



Ideas to better cope with change and loss continued . . .

- Get to know this “new” 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 your loved one 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.

Remember, you are not alone! There are many families going through the same experiences as you.

How to contact us

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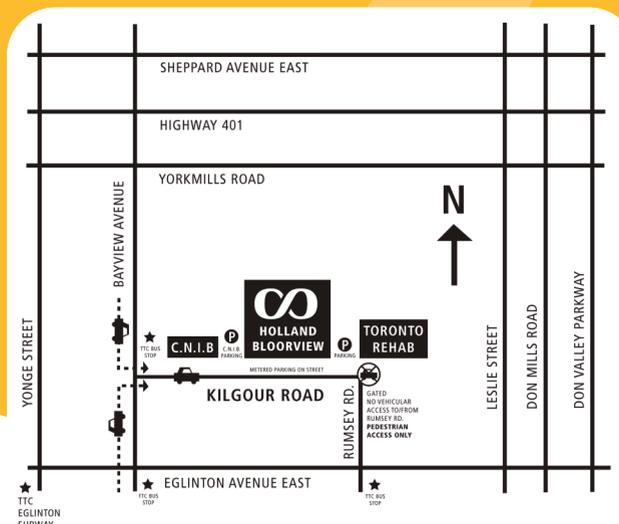
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About Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital is Canada’s largest children’s rehabilitation hospital.

Our vision is to create a world of possibility for kids with disability. We pioneer treatments, technologies, therapies and real-world programs that give children with disabilities the tools to participate fully in life.

Holland Bloorview serves about 7,000 children each year, with about 600 inpatient admissions and 58,000 outpatient visits. Holland Bloorview is a world-class teaching hospital fully affiliated with the University of Toronto. We train future health-care specialists in the field of childhood disability. The Bloorview Research Institute is located onsite, allowing us to integrate cutting-edge research and teaching with frontline care to improve children’s quality of life.



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Families Coping with Loss and Change After Brain Injury

The help you need

A guide for family and friends of a loved one recovering from a neurological illness or injury

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Drastic 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.

Comments often heard from family members:

- I miss the way things used to be
- She acts so much younger than her age since the brain injury
- It's so embarrassing to have people over now
- People look at him and think he's fine, but they don't understand
- I worry that people are going to take advantage of him—he's so naive
- Why is my sister so different?
- I love him but it's so hard sometimes to be around him
- I feel like I am living with a totally different child

Changes or losses you may have noticed

- Drastic changes in your loved one's personality and abilities
- Increase in stress and responsibilities
- Loss of support and companionship
- Decreased ability to 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
- Less time for other family members

Which of the following have you noticed?

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

Scoring: The more items you check, the more you might be depressed—make sure to talk to a professional.

Here are some ideas to better cope with change 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, for example "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.
- Eat properly, get enough sleep and remain active.
- Think about the future you want and the best ways to get there.
- Join a support group. Talk to other family members for support and ideas for coping.