmed and overthinking about the things that are out of your control, fear when focusing on the



worst case scenario ultimately keeping you from your normal activities and moving ahead with your life.

## HOW CAN CBT HELP?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a type of psychotherapy that works to change harmful thought patterns. For instance, as an individual's post-concussive symptoms persist, these harmful thought patterns may manifest as a fear that they may never recover from their injury which can trigger the cycle below:



CBT and a person-centred approach can address all aspects of a person's identity: their mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Addressing pervasive thoughts, anxiety or depressive feelings, chronic pain/body changes, as well as life balance while adjusting to and living with these changes and challenges is necessary to maintain the path towards your goals.

For 15 years as a physical therapist, I assisted many people of all ages with various conditions, levels of pain, and loss of function work towards their goal to regain their mobility, strength and wellbeing. Now, as psychotherapist, I am able to not only understand the physical components of concussion injuries but address the mental and emotional parts of the healing process as well. Let's talk about the possibilities for *your* healing process.