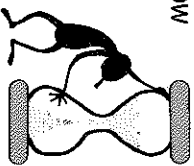


## HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF?

- ☑ Talk to and spend time with people who care about you.
- ☑ Allow yourself to ask for help.
- ☑ Realize that your feelings are a common, normal response to your experience.
- ☑ Be kind to yourself and allow yourself time to adjust.
- ☑ Take one step at a time, set goals for each day.
- ☑ Recognize the good things in your life and changes for the better.
- ☑ Focus on what you can do instead of what you can't.
- ☑ Be hopeful. Say positive things to yourself and others (e.g., "I will make it through this," "I've come so far.").
- ☑ Remain active, do things you enjoy.
- ☑ Distract yourself with music, a book, a movie, or television.
- ☑ Try to find new activities and interests.
- ☑ Make a list of things that you are thankful for and qualities you like about yourself, refer to the list often.



- ☑ Build new relationships and improve old relationships.
- ☑ Join a support group. Talk to other survivors for support and ideas for coping.
- ☑ Appreciate the value of patience and persistence in reaching your goals.
- ☑ Apply coping strategies that have worked in the past.
- ☑ Learn about brain injury, resources, and recovery.
- ☑ Remember that others face similar or more challenging problems.



**If you're unable to help yourself...  
Loss and change can cause  
severe depression, a serious  
problem. If you have questions  
or concerns, consult  
a professional.**

**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](http://www.neuro.pmr.vcu.edu)

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Layout and design — Debbie West  
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## Coping Effectively with Loss and Change

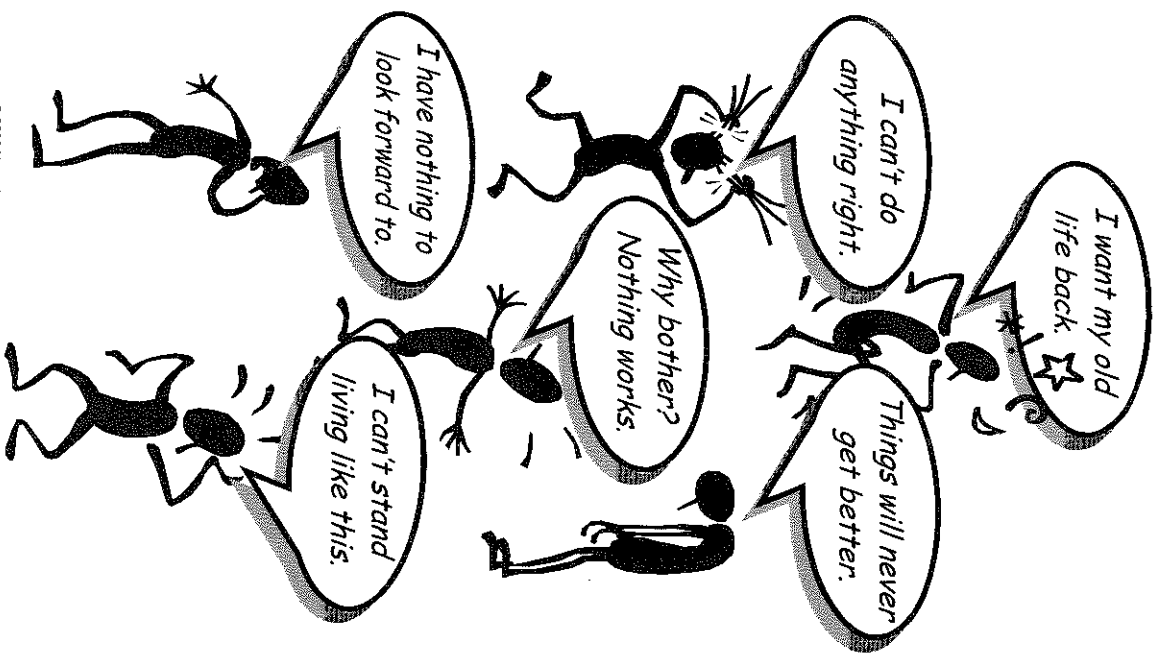
SARAH DEMM  
JEFF KREUTZER



GUIDE # 2

**National Resource Center  
for traumatic brain injury**  
*Tools for therapy, education, self-help, and support*

Brain injury often brings about drastic life changes. Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, frustration, and fears about the future may continue for weeks, months, or years. Many survivors want to feel better but don't know where to turn.



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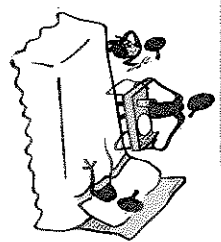
### WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU NOTICED?

Check all items that apply to you:

- Feeling down, blue, or hopeless
- Crying spells
- Irritability, restlessness
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Getting frustrated easily
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Low energy
- Appetite increase or decrease
- Can't stop thinking about problems
- Difficulty making decisions, concentrating, or remembering things
- Not enjoying things
- Avoiding others
- Wondering whether or not life is worth living

**Scoring:** The more items you check, the greater your distress and the more likely you are to need professional help.

### COMMON LOSSES OR CHANGES



- Loss of health and well-being
- Change in daily activities and responsibilities
- Loss of skills and abilities
- Less able to care for family members
- Loss of independence
- Unable to live on your own or manage finances
- No longer able to drive or work
- Loss of confidence
- Can't go out by yourself or be left alone
- Feeling alone and different than others
- No longer have an active social life, including dating

