Surviving, Coping & Healing After a Tragic Loss
GRIEF IS A NORMAL AND NATURAL PROCESS

• It takes work to get through
• Not easy to let go
• Grieving process is both physically and emotionally demanding
• People grieve in different ways
• No right or wrong way to grieve
• Each person comes up with their own method of grieving that fits them and their particular loss
Conditions That Make It Harder to Make it Through the Grieving Process

- Sudden losses are harder to deal with than anticipated loss
- Loss of spouse, lover, child, parent or best friend usually more deeply felt than distant relations or friends
- Support is critical
- The fairness of the loss
Kubler-Ross’s Stages of Grief

• Denial
• Anger
• Bargaining
• Depression
• Acceptance
Understanding the Emotional and Physical Effects of Grief

- Exhaustion
- Days of Distraction
- Denying New Reality
- Anger
- Grief Knows No Schedule
- Physical Symptoms
- Emotional Ambushes
Top 5 Myths About Grief

• **Everyone grieves the same.**
  Grief is unique to the individual

• **Ignore grief and it will go away.**
  One must experience the grief journey in order to heal

• **If someone is not showing emotion, they are handling their grief.**
  Expressing emotions leads to healing and results in a strengthened and enriched life

• **The goal of grief is to get over it.**
  One does not get over the death of a loved one. People can learn to live with the reality of a loved one's death.

• **Time heals**
  Time provides you the opportunity to do something about your grief
Ways to Deal with Grief

• Journaling
• Talking With Someone
• Getting Professional Help
• Medication
• Support Groups
CJD Foundation Family Conference

Bereavement Session

Danielle Jordan
Autopsy Program Manager
National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center (NPDPSC)
“Caregiver Burnout”

- Multifaceted: Emotional, mental, physical and financial exhaustion

- PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
  - Anxiety
  - Physical Symptoms
  - Detachment / Antisocial - withdrawal from family and friends

- Lack of support
MYTHS

- Don’t feel bad
- Grieve alone
- Takes time / Time heals all wounds
- Be strong for self & others
- Keep busy
S.T.E.R.B

- Short
- Term
- Energy
- Relieving
- Behaviors

Activities you use to distract yourself from painful feelings that follow a major loss

(Grief Recovery Institute)
Unique to CJD

“We were just given a diagnosis and sent on our way.”

“Why don’t the doctors know anything?”

“I lost a part of me when ____ died”

“Everyday is a constant struggle”

“Why did this have to happen?”

“I was robbed!!!!!!”

“I feel like I’m drowning…..I can’t breath!”

“What do I do now?”

“No one understands what I went through.”
Later....

“Hey, how are you doing?”

Feelings

Inside

Not

Expressed
Acceptance

- Rediscover the ability within yourself to transform the quality of “your life” so you can complete your relationship with a loved one who has passed away
  - Accepting the change in the relationship

- Take actions to deal with grief to become emotionally complete

- Recovery comes by learning to make a series of small positive changes in our attitudes and then our behaviors
Seek Out a “Heart with Ears”