

NORMAL GRIEF

Emotions and Reactions



ANGER/RAGE

with spouse or others who don't seem to be grieving or who avoid talking about the child; with other parents who talk about what their children are planning or doing; with GOD; with the insensitivity of society; with those responsible for the child's death, etc.

ANXIETY

panic attacks; heavy chest; heart palpitations; lump in your throat that you can't shake; fear of the future; stress of the weight of grief

APPETITE

loss of appetite - weight loss;
increase in appetite - weight gain

CARE OF OTHERS

a need to "take care of" or "be polite to" others who are uncomfortable discussing the child; silencing our grief for the sake of others

CONCENTRATION

inability to concentrate and being scattered and forgetful; losing track of time; can't focus on normal daily tasks

CONFUSION

bewilderment; in a haze; out of body experience; lost; don't know the day of the week or date

CRYING

from gentle tears to wailing, sobbing, and everything in-between; tears are your love with nowhere to go

DEPRESSION

loss of feeling of love, joy, or happiness; loss of meaning or purpose in life; loss of satisfaction in things that used to bring satisfaction; wanting to die

DISCOMFORT

feeling uncomfortable in your own home, especially if the child died there; physical discomfort; aches and pains; sleepy and lethargic; no energy

DISTRACTION

keeping constantly busy to be distracted from the grief pain; inability to concentrate on one task; losing your place while working; losing track of time

DOUBTING/QUESTIONING

Why my child? What did I do wrong?
Why me? Why now? Why God?
How can you say you are good when this doesn't feel good?
Do you even love me?



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DREAMING

frequently about your child or what happened to your child; having night-terrors; fear of falling asleep because of dreams

FAMILY OR SUPPORT SYSTEM

turning away from family members who are not supportive in the ways you are grieving; broken relationships because of the lack of compassion; family not showing up when you need their help; family who mock your grief with words of your playing a victim

FEAR OR FEARLESSNESS

of the future; that your other children or family will die; over protective because of the fear of more loss; trying to control risky situations to avoid suffering; fear you are going crazy; fear of the pain consuming you; that you will never enjoy life again

FRAGILITY/LOSS OF RELIANCE

inability to handle regular chores without falling apart (grocery shopping, laundry, driving by certain locations or down certain streets that remind you of your child); listening to songs or music in general

FRIENDS

leaving certain friends behind and making new ones with whom they feel better understood and more at ease; overall loss of friends who simply "disappear"

GUILT/REMORSE

thinking "Why didn't I?" or "I should have;" upset with self if enjoying life-- feeling I have no right to laugh because my child died; a sense of shame and feelings of being judged and misunderstood

HOPELESSNESS & HELPLESSNESS

about what to do; about life in general; sometimes afraid of your own feelings or shame that you don't feel like you can carry the Cross you have been given

IMPATIENCE/ANGER

at perceived shallowness of others, especially when others complain about minor issues involving their children or life in general

LIBIDO/LACK OF INTIMACY

loss of libido, not interested in marital communion with spouse

LONELINESS/ISOLATION

feeling abandoned by others, alone, or that no one else can possibly understand

LONGING & YEARNING

continuously talking about the child; reciting aspects of the child's death; seeing the child in others; dreaming of a life with your child that will never come to be



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LOVE

inability to feel love or to feel loved by anyone, even God; can't feel any other emotion but pain

SELF-ESTEEM

low self-esteem and shyness; uncomfortable when with others; beating yourself up for not being able to handle the weight of our grief

MEMORY

loss of memory; forgetfulness; missing pieces of your life that you can't recall

MOOD

mood changes triggered by the slightest incidents

NIGHTMARES & NIGHT TERRORS

fear of falling asleep and reliving the day or time of death; feeling trapped in this moment

OBSESSION

obsessive thoughts or re-living of what occurred at the time of death; if not present at time of death, ruminating about what you imagine occurred.

PHYSICAL PAIN

aches and pains; fatigue; exhaustion; a sense of tightness in the throat or chest; an ache or pain around the heart area; nausea or feeling full; sense of "empty arms"; still feeling pregnant in case of miscarriage

PTSD - POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

any or all associated symptoms of this syndrome

RESTLESSNESS

wondering what to do with the days ahead; possible insomnia or disordered sleep; inability to relax or sit still for even short periods of time

ROUTINES & TRADITIONS

a need to change rituals and routines because it is too painful to maintain them without the child there--this is especially true surrounding holidays and special dates

SHOCK & NUMBNESS

a sense that the child really didn't die; feeling as if living in a bad dream; a sense of an unreal reality

SLEEP OR INSOMNIA

insomnia or sleeping constantly; lethargic and lack of energy; difficult to get out of bed

UNREAL

feeling that the child did not really die--that he or she will walk through the door, call on the phone, or be in a place where you would expect to see him/her.

