

Dr. Jeff Kreutzer and Dr. Taryn Stejskal Talk About When Couples Should Seek Help

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

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When Should A Couple Seek Help?

Dr. Jeff Kreutzer: When should couple seek help? We think early on is better than later on and some of the reasons for that is that people are often confused about the changes that they see, they, they think they know a person really well and then their personality changes drastically. After a brain injury family members often have lots of questions, questions lead people with anxieties and also early intervention is important because we find sometimes people stop talking to each other and the relationship goes downhill. So we'd like to think that there is a preventative element of seeing a counselor early on.

Dr. Taryn Stejskal: Yeah. We were just saying too that a lot of times when people leave the hospital, there is so many other appointments, rehab appointments and speech therapy appointments and appointments with different doctors, the people can feel like their schedule is really full and so if it's not possible right after you or someone in your family has been discharged, we'd say within about three to six months, try to get into a counselor and just talk about some of the issues that are happening in your relationship. It's a, it's a good way to have a, a safer space to talk about what's changed in the relationship and, and get some feedback about that.
What issues do people visit you for counseling on?

Dr. Taryn Stejskal: The issues that people come to see us about can be very different. If they're coming in three months after the injury or injury or 18 months to 2 years after the injuries. So initially people are very hopeful that things will get better that the person will be back or very close to, the person that they used to be and that's within you know three months to one year. After a year, couples start to say you know may be this is the way that things are going to be for a long period of time and so at that point people are coming and they talk to us about okay we're still getting better but now we want some strategies to help us live with how things are going to be different for a long period of time and that could be cognitive strategies for memory, that could be how they could have a sexual relationship that's different now, it could run, could run the whole gamut.

In addition, to be completely honest within the first year when people are very hopeful that symptoms are going go away and people, people don't seem to mind as much when there are concerns related to the injury like aggression or people being forgetful or forgetting where they put their keys, at about between the two and five year mark people can become much more frustrated with the person who's had the injury, you know why can't he or she do this or that and so the chronicity of the, the concerns can create a lot of frustration and a lot of negative emotions and so we try to work with people on that to kind of solve their solvable problems and help them live with the problems that they can't solve.