

Dr. Jeff Kreutzer and Dr. Taryn Stejskal Talk About Working Families and Adolescents

Produced by: Produced by Victoria Tilney McDonough and Brian King, BrainLine.org

Video Link: <http://www.brainline.org/content/multimedia.php?id=2889>

Dr. Taryn Stejskal: When it comes to adolescents, it's hard because a lot of aspects of being an adolescent or a teen look like symptoms of brain injury, impulsivity, moodiness, feeling very sad another, one moment and angry another moment, wanting to be independent then wanting to be close, experimentation, you know sexual expression, and a lot of things, a lot of symptoms of brain injury look like adolescence.

One thing that a professional in your community can help you do is kind of help you sort that out and you know I say to families a lot of times, I say "do we have a problem" and I say well if you're feeling concerned, if you're having a difficult time, if you feel uneasy then at the very least we're having a problem where you're feeling those particular ways.

Some families feel like they're doing okay and they don't have anything that they're very concerned about and other families feel like they have so many complex issues and families that I work with will even say to me gosh how do you, how do you even work with us. We must be so difficult to deal with and I say you know the person who thinks that you're the most difficult to deal with you is you, so you're really not that hard.

I think consulting with the professional and saying here are some of the things that we're experiencing, we're wondering if we should be concerned or not is a great idea because either you're going to have someone who can work with you through those problems or you're going to have someone give you some piece of mind and say you know what were you experiencing is very normal and here are some things that you can do to weather the storm in the meantime.

Dr. Jeff Kreutzer: And, and one thing to keep in mind is that things have changed a lot in brain injury world over the last 20 or 30 years. Most states now have a, a very good brain injury association and most of the brain injury associations in every state are aware of what the local resources are and so I would recommend and we routinely recommend families that we see to contact the brain injury association to get information on support groups, conferences, and the other source of good information about rehabilitation and family support is your local rehabilitation hospital. Most of them are very effective at doing what they do and they know what kind of services are available, where to find them, in rural communities as well. So I think somewhere between rehabilitation provider organizations and advocacy organizations like the brain injury association families can get good leads on where to find help in their local community.

Dr. Jeff Kreutzer: Taryn and I work closer together and we, we that gives us options because we have in some cases worked with a family both Taryn and I've seen the family. In some cases one of us will see the parents and the other one will see the adolescent, means adolescence is a time when people are seeking independence and one of the things that tends to happen when an adolescent is injured is there's a real concern about protecting that child and so the adolescent often gets very frustrated that there's a lot of things that they can't do anymore and so individual therapy like providing the adolescent an opportunity to express their feelings, their fears, their concerns, their sense of that they're losing their freedom is really important. It's important to give that persona voice and more often do is combine the individual sessions with adolescent with additional sessions that involve the family because one of the things that we found out for sure, I mean there is no question that parents are very, very concerned and they need to be, they need information, they need to understand a little bit about what's happening, so we use a dual focus kind of approach when there is an adolescent that needs some individual time.