

# Supporting Bereaved Parents

Grief can affect us in a variety of ways, how we feel physically and emotionally, how we think and how we interact with others. There is no right way to grieve; we do it in our own way and in our own time. Grieving the death of your child is challenging and looking after yourself can help.

## LOOK AFTER YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

Try to get some physical activity; and make small changes to your diet to improve your energy levels. Everything can seem even more overwhelming when we are tired, so it is important to have a routine that will help you to sleep and/or rest.



## TALK

Find people who you can talk to, who are comfortable with you and will let you tell your story again and again without trying to fix you.

*“Talking to other bereaved parents who are further down the road helped us to have hope that the overwhelming sense of loss will get easier in time, although it is hard to believe that in the early stages.”*



## DO SOMETHING THAT HELPS

Find what helps you cope through the day, for example writing, gardening or walking. You may find it helpful to keep a journal where you can record your feelings and allow you to say the things you want to say to your child.

*“Working in the garden and going to the gym helped because I could push myself physically which in turn helped me to get some sleep.”*



## RITUALS TO REMEMBER

Find special ways to remember your child. Incorporate rituals into family events like lighting a candle or planting a shrub.

## ASKING FOR AND ACCEPTING HELP IN THE EARLY DAYS

Family, friends and neighbours can be a good source of practical help.

You may often hear: *‘If there is anything I can do...’*

If you are comfortable accepting their help, the answer is *‘Yes’*.



## BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Sometimes we just need to practice self care, this may mean avoiding certain situations or people. Making the right choices for you is important. Above all, listen to yourself and how you are feeling.

*“After a while I learned how to say ‘No’. It was the best thing I ever did...”*

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