

Family and Friends

Our Grief Experience Shared

We want to share with you some of our feelings and how you can help and support us. We have suffered a tremendous loss and we need to grieve. Even though this may be uncomfortable for others around us, it is something we MUST do. We won't be over this in a few weeks as most people expect. We will be able to adjust to the loss of our precious child if we are given the time needed to grieve (average intense grieving is 18–24 months). However, we will not be the same people we were before our loss.

We may need to talk about our baby, how much we loved our child and the details of our experience. Even though we may not have many memories, we suffer from broken dreams. During this time, we need others to be there and listen to us time and time again. This is the kindest thing a person can do for us. We do not want to forget our baby and we will need to mention him/her in the future. It would be appreciated if you would remember our baby, especially on difficult days such as anniversary days, birthdays, Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

In our struggles with our grief, we may have difficulties with the following:

- a. Understanding our many emotions and feeling emotionally balanced.
- b. Coping with feelings of guilt, anger and jealousy.
- c. Dealing with normal, daily functions due to lack of energy.
- d. Deciding what to do with our baby's belongings.
- e. Coping with the individuality of our grief as a family and as a couple.
- f. Sharing family celebrations.
- g. Seeing babies/children that are the same age our child would have been.
- h. Needing to make major decisions such as subsequent pregnancies, moving, job changes, etc.

- i. Visiting the cemetery and purchasing a tombstone.
- j. Remembering our baby in special ways that are acceptable.
- k. Feeling different and subsequently feeling isolated.
- l. Dealing with physical symptoms that arise due to grieving.

Dealing with all of these emotions takes a lot of courage and tedious work. It is worth it so we have a peace of mind and a physical well-being.

Many of us will attend support group meetings. Support groups are not for weaklings. The meetings are a safe place where we can share our feelings and love for our baby. Our feelings are validated by others who have experienced similar experiences. These meetings give us comfort and hope for our future.

If we sound a little selfish, please understand. Only after we are able to adjust and experience the journey of grief can we reach out and help others. One day we will be able to live life in a fuller manner.

We try not to criticize others. Before our baby died, we didn't understand the full impact this loss has. We want to share this painful experience with you so others can understand our need for support. No one will be able to take our pain away, but perhaps they can be there and listen.

*Cathi Lammert
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