



Dads Grieve Too

The death of a child is one of life's most painful experiences. As a parent, you lose your hopes, your dreams and your sense of purpose. Unfortunately, dads often don't get as much support when their baby dies. Some family members and friends would like to help, but aren't sure how to acknowledge a man's feelings. For many people, it seems easier to ask the mom how she's doing. But dads grieve too.

You may be feeling:

- Angry
- Hopeless
- Disappointed
- Frustrated
- Depressed
- Helpless
- Lonely
- Confused
- Guilty
- Afraid
- Out of control
- Like a failure

It's completely normal to have these feelings. You may think that because you're a man you can't show them, which is not true. Acknowledging your pain and expressing your emotions is an important step toward healing and moving forward.

Ways you can work through your grief:

- **Experience your emotions**
Consider keeping a journal where you can write about your thoughts, feelings and memories. Continue adding to it and read it often. Accept that your grief may be different from your partner's grief.
- **Let your tears out**
Crying is normal and necessary when you've experienced a loss. Giving yourself permission to cry will allow you to relieve built-up tension.
- **Talk about your feelings**
Turn to a family member or a trusted friend. Talk about what you're going through. Say your baby's name and encourage others to say it as well.
- **Get support**
Contact the Infant Death Center to find an in-person or online support group. It helps to meet other grieving dads who can relate to what you're going through.

Remember, there's no time limit for your grief. You may notice your extreme sadness and anger start to get better over time, but there will be good days and there will be bad days. You shouldn't try to "get over" the loss of your child. Instead, try to find healthy ways to cope. If you feel like things aren't getting any better, it's a good idea to get help from a doctor, therapist or other professional.

With all that's going on, you may feel like it's your responsibility to stay strong for everyone else. However, grief is not something you can take away or "make better" for your partner or your children. It may be difficult to see your loved ones in pain, but it won't always be like this. After a while, the "really hard days" will grow further and further apart.

When you do have a hard day, it can feel like you're starting all over again. Although it's frustrating, this is a normal part of the healing process. Parents who have lost a child often revisit their grief at different times throughout their lives. They may feel sad when their child "should" have been in line for the school bus or "should" have graduated from high school.

As a dad, you will never forget; but things will get better.