

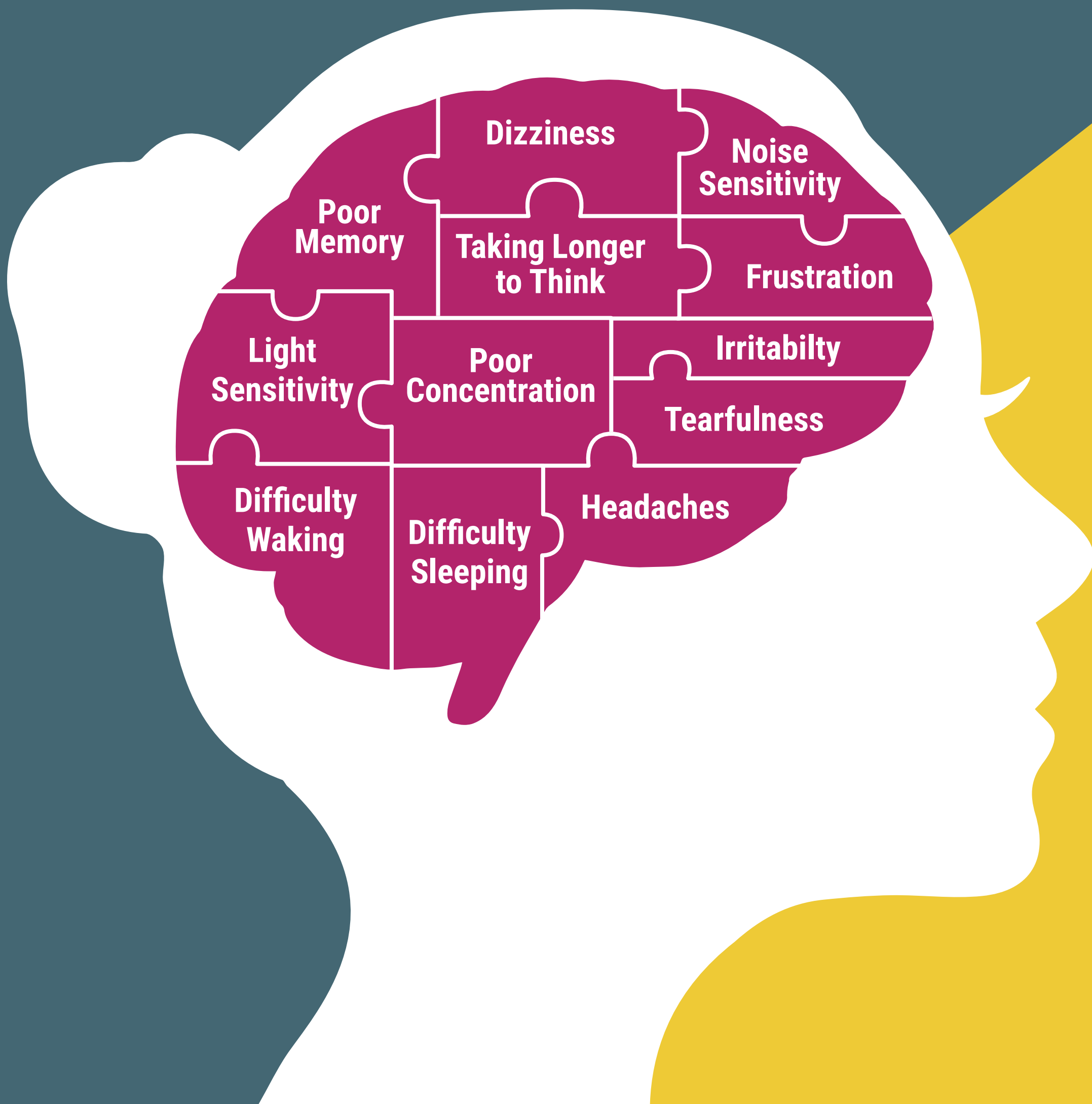
Female Concussions: New Interventions and New Information: Considering Best Practice for Supporting Females Recovering from Concussion from a Social Work and Occupational Therapy Perspective

“If concussion is the invisible injury, then females are the invisible population within that injury.” (Snedaker, K, Pink Concussions, 2013)

Problem

“Several recent studies have confirmed what women and their physicians anecdotally have known for years: **Women experience greater cognitive decline, poorer reaction times, more headaches, extended periods of depression, longer hospital stays and delayed return-to-work compared to men following head injury.**”

—Jeffrey J. Bazarian, M.D., M.P.H.

