

Family Dynamics Following Brain Injury

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

Mike Peters



Rob McDaniel, MS

VP Operations

NeuroRestorative South Central

Prioritized Areas of Rehabilitation

Physical Functioning

2 Cognitive Functioning

Self Care Skills

1 Medical Stability

3 Behavioral Functioning

Communicative Functioning

2 Family Dynamics

The Pros & Cons of a Crisis

- Family crisis often provides the opportunity to move either toward greater family cohesion and mental health or family deterioration and emotional decay.

Kaplin



Sequence of Family Reactions Following a Catastrophe

- Relief** They're alive! Someone who knows what to do is in control and making decisions.
- Anger** Someone else is making decisions which are rightfully mine. This never should have happened – it's not fair.
- Guilt** I could have prevented this. I never should have let others make important decisions.
- Dependency** I admit, I really don't know what to do. Somebody has to take this load off me.

The Issue of CONTROL !

They attempt to fight the trap of dependency by trying to regain mastery over the situation they are in.

They are most comfortable in dealing with personal issues. The family may seek control by being highly critical of staff in areas that normally fall within the role of parents.

The patient may seek control by being attention seeking, non-compliant or manipulative.

The Hard Truth

The need for re-gaining control is
REAL!

What may appear to be petty complaining or ridiculous questions over nuisance issues is part of of necessary step – a step that can develop into a nightmare if not channeled properly.

Why does the family so avidly seek control?

No control over the traumatic event

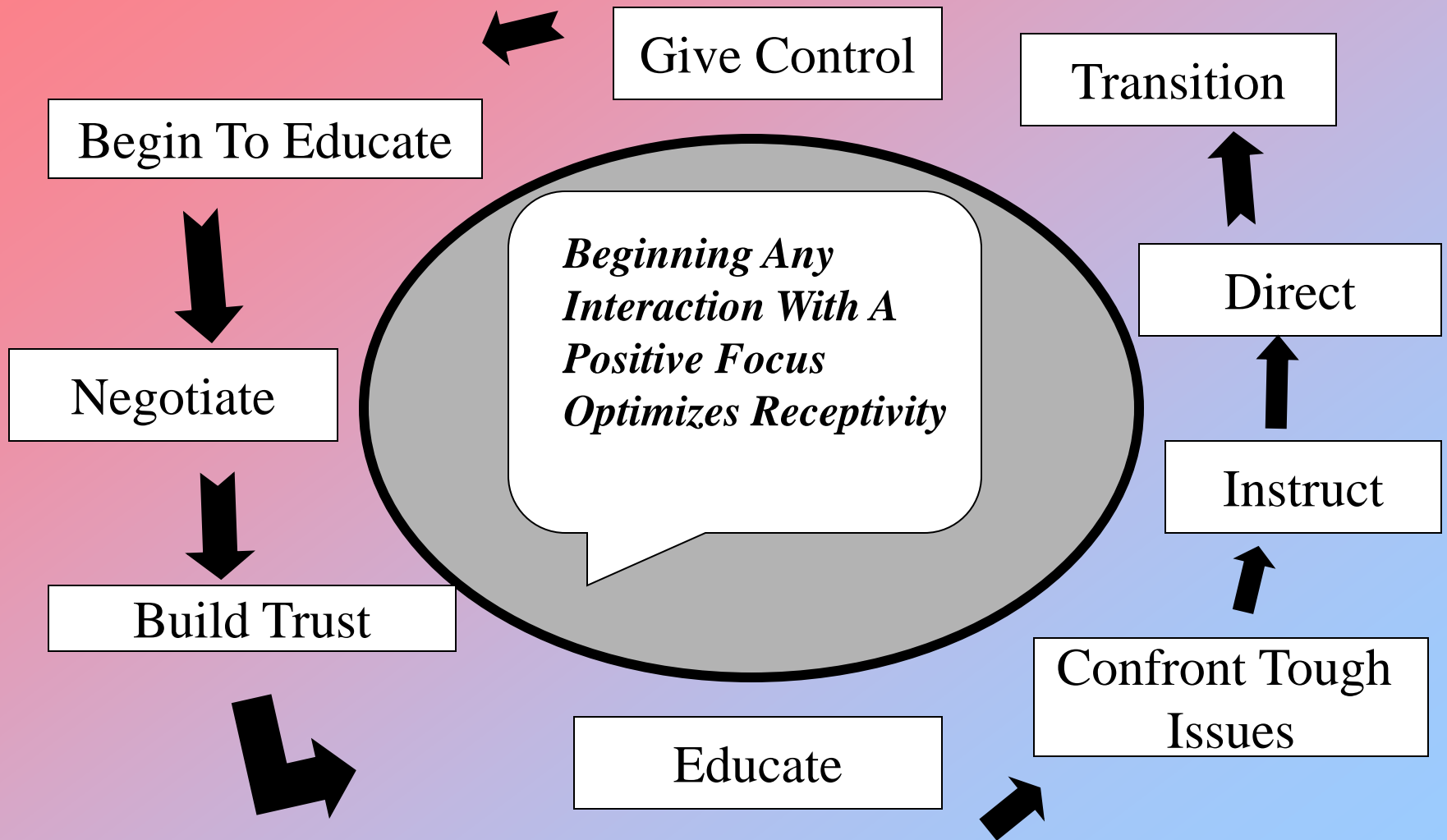
No control over emergency & intensive care

No control over the drastic life changes

No control over the need for rehab

No control over the ultimate outcome

Family Training Guidelines



Factors Which Influence Crisis Resolution

Frye

The family's experience with anxiety management and problem solving

The severity of the brain injury

The quality of education that the family receives during the crisis period

Precursors to Education

The first crucial step of education requires that the family understand both the general and specific consequences of the disability.

Denial may be present – the family may report progress where staff don't. Later they may encourage the patient to pursue goals outside of his/her ability. This is a set up for emotional failure.

REMEMBER

Persons under the stress of trauma hear poorly, remember little and process less.

O'Brien & Fralish

For a family of an individual with traumatic brain injury, the diagnosis does not likely conjure a recognizable frame of reference

Concluding Guidelines For Steering Control in the RIGHT Direction

- Display sincere and genuine interest toward the family – you are asking a lot of them
- Really think about what you want to happen – do you want increased independence
- Always be upfront and honest – never lie to make someone happy
- Presented information should be clarified
- Sometimes families need to vent – let them
- Focus on assets
- Determine progressive steps which give the survivor and family back a sense of control
- Consistency and objective are easy to talk about – make a commitment to actually carry through
- In the long run the family CAN be a benefit or a burden – help them make the wise choice