

Understanding Concussion

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DURING A SOCCER GAME DAN WAS HIT IN THE HEAD BY ONE OF HIS OPPONENT'S ELBOWS. HE WAS KNOCKED OUT...



IT'S POSSIBLE TO HAVE A CONCUSSION WITHOUT LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS.





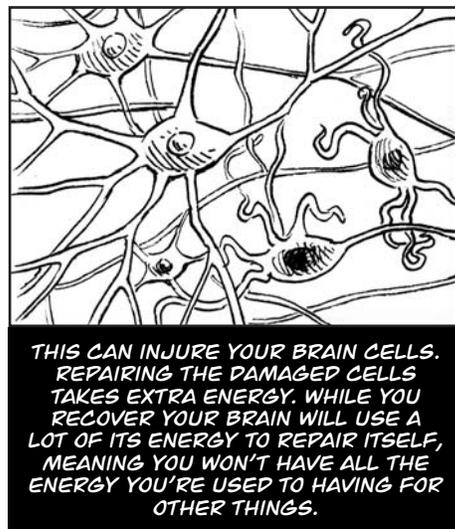
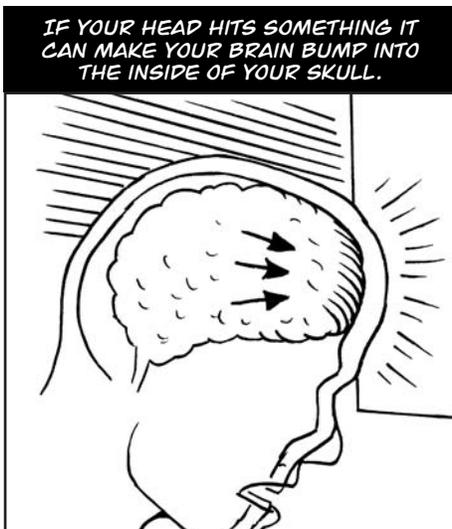
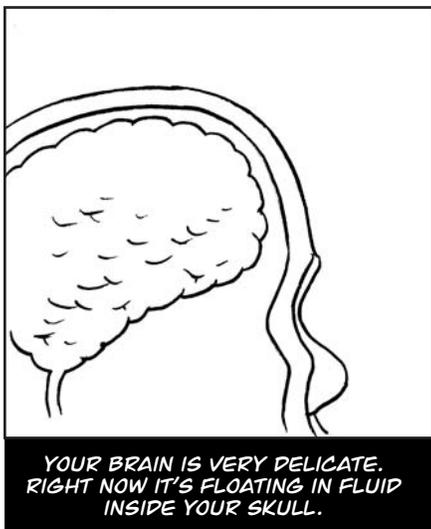
THERE MAY NOT BE ANY SYMPTOMS FROM A CONCUSSION FOR UP TO TWO DAYS.



A PERIOD OF CONFUSION AND DISORIENTATION OFTEN FOLLOWS A TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.

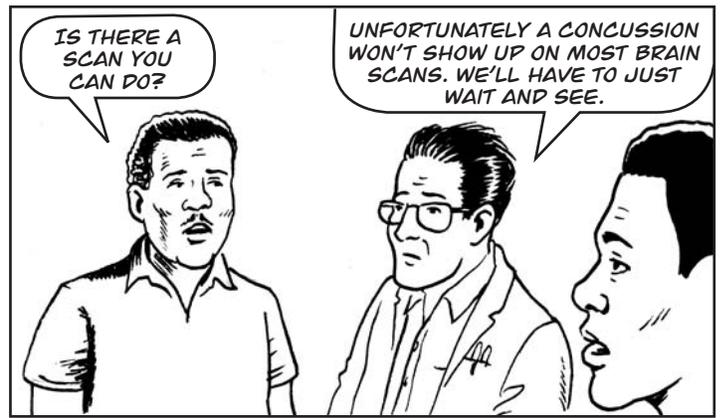
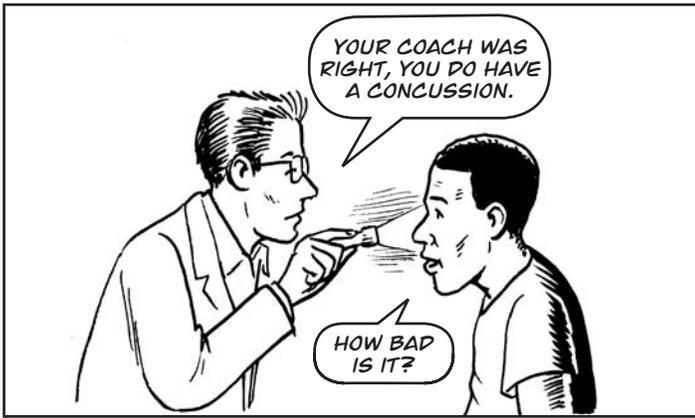


WHAT A CONCUSSION DOES TO THE BRAIN...



