

- Meet others who have an understanding of at least part of what you have been through. This may mean a bereavement class or support group in your area, connecting with other CJD families or attending the Annual Family Conference. It is important to know that you are not alone, even though you may feel very alone.
- Do what works for you. The world around you may try to tell you what is best for you. Only you truly know what is right for you.
- Contact us for support or with questions at **1.800.659.1991** or **help@cjd.foundation.org**. We are here to support you.

LAST THOUGHTS

People around you want to help but they may not know how, so please remember that they are not mind readers. If you have a need, tell someone. That is the only way people know what will be helpful to you.

This process consists of redefining who you are after this loss. This will take time, much more time than anyone realizes.

If physical symptoms persist or become worse, please see a physician.



Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease
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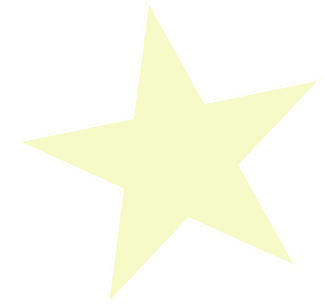
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HelpLine 1.800.659.1991
www.cjd.foundation.org
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COPING WITH LOSS



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COPING WITH LOSS

Each person's response to a loss is unique, yet there are many common feelings. Listed below are a few of the experiences you may encounter in the weeks, months and years ahead. Please remember that these are only some of the possibilities - what you feel today may be very different from what you feel tomorrow. If any physical symptoms or health problems persist, it is important that you contact your doctor for evaluation and advice.

PHYSICAL RESPONSES

Grief can express itself in physical symptoms, such as:

- Tightness in the throat
- Change in or loss of appetite
- Restlessness or change in sleep patterns
- Unexplainable lack of energy
- Inability to concentrate
- Difficulty making decisions
- Confusion
- Intense levels of feelings
- Sudden change in feelings
- An empty feeling

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COMMON FEELINGS

In response to your grief, you may:

- Feel that the loss can't be real
- Feel that these past few weeks did not happen
- Sense your loved one's presence
- Keep thinking about the life and death of your loved one
- Relive times in the past and feel guilty or angry about things that did or did not happen
- Feel angry at how unfair this is
- Feel that you have been cheated
- Feel that no one knows or understands what you are experiencing
- Need to tell and retell the stories about your loved one and your experience
- Feel mood changes over the slightest thing, including music or smells
- Cry without warning and in unexpected places and times
- Feel like you want to run away
- Desire to stay busy enough that you will not feel the pain
- Fear what will happen next, because this was never supposed to happen

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SURVIVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

As much as you may not like what has happened, it is important to remember that life is not the same now even though you want life to be the same as it was. For the next few weeks or even months, much of life may be about surviving.

- Surviving the pain
- Surviving everyone else's attempts to make you feel better
- Surviving the changes you never invited or wanted in your life

The following are some suggestions about surviving the days ahead:

- Live one day at a time. You know differently than most how fragile life is. Live for today as much as you are able. Be gentle with yourself.
- While you may not feel you have the time or energy to take care of yourself, remember you are also important.
- Give yourself permission to "backslide". It is a natural progression in the process of mourning. You are not getting worse you are surviving.
- Excessive use of drugs, food, shopping, alcohol or any other substance or activity is not helpful. You may feel good for a moment, but it will not help in the long run.

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