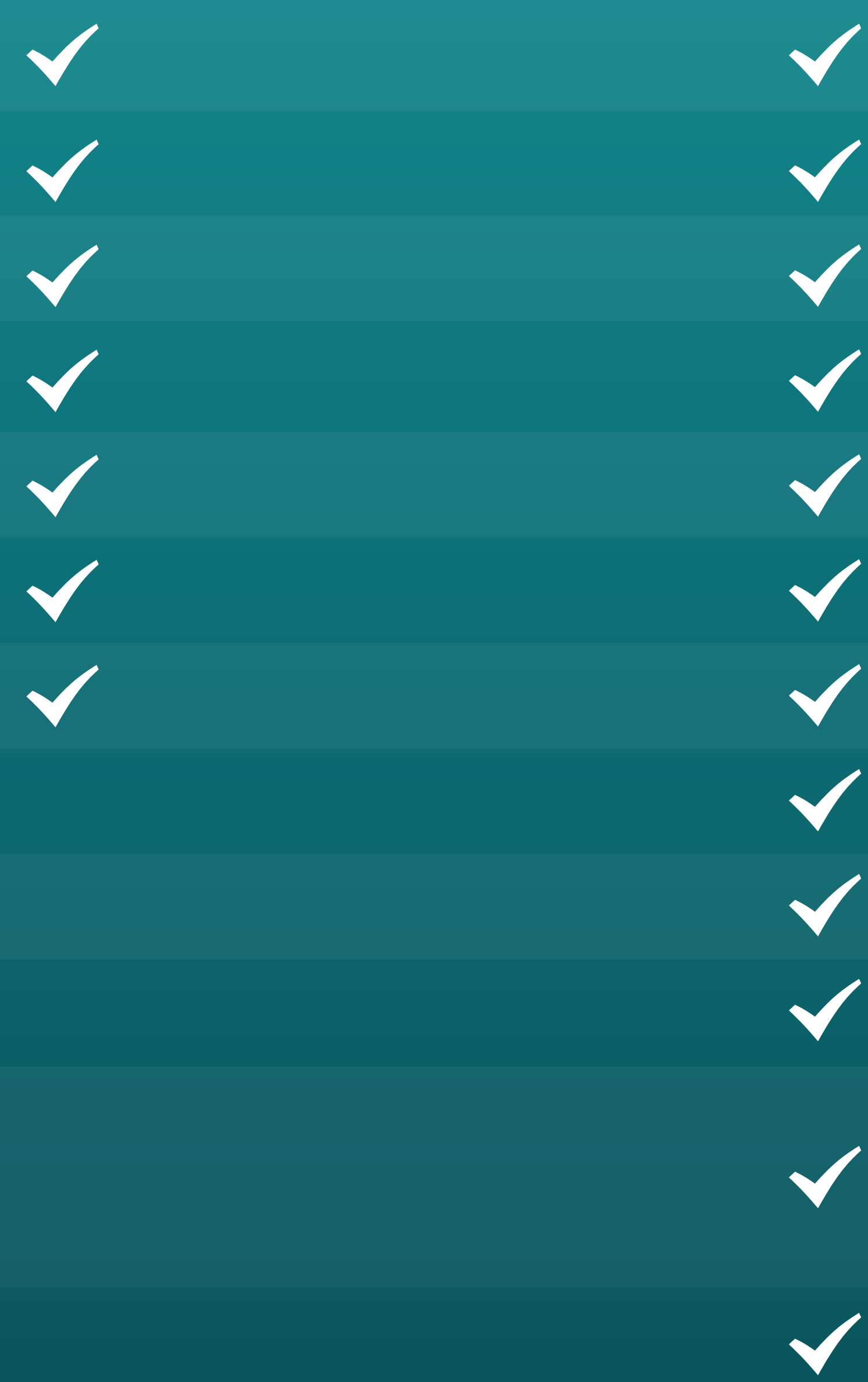


Distinctions

As a woman, additional considerations need to be acknowledged and taken into account in both diagnosis and treatment.

Impact of a concussion

- Depression/Anxiety/Irritability
- Fatigue/Sleep Disorder
- Post Traumatic Headache
- Balance
- Dizziness/Vertigo
- Cognition Impairment
- Tinnitus/Noise Intolerance
- Pregnancy
- Hormonal changes (involving pituitary gland)
- Menstrual cycle changes
- Executive functioning problems impacting life roles including pregnancy/motherhood
- Emotional expressiveness



Intervention

Education

- Displaying a diagram of the brain after concussion and how the injury to the brain was sustained
- Resources/referrals to specialists
- What to expect re symptoms
- What to expect re length of recovery

Awareness

- Sleep hygiene
- Importance of proper nutrition
- Provision of a safe exercise program
- Effective coping techniques for emotional changes
- Cognitive rehab (including remedial and compensatory strategies)

It is important to remember when treating the concussed client, the key differences between males and females to ensure that the treatment approach is client-centred.

Support: OT & SW

- Validating a woman's experience and supporting her reported post-concussive symptoms
- Refrain from challenging her experience or trying to “FIX” it
- Empathy, listening, remaining open, being patient and joining with the patient in her experience
- professional health care services for specialized education about female concussions, for client and family
- Seek psychotherapy and advocacy services with a registered social worker for education, relationship and mood counselling, government benefits, financial assistance and work/school accommodations
- Seek occupational therapy for functional/cognitive assessment, establishing routine, headache management & education



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