A CONCUSSION CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU FEEL PHYSICALLY, YOU CAN EXPERIENCE:

- HEADACHE
- BLURRED VISION
- DIZZINESS
- RINGING IN EARS
- SEEING STARS
- NAUSEA/VOMITING
- NUMBNESS/TINGLING
- LIGHT OR SOUND SENSITIVITY
- DISORIENTATION



BACK AT HOME...



⇒ IMPORTANT ⇐

IN THE FIRST 2 TO 3 DAYS IF ANY OF THESE THINGS GET STEADILY WORSE, GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY:

- HEADACHE
- CONFUSION
- DIFFICULTY AWAKING
- DISORIENTATION
- OR VOMITING



A CONCUSSION CAN CHANGE YOUR SLEEP PATTERNS: YOU CAN SLEEP MORE THAN USUAL AND FEEL TIRED ALL THE TIME. YOU CAN ALSO HAVE TROUBLE FALLING ASLEEP OR SLEEP LESS THAN USUAL.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL...





ALL THE ACTIVITY AND NOISE IN THE HALL WAY AFTER THIRD PERIOD WAS OVERWHELMING. IT EXHAUSTED DAN.



BECAUSE DAN HAD GROWN TIRED AND OVERWHELMED, 4TH PERIOD WAS HARDER THAN 3RD.



...SINCE DAN WAS TIRED, LITTLE THINGS WERE MORE DISTRACTING.



DAN GOT A HEADACHE, HIS VISION BECAME BLURRY AND HE COULDN'T FOCUS ON HIS WORK.



HE SIGNALLED TO HIS TEACHER THAT HE NEEDED TO BE EXCUSED.



A CONCUSSION CAN CAUSE CHANGES IN YOUR THINKING, FOR EXAMPLE:

- FEELING LIKE YOU'RE IN A MENTAL FOG
- SLOWED THINKING
- TROUBLE WITH MEMORY
- DIFFICULTY STAYING FOCUSED
- SPEAKING SLOWER
- CONFUSION

DAN STARTED PARTICIPATING MORE, BUT HE KEPT PRACTICING SELF-CARE, AVOIDING THINGS WHERE HE COULD HIT HIS HEAD AND RESTING WHEN HE WAS TIRED.



WHEN DAN WENT BACK TO CLASS FULL-TIME SOME PEOPLE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY HE PARTICIPATED LESS.

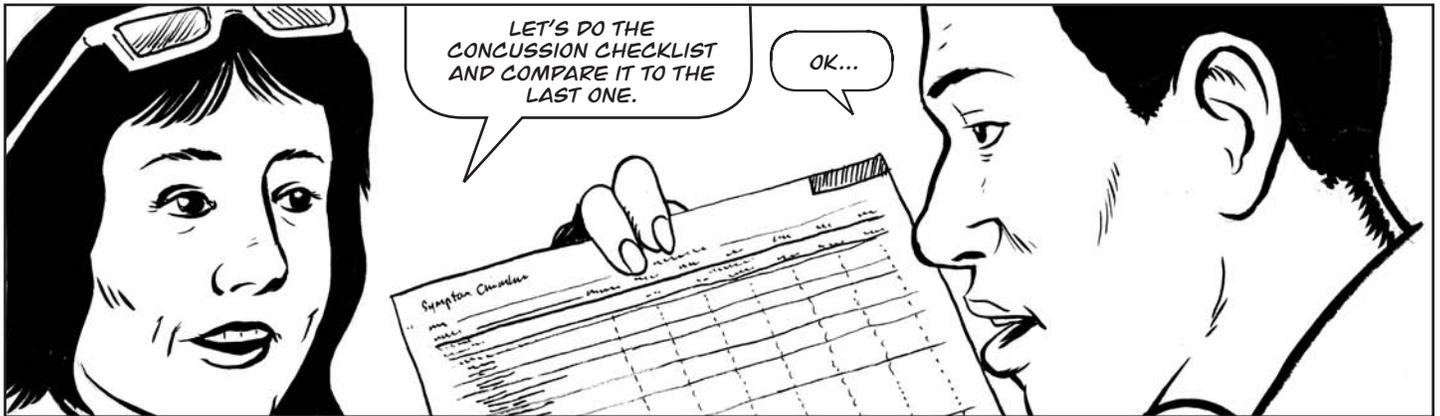
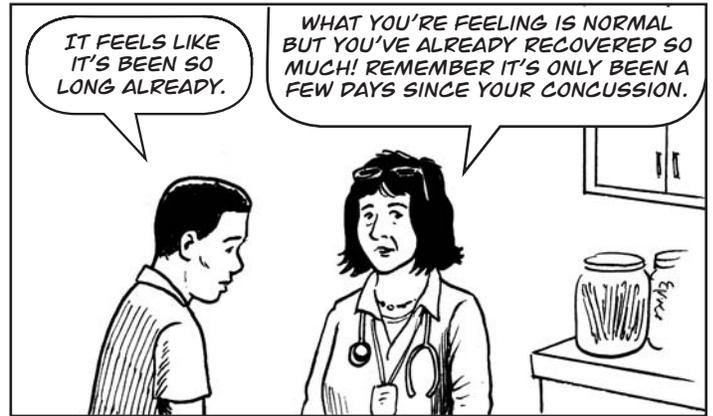




