

Why is Family Support so Important?

PCS patients with supportive family and friends will almost always have a better recovery than those without such support.

Loved ones can make a world of difference in the way they help those suffering from PCS.

How can I support someone navigating PCS?

Believe them — living with an invisible injury is hard, and doubt can be deeply hurtful. Your support matters. Whether you are supporting a child, spouse, family member or close friend navigating PCS, offering validation is a great place to start.

Additional ways to support your loved one:

- Help talk through emotional challenges of the injury and let them know you see how challenging recovery can be.
- Be an advocate for them at school, sports, and with medical and mental health providers.
- Prepare for the impact the injury can have on the whole family.
- Build a support team and realize you can't do it alone as a caregiver.



Caregiving for PCS

Tools & Resources to Support Your Loved one

Prepare for setbacks

Concussion recovery is not linear, and no two concussions are the same. Without a set timeline for recovery, progress can be hard to see, and it can be even more difficult when improvements seem to appear one day and disappear the next. Good days and setbacks are normal; try to be patient and gentle with them (and yourself).

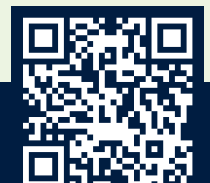
Some things to keep in mind:

- Setting and sticking to a routine, but adjusting as needed.
- Providing support for fluctuating emotions and personality.
- Track symptoms and explore additional evidence-based treatment options

Caregiving in a Crisis

Depression and anxiety are common symptoms of concussion. While over 99% of people do not experience a suicide-related event, the risk does double after a concussion. If your loved one is struggling, call **988** to reach the **Suicide Crisis Helpline** free, confidential, and available across Canada.

To learn how to best support your loved one who may be experiencing an emotional crisis, please [watch this CLF webinar with mental health experts Dr. Ciara Dockery and Dr. David Reiss.](#)



Self-Advocacy for Caregivers

Learn the basics of brain injury:

understanding the facts about brain injuries and their symptoms enables you to empathize with your loved one, forming a foundation for better support, and can highlight the steps you can take to minimize the impact these injuries can have on your relationship.

Explore family resources: Inquire with medical and mental health providers about available resources for your family. This may involve seeking family counselling, exploring respite care options, and accessing additional support services. Understanding and using these resources can contribute to your and your loved one's well-being.

Explore financial resources: Brain injuries often bring additional financial challenges, from medical expenses to necessary home accommodations. Collaborating with a Case Manager can help you identify available financial resources to alleviate some of the economic burdens associated with the care your loved one requires.

As a caregiver, advocating for both your loved one and yourself is crucial. By incorporating these strategies, you can better support your loved one and also prioritize your own well-being as a caregiver.

Communicating with Your Loved One

Many patients have trouble with interpersonal communication after a concussion or brain injury. It's important to keep this in mind as you work with your loved one to continue to support them through recovery.

Brainline and **MIT** offer helpful strategies for maintaining clear and effective communication.

Advocating for Your Loved One

- Ensure appropriate screening
- Seek referral to specialists
- Discuss recommended guidelines with healthcare providers
- secure medical records
- Respectful communication
- Ask questions and document answers
- Engage with a case manager
- Collaborate with athletic therapists
- Stay organized

More information about Advocating for Your Loved one can be found in our [Post-Concussion Guidebook](#).



Take time for self-care

Caregiving can be both emotionally and physically draining. Don't forget to take moments for yourself when you can. If you're looking for support as a caregiver, we'd love to connect you with one of our Peer Support Volunteers who has been in your shoes. If you would like to connect with a Peer Support Volunteer, please [Book a Peer Support Call](#).

