



The benefits of a holistic approach to concussion recovery

Bayshore[®]
Therapy & Rehab

Holistic health care is an approach to treating patients that looks at the whole person – not only isolated symptoms or ailments. It involves considering a patient’s physical and mental well-being, and the social, economic and spiritual factors that have an influence on their health.

With this approach in mind, **Bayshore Therapy & Rehab, a division of Bayshore HealthCare, is preparing to launch a brand-new concussion program in Victoria, B.C.**, created in partnership with Neuromotion and the University of Victoria. Starting in January, the 12-week program will provide **holistic, multidisciplinary treatment**, making it easier and more convenient for clients who have suffered a brain injury to access a team of different health professionals.

“We’ve noticed that there’s a large gap in services when it comes to post-concussion therapy,” says Lindsay Plaisant, an occupational therapist at Bayshore Therapy & Rehab who has played a key role in developing the program. “There are lots of concussion programs that focus on specific issues, such as problems with memory or balance, but there wasn’t a cohesive, multidisciplinary program that covers all aspects of a brain injury.”

What is a concussion?

Concussions, also referred to as mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBIs), result from a jolt or blow to the head, or a hit to the body that causes the head to move sharply or rapidly. The impact causes the brain to shake or bounce and collide with the skull, and this can lead to injury.

A concussion can cause a wide range of symptoms, depending on its severity and which parts of the brain have been affected. People may experience physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional changes. If a concussion is not treated, these effects can get worse, and the brain may not heal properly. Concussions – whether sustained at work, in a motor vehicle accident or while playing sports – should always be taken seriously. Anyone who has suffered a blow to the head should seek medical help.

Life after a concussion

Concussion symptoms can persist for days, weeks or months – even years. Often, patients must seek out different health professionals to deal with the after-effects of their injury. This can be time-

consuming, and when each care provider focuses only on his or her individual specialty, it's possible to overlook the bigger picture.

"More and more research shows that there are underlying factors that may cause or contribute to a patient's symptoms," says Balraj Dhillon, a practising kinesiologist at Bayshore Therapy & Rehab. "For example, **there's often mental health deterioration with a brain injury, because the person's perception of self-worth is lower, they're participating less in enjoyable activities, etc.** Unfortunately, treatment programs usually don't take the time to address anxiety, depression and other issues that might be related to the injury. If those problems persist, years down the road it will be hard to trace them back to the brain injury – and then no one knows how it all started."

The new concussion program in Victoria is designed to support both physical and psycho-social well-being. Physiotherapists and Kinesiologists will help patients with physical and functional deficits, and occupational therapists and clinical counsellors will focus on cognitive challenges, sleep problems and mental health. A speech-language pathologist is also available for speech difficulties, and a vocational rehabilitation consultant can help clients stay at or return to work.

"Research has shown that when a patient's whole, holistic self is treated, they recover better, and long-term effects from the brain injury can be minimized, relative to the mainstream treatment options currently being offered" says Dhillon.

The program is structured, but it's also individualized to target symptoms that haven't been treated or are difficult to treat because they require specialized care, explains Plaisant. "What we're doing is based on research, and we continue to evaluate the outcomes, to make sure we're providing the best care possible," she says. "We want to provide the skills for people to self-manage their condition and lead productive and meaningful lives."

Partners for brain health

Bayshore's collaboration with Neuromotion and the University of Victoria are key to this new endeavour.

Neuromotion is a neurological physiotherapy practice with extensive experience in treating brain-injured patients. Its physiotherapists will work with clients in the new program, which will be offered at the practice's bright, modern and accessible clinic in Victoria. "We had an existing relationship with Neuromotion, and this program was a natural fit," says Plaisant.

Meanwhile, PhD students studying neuropsychology at the University of Victoria will participate in the program and gather data for research purposes.

Dhillon and Plaisant are both excited about the possibilities of the new program, and about working closely with Neuromotion and the university students. Says Dhillon, "Together, we've created a well-rounded, fully researched program based on best practices."

Bayshore Therapy & Rehab provides comprehensive assessment and treatment services for automobile insurers, workplace insurers, life and health insurers, and government-funded ministries across Canada.

For more information about the concussion program in Victoria, call 604-404-0617.

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Bayshore Therapy & Rehab, a division of Bayshore HealthCare, assists Canadians to achieve maximum function and independence through physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and rehabilitation services. These services are designed to help people overcome injuries, illnesses and disabilities and are delivered in home, workplace, school or residential settings.

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