


THINGS OFTEN HEARD FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

≧ I miss the way things used to be.

≧ He's more like my child than my husband.

 I have to be the mother and father of our children.

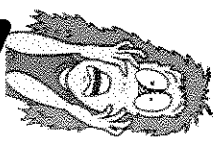
≧ Now I have to take care of everything by myself.

≧ Our 29 year old daughter is living with us again.

≧ Why is my dad so different?

≧ There's no way we can have another child now.

≧ I feel like I am living with a stranger.

 **D**rastic changes in relationships and responsibilities often follow neurological illness and injury. As a result, many family members have a mixture of feelings including sadness, fear, hopelessness, and frustration.

CHANGES OR LOSSES YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED

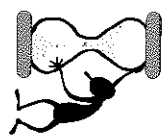
- ➡ Drastic changes in the survivor's personality and abilities
- ➡ Increase in stress and responsibilities
- ➡ Loss of support and companionship
- ➡ Decreased ability work and have fun
- ➡ Financial difficulties
- ➡ Diminished sense of security
- ➡ Worry about health problems and the future
- ➡ Lessened confidence in yourself or others
- ➡ Changes in plans for the future
- ➡ Loss of social life and time for friends

HOW HAVE YOU REACTED TO CHANGES OR LOSSES?

- Feeling down, blue, or hopeless
- Crying spells
- Sleep problems
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Low energy or getting tired easily
- Restlessness or difficulty sitting still
- Irritability or frustration
- Eating a lot more or less
- Worrying about the future
- Difficulty making decisions, concentrating, or remembering
- Not enjoying things like before
- Keeping to yourself
- Wondering whether or not life is worth living

Here are some ideas to better cope with changes and loss. Try them out and see which work for you.

- ★ Be kind to yourself and allow yourself and others time to adjust.
- ★ Realize that your feelings are a common, normal response to a difficult situation.



- ★ Appreciate the value of patience and persistence in reaching your goals.



- ★ Recognize the natural human tendency to worry and focus on the negative.

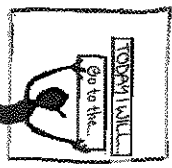
- ★ Learn to focus on your successes, strengths, and resources.

- ★ Focus on what your loved one can do instead of what they can't.



- ★ Be hopeful and say positive things (e.g., "We will make it through this," "We've come so far.")

- ★ Take one step at a time, set goals for each day.



- ★ Avoid thinking about and making comparisons to how things were.

- ★ Give up some old responsibilities when you take on new responsibilities.

- ★ Distract yourself with music, a book, a movie, or television.



- ★ Remain active, try to do things you enjoy.

- ★ Think about the future you want and the best ways to get there.

- ★ Join a support group. Talk to other survivors for support and ideas for coping.



- ★ Get to know this "different" person. Try to do fun things together.

- ★ Talk to and spend time with people who care about you.

- ★ Remember, you must take care of yourself so that you can better take care of the survivor and other family members.



- ★ Give yourself breaks and learn when and how to ask for help.



- ★ Learn about treatments, resources, and recovery.

- ★ Talk with a professional about your concerns.



National Resource Center for Traumatic Brain Injury
Tools for therapy, education, self-help, and support
 Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems
 P.O. Box 980542
 Richmond, VA 23298-0542
 (804) 828-9055
 FAX: (804) 828-2378
www.neuro.pmr.vcu.edu

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Layout and design — Debbie West

Coping Effectively with Loss and Change

LAURA TAYLOR
 JEFF KREUTZER



GUIDE # 54
 A GUIDE FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

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