FOCUS ON YOUR RECOVERY INSTEAD OF THINGS YOU CAN'T CHANGE

A CONCUSSION CAN CAUSE CHANGES IN YOUR EMOTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE:

- EMOTIONS THAT DON'T MATCH THE SITUATION
- ARE MORE INTENSE THAN USUAL
- IRRITABILITY OR SADNESS
- BEING NERVOUS OR ANXIOUS
- FEELING LESS MOTIVATED.



MAKING PROGRESS...

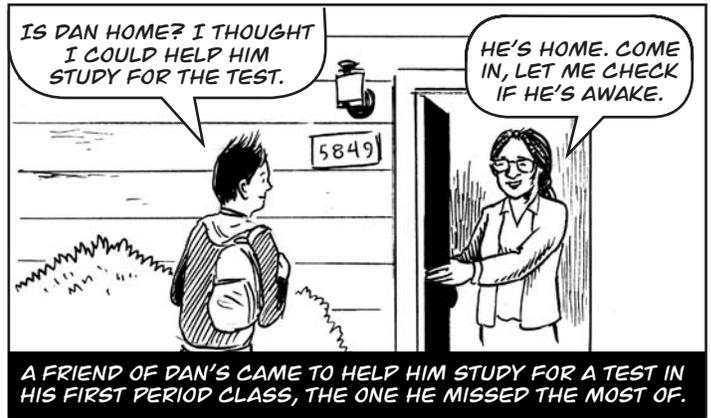
DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS DAN KEPT PRACTICING SELF-CARE. HE LEARNED NOT TO FIGHT HIS SYMPTOMS AND TO HAVE A SHORT REST WHEN HE WAS TIRED. IF HE WAS DOING SOMETHING THAT OVERLOADED HIM MENTALLY, HE TOOK A BREAK. HE ASKED FOR HELP WHEN HE WAS HAVING TROUBLE.

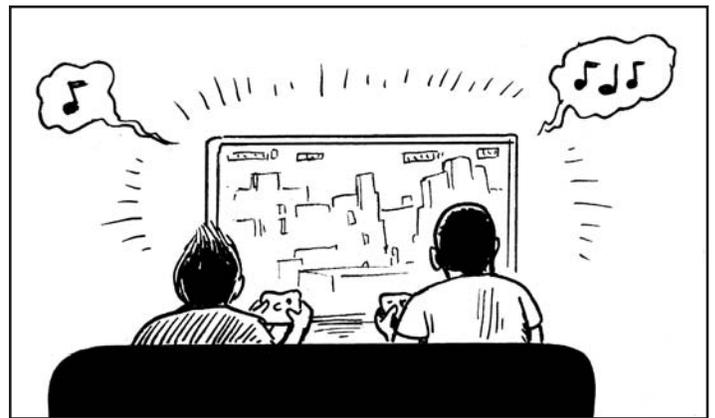


DAN LEFT CLASS A FEW MINUTES EARLY SO THAT HE COULD AVOID THE OVERWHELMING HALLWAYS.

