

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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