

Brain Injury Dialogues: Rehabilitation #2

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Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=1572>

Nani: I had to know when the bus left, what time I had to be at the bus. What I had to do to get to the bus. You know if I missed the first bus how would I get there. I think you taught me plan A, plan B, plan C. You know, until I caught them all. In case I lost one I can fall back on another one. And that really helped me get out of the house. Because I used to get lost when I would leave the house. You know, I remember it wasn't until I...

Becky Stone: I think after you injure your brain, there's often a kind of what I call fuzzy mindedness that develops. There's a tendency to be a little more spacey or less focused. A lot of the time what people think of as a memory problem is related very much to their lack of focus. Their distractibility. So we do a lot of work with that.

Male Narrator: Cognitive rehabilitation teaches survivors different ways to negotiate the world around them. Simple everyday things taken for granted before an injury could become impossibly complicated when you can't remember things, aren't able to concentrate, or your understanding of the world no longer operates as it had before your injury. In programs like this one, survivors re-train their thinking. They identify areas where they have difficulties and learn strategies to work around them. For me cognitive rehab was a corner stone in being able to get back into my life after my injury. I am always amazed when I hear of a survivor who hasn't yet had this kind of rehab. Truth is classes like Becky's can make the difference a survivor sinking or swimming.

Female Class Member: We have to find the way out.

Becky Stone: This is the first day out. I introduce this assignment called "get me out of here". And you'll see it's a pretty complex program where they have to read maps, follow directions, write down, write down very precise steps involved in accomplishing a task that's complex and it's a good kind of simulation of the complexity of the real world where you have a lot of things you have to keep together and keep organized and not drop critical pieces.

Female Class Member: We had to think, what is, what is oh... now I can't remember...

Male Narrator: Its okay. This is an exercise itself.

Female Class Member: Yeah...

Becky Stone: My fascinations always been how do we know? How do we understand? And with an acquired injury there is the history or the knowledge that I used to know this, or I used to understand this, so we can be Sherlock Holmes and try and figure out what pieces are

missing. That we used to have, and see if we can kind of parse it back together again. But if you've never been able to perform this cognitive skill, it's a whole different...

Male Narrator: Is it more difficult maybe? Or is it not necessarily?

Becky Stone: I'll say from this perspective, the acquired injury is harder because there's this sense of loss...