

GRIEF: When You Lose a Child

Grief is a normal reaction to a loss of any kind. It is a journey of experience and feelings. Your attachment to the child who died and your relationship with the child will undergo a transformation.

Grief hurts. When a child died, your attachment bond is severed. Your brain is hard-wired to be attached to your child. Loss of attachment is the most primal emotional that you will experience. It may feel like emotional desertion. It hurts in ways that you cannot adequately express in words. Few people will understand the deep nature of the grief in losing a child.

Grief is not an option. Your love and connection to your child who died is severed. This created a daily lived experience unlike your previous experiences.

You feel grief all over. It is an experience that involves your entire being -- your physical, emotional, social, cognitive (thinking) and spiritual being. Because grief affects you in every way, it is exhausting.

Grief involves many feelings, such as sadness, anger, love, despair, doubt, guilt, resentment, confusion, and regret. Sometimes grief includes depression, physical changes related to stress, and changes in our interests and lifestyles.

Grief affects your attitudes about yourself, your family, your community, and the child you lost.

Grief is very personal. There is no roadmap. There is no right way to grieve or wrong way to grieve. There is just your way of grieving.

Grief has no timetable. Most people who lose a child will experience grief that lasts for 2 years or more.

Grief is a process. It is a journey. It is not a straight line experience of getting better each day. Some days you will take a step forward, some days a step backwards. This is your unique journey. You don't "get over" grief. However, you will recover.

Grief feels overwhelming sometimes. Sharing your feelings, with your spouse, partner, parent or support group can be helpful. Holding your feelings inside can be toxic to your physical health and to your living relationships. When grief feels overwhelming or when it threatens other relationships,

Gabriel's Gift Network of Counselors can help.