

## Taking Care of Yourself

Give yourself permission, time, and space to grieve.  
Do not pretend that death does not hurt.  
Feel free to protest the "why" of the death.  
Do not judge your level of grief and healing by how others are grieving.  
Understand and accept your limitations.  
Do not escape into loneliness.  
Get rid of imagined guilt and "if only."  
Laughter does not mean you are disrespectful to your child's memory.  
Feel free to cry whenever and wherever you are.  
Express your feelings about death to people who will understand and not judge.  
Seeking professional counseling does not mean you are weak or crazy.  
Use religion, poetry, music, art, gardening, walks, reading, etc. to gain relief.  
Share your experience with friends who were or were not involved with the death.  
Accept any help that is offered.  
Continue to participate in activities that are fun for you.  
Recognize that you may not always want to talk about your baby.  
Eat nutritiously. Consider using a vitamin supplement. Exercise to improve sleep.  
Not crying does not mean you did not care.  
It is normal to either enjoy being around other babies, or to be uncomfortable.  
Postpone major decisions, such as moving, selling your home, or changing jobs.  
The decision to have or not have another child is yours alone.  
Consider participation in support groups; grief shared can be grief diminished.  
Avoid masking the pain with drugs or alcohol.  
You cannot prevent, cure, or skip the grief process; the only way out is through it.

The above is a compilation of excerpts of articles by the following and reprinted with their permission: "Caring for the Caregiver," Barbara Swenson, RN, MS, PNP, Seattle, Washington; "Ten Guidelines for Dealing with Grief," TCF, Austin, Texas; "Parent Contact Workshop," Washington State Chapter, NSIDSF. Reprinted with permission of Washington State Chapter, NSIDSF

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