Social Life and Peer Pressure after a concussion

Why this matters

Concussion doesn't just affect your brain - it affects your **life**.

- You may need to sit out of sport, limit screen time, or miss social events.
- Friends and teammates might not understand why you're not "back to normal."
- You might feel left out, frustrated, or pressured to return before you're ready.

This is normal — and there are ways to handle it.

Common challenges

Feeling isolated: Missing training, parties, or online time.
Peer pressure: Teammates saying, *"It's only a knock - get back in!"*
Worry about missing out (FOMO): Scrolling and seeing friends carrying on without you.
Identity shift: If sport is a big part of who you are, not playing can feel strange.

Engaging with social life

- **Important reminder**: Just because you can't play sport yet does not mean you have to stop socialising.
- **You're allowed fun**. Hanging out with friends, going to events, or joining team socials is safe — it doesn't set back your recovery.
- **Don't punish yourself.** Social connection is healthy, keeps your mood up, and helps you feel part of things.
- If an activity is loud, bright, or tiring (e.g. big party, noisy gig), go for a shorter time — but go.
- Think of it as choosing how to join in, not *whether* you can.

Strategies that can help

1. Stay connected in safe ways

- Hang out with friends in low-stimulation settings (walks, chilled meet-ups, quiet cafés).
- Join training as a spectator or helper — you'll feel part of the team even if you're not playing.
- Use short bursts of screen time to keep up socially (messaging, group chats).

2. Have a go-to explanation

Sometimes people just don't "get it." Having a simple script helps:

- *"I've had a concussion — I need a bit more time before I'm back."*
- *"Doctor's orders: I can train again when I'm 100%."*
- *"If I rush it, I'll be out even longer."*

3. Handle pressure with confidence

- Remember: *It's not weakness to rest - it's strength to recover properly.*
- Coaches and teammates will respect honesty more than risking yourself.
- Think long-term: one rushed game isn't worth weeks of extra symptoms.

4. Look after your mood

- Plan small daily positives: music, a hobby, a walk, time with pets.
- Talk to someone you trust if you feel low or left out.

Key Points

- Feeling left out or pressured is **normal** during concussion recovery.
- Staying socially connected is part of healing.
- A simple explanation can stop awkward questions.
- True friends and good teammates will support your recovery.