

Teen Finds Alternatives to Drugs for ADD

A.2 Auditory Processing-Oral Language Expression [Ability to say what you want to say]

Austin, 16, had been taking Dexedrine, a medication often prescribed to teenagers with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Before that, he took the more commonly known Ritalin given to children with ADD. Austin and his mother, Carol, began to seek alternatives for treating the disorder which had affected his grades and school performance, as well as his self-esteem.



When she heard about Options Center for Health and Education in Peoria Heights from three different sources, Carol decided to try the alternative approaches used there.

Classes to help him with his self expression and memory in school and acupuncture were also recommended. During classes at school, Austin said he would get tired and couldn't concentrate. He said this is how he felt



because of the Dexedrine. He couldn't get to sleep because he was too wired and then didn't get enough rest to have energy for the next day. Helen wondered out loud if supplements would help.

Carol and Austin decided to try the herbal supplement and see what happened. In a later class, Helen pointed out to Austin how alert he appeared. Both Carol and Austin attributed it to the supplement. Austin began taking the supplement and was able to cut the Dexedrine in half, said Carol.

With the combination of the supplement, stress reduction techniques, and the classes, according to Carol, Austin has shown a great deal of improvement in the classroom as well as in health and self-esteem.

The main problem with the Dexedrine for Austin was the side effect which made Austin unable to sleep or eat. Austin was "gaunt and thin looking,"

according to his mother. Austin's teacher had noticed he "dosed off a lot or spaced out," Austin recalled.

"She said I'm doing it a lot less," said Austin.

It took a couple of weeks to get used to it, according to Carol, but Austin responded well to the pycnogenol. Their goal is to get Austin completely off the Dexedrine.

"I feel like I'm eating a lot more," said Austin. "I feel pretty good now." He could tell the difference when he forgot to take the supplement a couple of times, he noted, and "felt like my face was going to fall off."

Carol noticed marked improvement with the use of pycnogenol, saying, "There is no way I could describe to you the change that took place. He was present. He started following instructions -- multiple instructions, as a matter of fact."

With Helen, Austin learned Brain Gym® exercises designed to create a balance between the right (intuitive) and left (analytical) sides of the brain. Through testing, Austin discovered he was left eye and ear dominate but right-handed, which made receiving and interpreting information a difficult and slow process for him.

This was abundantly clear in one classroom, in which the teacher asked the students to copy a question from the chalkboard on their piece of paper, and then conduct research on the question by using reference books in the back of the classroom. It took Austin too long to copy the questions, and he was unable to complete the assignment.



He would process one word at a time, explained Carol. Now he is able to process words in groups. Austin noticed he is able to "look up to the board and write it down quicker" now. It's also easier to listen to the teacher, he said, all of which help him in completing assignments which were virtually impossible to finish before. "Now, I'm more excited to get it done," he said.

Austin's Options classes helped him to enhance his memory in the areas of basic math and reading skills and become more self-aware and develop positive attitudes about learning.



Austin also received acupressure, using the pressure points of the body to relieve stress and open blockages in the mind and body to allow the person's energy to flow properly. One of the techniques is the five-point neck and shoulder release, which Austin loved.

"That is the best!" said Austin.

Carol likes the effect of Options' work with Austin, too, saying, "I think they are just great. I think they are really calming."

Carol said they have remained with the program at Options because it is working and because "Austin feels better with it." Time, and his first set of grades in a new school year, will tell if the difference Carol and Austin see will translate into a better grade point average in school for Austin. "I'm hoping that the grades do show improvement like the pre- and post-test show," she said.

Austin improved in three of the four academic areas from his pre-test in April to his post-test in August, with the exception of basic math. In specialized math, he improved 1.5 grade levels; in reading, the jump was 3.2 grade levels; and in spelling, he moved 3.4 grade levels.



"If we had known about this when he was younger," said Carol, speculating on how his school experience could have been better had there been earlier intervention available. "They don't go into this at school."

***If you would like to communicate with Options,
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