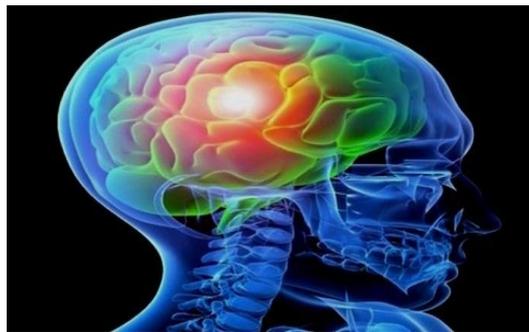


Understanding and Treating Concussion



Let's get one thing very clear, a concussion is a traumatic brain injury. There was a blow to the head and damage was done to the brain, and not everyone simply gets over such an injury



I often wonder where this tendency to minimise traumatic brain injuries began. We have all been exposed to the idea that we will simply get over a concussion, and I continue to come across this idea holding sway in all walks of life. Unfortunately, it doesn't do anyone any good, especially when their symptoms do not resolve.

I have been treating traumatic brain injuries for over 30 years now and I find myself in the unusual position of having had a moment of realisation, which has allowed me to develop a therapy that does fix these injuries and does so very quickly. I say this is unusual because I have yet to come across anyone else who fell down the same rabbit hole and does anything even remotely similar.

If you are someone who has suffered a TBI and has gone through all the contemporary (current) therapies and treatment and still have symptoms, you will know that frustration that comes when you can't get the answers you seek and no one seems to be able to help you. Well I was trained



into pretty much the exact same understanding that most healthcare professionals continue with today. But, instead of continuing to do the same things over and over again and accepting the limited outcomes it achieved, I got frustrated. I knew something was missing and I wanted to know what it was.

Now this was just an ordinary old frustration; I found myself consumed by the desire to know what was missing. I can look back now and see how life led me through a series of different events and situations, which gave me a very good understanding of how TBIs were seen and understood within healthcare, and I could see how none of it really led anywhere useful. In 1996 I found myself in a small town in the south east of New Mexico, USA, once again frustrated because someone was sitting in front of me who needed my help and I didn't know what to do. However, this time things took a very different turn and I finally got the answer to my question of what I was missing. That moment has resulted in a body of work I love and a therapy – the **Visual Perceptual Therapy** – which allows me to correct neuro-cognitive deficits quickly and effectively.

These days I can look back and say quite definitively that most of the world is only ever seeing the surface of neuro-cognitive performance. They are seeing the outcome of a process, which remains hidden to them. It will take a shift in perspective for them to see beneath the surface, and start to realise the profundity of the process that allows us to perform some truly amazing things in this world.

In order to understand what brain injuries do, let's first imagine the brain as a ball of fibre optic cables. All through our lives, our brain is modified on the basis of the sensory information it receives and the associations formed between pieces of sensory information. The reality is that none of us are aware of individual pieces of sensory information, because we experience the world as patterns of information. We look around us and see trees, cars, houses, etc and these objects are all patterns of sensory information, with many of them being comprised of many smaller patterns of sensory information eg: a house is made up of windows, doors, roofs, bricks, wood, etc. We also experience the world through sound, taste, touch, smell and our emotions and this all adds a depth and breadth to that experience.

In every moment of the day we are flooded with phenomenal amounts of sensory information, and when our neurology is working well, there are no problems with this. We exist in this vast sea of information and get to experience life as a result.

However, when the brain is damaged those fibre optic cables lose the capacity to carry that same volume of sensory information. Suddenly, we are no longer connecting the dots between pieces of information, and we no longer have the tolerance for that same sensory experience that is life. Our sensory receptors remain wide open and the same volume of sensory information is being channelled into the brain; but, because those pathways in the brain have been damaged, that information is no longer channelled to where it needs to go. Instead, any information the brain cannot cope with floods our system and we experience this as sensory overload.

To anyone observing a person with TBI it often seems as though they just cannot connect the dots, and this would be a very good description of what is going on. At the core of our information processing is our capacity to form inter-relationships between pieces of sensory information. When we do this, patterns of information naturally coalesce. If we think of how little puddles of water run together and form larger puddles, this is a good way of seeing how this happens. Essentially, the **Visual Perceptual Therapy** allows me to work with clients and rebuild this capacity to form inter-relationships. I can do this because I understand how we form these inter-relationships, and how

there is a direct relationship between what we experience (perceive) and how we then go on to act or respond to what we are perceiving. In most circumstances the client responds very quickly to the therapy with most people only needing 3 or 4 therapy sessions and their symptoms will have resolved.

TBI's are very significant injuries, regardless of what anyone might think. However, we have now entered a new age where it is possible to treat these injuries in ways that were just not possible previously. No one needs to resign themselves to living with symptoms of a TBI forever, because it just doesn't have to be that way.

Natoya Rose
Occupational Therapist

*With that, I would like to welcome you to my world,
the world of visual perceptual performance*

