

Death of a Child

There is no worse pain in the world than after the loss of a child. No one can understand it unless you have gone through it. The grief process is different because it is a seemingly unnatural death. It is more jarring and shocking than any other death of a loved one. It can seem as if the grief is never-ending. This is all a normal reaction to the death of a child. Here are some reminders, just as you process and begin to accept the death of your loved one:

- ✦ You are in a state of shock, and you are not sure how to break through the fog. At this time, your brain is protecting you from dealing with the truth. There is nothing wrong if you cannot cry or talk about it. Be patient with yourself, and those around you as the process begins of taking in what this loss means to you.
- ✦ Rely and draw strength from your faith. In this time of uncertainty, there may be few constants. Keep your faith and those who share your faith close during this time. It will help you find, even if only for a moment, peace and comfort.
- ✦ If you have other children, it may be best to explain the situation with a therapist or counselor in the room. They will ask lots of questions, so be prepared.
- ✦ Your family could benefit from counseling during this time of grief. It could include looking into a faith-based counselor, from your local church, or from a family counseling center in your area. It helps to have an outside person listening to you. You may find relief in talking. If a counselor is not for you, then perhaps a trusted family friend to lean on during this time.
- ✦ The hardest thing to maintain during one's grief is their physical health. You become so wrapped up in funeral arrangements, your own grief and those who send their condolences that taking care of yourself may become difficult. Make sure that you and your family are eating healthy, balanced meals; getting proper sleep, even if it is in the form of naps as well; drinking lots of water; exercise to alleviate the stress and built-up anxiety; and refraining from alcohol, which will only depress you further.
- ✦ Give yourself time and space. Know your limitations of what you would like to share with others about the death of your child. Do not think that you have to tell everyone what happened. That is completely up to you.
- ✦ Finding a support group to give you comfort in knowing you are not alone in your suffering could help.
- ✦ Journaling your feelings, prayers and grief can help. In the beginning, this may help a great deal, as you cannot say it out loud yet.

The loss of your beloved child will always be a part of you. No one can wipe away the pain you feel, but trying to find those who are strong for you in your weakest moments can help.

There are resources available to you:

AAMFT American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
<https://www.aamft.org/>

Bereaved Parents of the USA <https://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/>

The Compassionate Friends
<https://www.compassionatefriends.org/>

CISM Hotline 214-640-4380 SWA/TWU 556