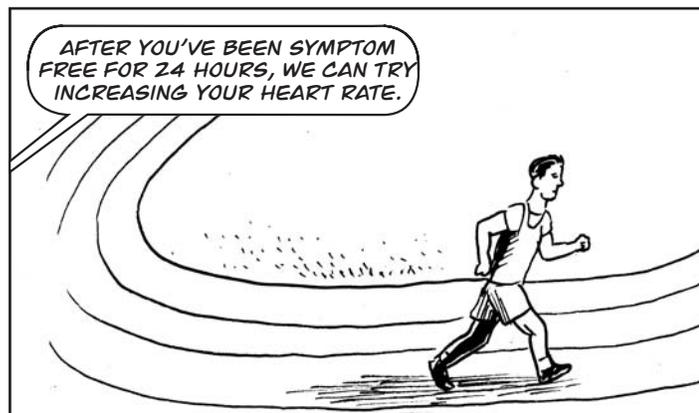
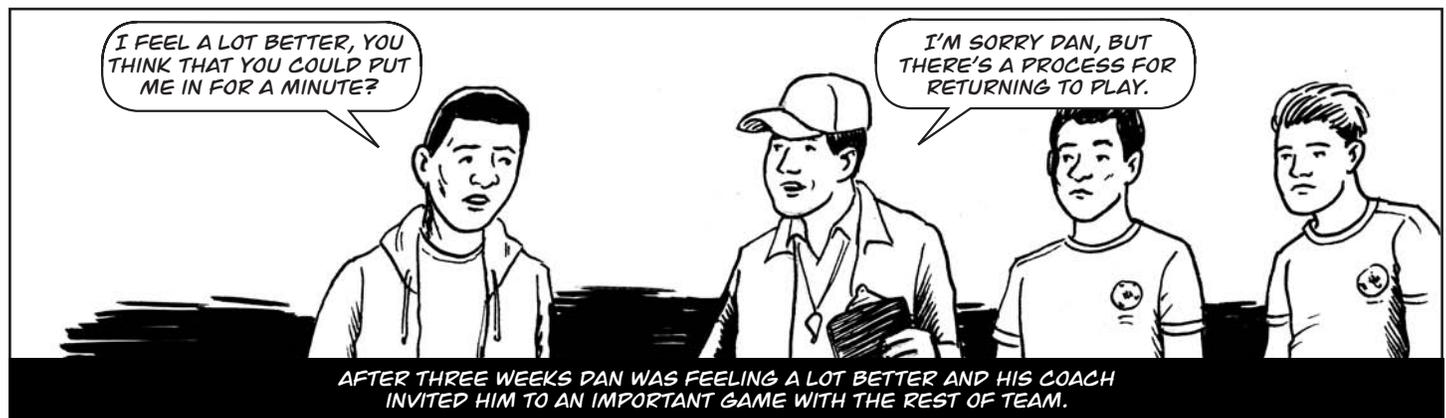








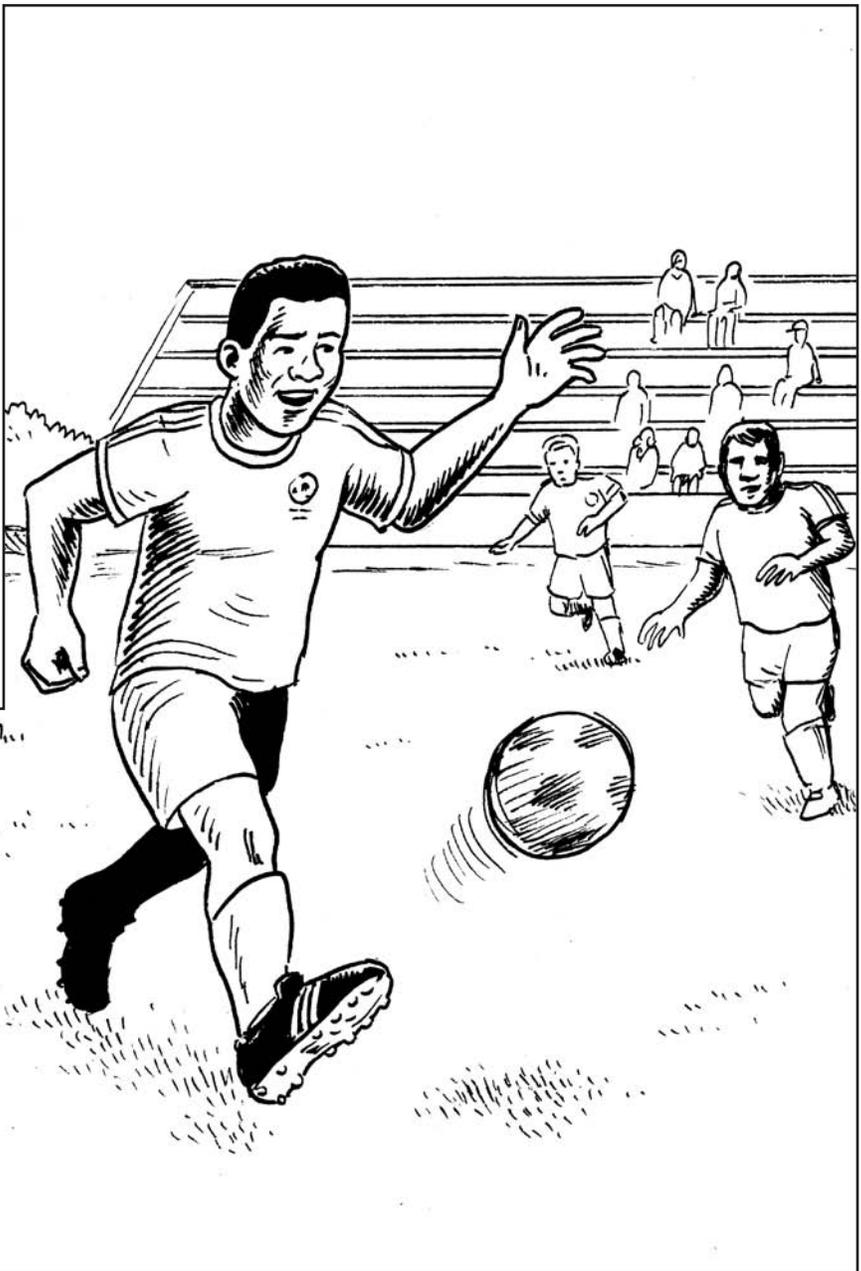
RETURNING TO PLAY...





