Frequently Asked Questions
Grief & Bereavement

How long will I grieve?
Grief is a lifelong journey. There are periods when grief is turbulent and periods when it is calm. Grief is also unpredictable and can change quickly. You and your family have experienced a profound loss, and it is important to be gentle with yourself and others as you go through this uncharted territory. Give yourself permission to grieve and adapt. As author Mitch Albom states, “Death ends a life, not a relationship.”

What is grief counseling?
Grief counseling is very different than mental health counseling in that we don’t diagnose or formulate a treatment plan. Rather, we provide a supportive, safe space for people to talk about and process their grief and the many psychosocial losses that come with losing a child or sibling.

What is the difference between individual counseling and support groups?
In individual counseling, a bereaved person and counselor meet privately to discuss the individual grief experience. In group counseling or support groups, multiple bereaved people gather to provide support for each other. Usually there is a shared experience around the type of loss.

How do I know if I need grief counseling or a support group?
Each person grieves in a unique way, and what may be helpful for one person might not be helpful for another. Many grieving parents find support from family members, friends, co-workers and faith communities. However, grieving the loss of a child can also be a very isolating experience. Some parents feel unable to share their grief with close friends and family. It can be difficult to see others return to their daily routines while you are still in so much pain. Some parents find grief counseling helpful in that it gives them a safe space to talk about their child, their loss and their grief without judgment and without someone trying to “fix it.” Some find comfort in attending a support group with other parents who have lost a child. It can be helpful to know you are not alone in your pain or fears.

How old does a child need to be to receive grief support services?
Even young children can experience the effects of grief. We use play and art therapy to work with young children in our child-friendly environment. If you have questions or concerns about how your child is grieving, please contact us.

How much do grief and bereavement services cost?
We believe every family who experiences a loss should receive the support they need. With this in mind, IU Health and the Riley Children’s Foundation financially support Hope in Healing, allowing our team to offer services to families free of charge.

I do not live in Indianapolis. May I still receive grief support?
Yes, please contact us so we can identify resources and support in your area.

How do I make an appointment?
Please contact us at 317.963.0829 or HopeinHealing@iuhealth.org.