

FINDING SUPPORT

After the Loss of a Child

“Encourage, lift and strengthen one another, for the positive energy spread to one will be felt by us all. For we are connected, one and all” —Deborah Day

I have heard many parents share that it is hard to breathe after the loss of a child. A part of the parent dies and the future is changed forever. We've all heard that grief is different for everyone. Understanding what kind of support would help you the most is an important piece of the puzzle.

What kind of support would help you feel not so alone? A support that does not feel like another burden on you, but is something you are automatically drawn to lean on? Often the person you desire to lean on is a spouse or partner because there is a shared experience of grief. At times though, our partners may grieve very differently and need different things. Make sure to have honest conversations about what is helpful and what is not.

Who do you turn to if you don't have a spouse or partner? Who comes to mind that you know you can depend upon? Don't be surprised if sometimes those who support you are not who you thought they would be. A distant friend may become your main source of strength.

Although you may feel the need to isolate yourself and withdraw, it can be powerful to share the burden of your grief and pain with other people. Reaching out to others takes energy, but the connections made can give you strength in return.

There are support groups to attend, information online, books and journaling, churches/synagogues or therapy with a grief counselor to help you process your emotions safely. It can be overwhelming to know where to start in finding these resources. People who care for you are looking for ways to help. This is a great opportunity to delegate the research and phone calls to them.

Support along the grief journey is completely individualized. The timing of reaching out for support is up to you. But you are encouraged not to wait too long; support can be an invaluable guide to assist you throughout your journey. The type of guidance and support is also unique to your needs and comforts. Whether you feel more comfortable in a group or individual setting is important to consider.

Whatever connections you seek, remember to be kind to yourself, just as others are reaching out to be kind to you.

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