

Understanding Systemic Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

Emotional Effects

A systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis (SJIA) diagnosis can bring a roller coaster of emotions for both the child with SJIA and parents and caregivers. It's important for parents and children to learn coping and communication skills to manage the ups and downs of living with a chronic and unpredictable disease. While the physical effects of SJIA can take a toll, mental health and emotional wellbeing can be greatly impacted, too.

Rollercoaster of Emotion

An SJIA diagnosis can trigger feelings of grief and loss. Grief can cause certain emotions to happen in stages or at the same time. Recognizing these emotional states can help you identify when to seek resources and solutions to cope.

Denial

Confusion, shock, fear & avoidance

Solutions & resources:

Needs: Education, information, communication skills.

- Get a **JA Power Pack**, which includes *A Parent's Guide: Raising a Child With Arthritis*
- Learn about **Juvenile Arthritis**
- Learn about **JA and school rights**

Bargaining

Overwhelm, guilt, hostility

Solutions & resources:

Needs: Emotional support, connection, speaking up about needs

- Make time for self-care
- Participate in a **JA Parent Connect Group**
- Attend a **JA Conference**

Acceptance

Exploring options, moving on, making new plans

Solutions & resources:

- Develop a daily routine to keep your child active and moving
- Find activities or hobbies for the family to do together
- Sign up for your child to attend a **JA Camp**

Anger

Frustration, anxiety, irritation

Solutions & resources:

Needs: Coping skills to manage stress, anxiety and anger; support system

- Join a **JA Online Community discussion**
- Seek counseling and support to learn coping skills
- Find family activities to help release stress and have fun together

Depression

Withdrawal, sadness, hopelessness

Solutions & resources:

Needs: Support, Counseling, Connect Groups

- **Call the Helpline** to find resources or answers to your questions
- Seek support for your mental health and wellbeing
- Attend a **JA Connect Group**

Finding Meaning

Translating acceptance into action

Solutions & resources:

- Share your JA family story with others to raise awareness
- Participate in a local event & invite family & friends
- Become an advocate

It's important to give yourself the time to process all your emotions.

When you feel comfortable sharing your experiences and feelings, talk to a loved one or seek help from a mental healthcare

Find more details about SJIA here.