

A Grandparents loss



Little Things & Co.
The baby bereavement charity



The death of a beloved grandchild is a devastating loss. Combine this with your nurturing instincts for your own child and it can be a difficult and frustrating time.

As parents our instinct is to protect our children. When something such as the death of a baby occurs, it can be difficult to comprehend. When it is your child suffering it can be extremely hard because all you want to do is make things better.

Sadly, with such a loss all you can do is be there to support and comfort. You will mourn the loss of your grandchild but also the loss of your child's innocence, their naivety and peace of mind.

If you have suffered such a tragic event we aim to help you within this leaflet with not only your own grief but also how to support your child.

What you can do for yourself

- Remember that you too have suffered a loss. Allow yourself quiet time alone with your thoughts to grieve.
- If you yourself have suffered the death of a child, be prepared it may take you back to your own loss and stir up old feelings and emotions.
- Do not hide your tears and emotions. Although you may feel they have 'enough to worry about' or they don't need to worry about you, it is important you let them see how you are feeling too. You do not have to be 'strong'. The loss of a baby affects so many of a family.

It may do more damage if they think you are not upset.

- Ensure you have someone that you can talk to. Whether that is a partner, trusted friend or support group. You too need help to process your thoughts and feelings and it is important you do not ignore them, in the desire to help your child.
- Acknowledge your grandchild. It may feel hard as the child is not here for you to be a grandparent in the usual way, but you can still display pictures, talk about them and be a proud grandparent.

What you can do for your child

- As much as you want to help and support it is important to remember that the baby that died is their baby and they may have different ideas than you. Many years ago, it was not usual for a funeral or to see the baby. Nowadays it is standard, and

their ideas surrounding this may be different than your own. Times have rapidly changed and things are very different than they were.

- Acknowledge the loss – include the child in family occasions etc. i.e. at Christmas give a keepsake such as a bauble for the tree. Remember special anniversaries with lighting a candle. The important thing to grieving parents is that their child existed and that their baby is never forgotten.
- Ask what they want help with. Some families may need lots of care and attention whereas some may need time alone. Ask them to let you know just how much they need from you.
- Remember there are two parents. Your need is to protect your child and how they feel, but remember the baby was part of two people and both parents wishes should be respected.



- Realise that your child is an adult. It is very easy when they are hurting to think of them as vulnerable and childlike. However, they are an adult. Try not to smother them. They will appreciate your good intentions but ask them to be honest with what they need.
- Not everyone understands the grief connected to losing a child. Some people do not realise that parents grieve for a child who was here so briefly. If there are other family members who cannot grasp it, do not burden your child with their thoughts. Ensure they concentrate on how they feel rather than others.
- Be on hand to listen when they need you. Appreciate that the grief comes in waves and although at times they may seem as if things have improved and they are feeling better, it can be

that the grief will take over again. Be prepared for the sudden changes in mood.

- Do not ask 'When will you be trying again?' or 'When are you going to make me a Grandmother then?'. Even if it is months or years later. Do not ask them questions, instead allow them to come to you with this information. They may already feel under pressure to have another baby. Nobody knows if or when they are ready again but them. You are already a Grandmother or Grandfather to their baby who died. By uttering these words, you are diminishing the memory of their child and could upset them further.

If there is anything contained in this leaflet you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

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