"SECOND-IMPACT SYNDROME" IS WHEN THE BRAIN SWELLS QUICKLY. IT HAPPENS WHEN A PERSON HAS A SECOND CONCUSSION BEFORE THEY HAVE RECOVERED FROM AN EARLIER ONE.





IMPORTANT TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS COMIC

- 1.)** If you have a concussion, **get medical attention right away.**
- 2.)** You'll **need more rest while you're recovering**; this is normal.
- 3.)** Steadily increase your activity but be sure to give yourself a break when you start feeling tired. **Don't push yourself.**
- 4.)** Make a **plan for your recovery** with your doctors, teachers, and coaches.
- 5.)** There are a lot of symptoms that a concussion can cause. These **symptoms could be physical, mental, emotional**, or a combination of these.
- 6.)** Your brain will be using more of its energy to recover. Try to **focus on only one thing at a time.**
- 7.)** **Cut down or stop your screen time.** Screens give you a lot of information at once and it can be exhausting for your brain while it's recovering.
- 8.)** It can be helpful to **find an adult you can talk to** about what you're going through. This could be a school counselor, nurse, coach, parent, or anyone else who you trust.
- 9.)** **Don't be afraid to ask for help** from your teachers, coaches, parents, and friends. No one knows what you're experiencing except for you.
- 10.)** After your doctor clears you for physical activity, **work with your coach or P.E. teacher to return to play.**

Want to learn more about concussions and other types of traumatic brain injury (TBI)? Here are more resources:

See more InfoComics about TBI - <http://comics.tbi.washington.edu/>

The Brain Injury Alliance of Washington has a lot of resources on their page about concussions:
<http://www.biawa.org/concussion.php>

Read the R.E.A.P. Manual, it gives a clear description of the role each person involved (teachers, coaches, doctors, and parents) plays at each stage of concussion recovery. <http://REAPconcussion.com/>

Get Schooled on Concussions offers a variety of information about returning to school after a concussion:
<http://www.getschooledonconcussions.com/>

The Center for Disease Control's "Project Heads Up" provides information about concussions for a number of different audiences:
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup>

SOURCE

Portions of this InfoComic were adapted from the R.E.A.P. Manual (Remove/Reduce, Educate, Adjust/Accommodate, Pace). The R.E.A.P. approach of concussion management was developed to be a Community-Based Multi-Disciplinary model. The R.E.A.P. Manual was written by Karen McAvoy, PsyD.

The Symptom Checklist attached as the last page of this InfoComic was adapted from the R.E.A.P. Symptom Checklist.

AUTHORSHIP AND ILLUSTRATION

Silas James and Ayla Jacob wrote this InfoComic and it was illustrated by David Lasky.

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Please send any feedback or questions about this InfoComic to tbicomc@uw.edu

