

## DR. MARIA MOURATIDIS TALKS ABOUT ADDRESSING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE

Credit: BrainLine (Produced by Victoria Tilney McDonough and Brian King)

### Dr. Maria Mouratidis

It is common that patients who are recovering from a brain injury or a severe physical injury might have thoughts of suicide. It's important that although it may not happen for everyone, that we pay attention to someone who might be feeling so hopeless, and so helpless that they might think that their life may not be worth living anymore. Especially if someone has a brain injury, depending on where their brain injury might be, that might effect their ability to be in control of their behavior, might effect their decision making, and especially if they are also using drugs or alcohol that can certainly, even more so impair their ability to make some good decisions.

Sometimes people can get into a very dark little corner of their mind where they just don't see anyway out. Although that moment may be brief, tragic consequences can happen. It is OK to ask people if you're concerned if they are having thoughts of suicide it doesn't put thoughts into their head, they've probably already thought about it. There's a big difference between having those thoughts and taking action on those thoughts. But if someone is having thoughts of hurting themselves or someone else they should definitely talk to their health care provider, their pastor, whatever supports that they might have and to get assessed and treated for that if that happens.

It's also very common in people who are suffering from depression, which often happens as a consequence of exposure to trauma, or as a consequence of brain injury. Although it's not uncommon to have those thoughts, it's very important that providers assess for that and that family members, if there is any concern about, if they are making comments about not being around, comments about that they would be being better off dead. Oftentimes patients who have a disability or injury feel like they are burdening those around them. Even if the caregivers aren't feeling that way at all, or aren't communicating that at all, it's a worry that they might have. So it's important that we are aware, that we can talk about it, and seek help because there is hope for it.