

## **REORGANIZATION AND RESOLUTION:**

As you accept the finality of your loss, you will be able to enjoy yourself again without feeling guilty.

The pain of the loss is much less intense, though the baby who died is not forgotten. Birthdays, holidays and the anniversary of your baby's death can still trigger some intense pain and sadness, but you will be able to get on with your life.

You may:

- Feel a sense of release
- Have renewed energy Reestablish previous eating and sleeping patterns
- Laugh and smile again
- Make plans for the future
- Feel like yourself again

## **SOME THINGS THAT MAY HELP:**

- Cradle an object in your arms if you are feeling "empty arms"
- Ask for keepsakes for your baby; pictures, hand and footprints, a lock of hair, stuffed animal, or blanket
- Join a parent support group
- Express your feelings as you work through your grief

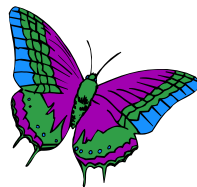
Many parents report that it takes them about two years to work through their grief, though there is no set time frame for this. Be patient with yourself and with the baby's other parent.

## **YOU CAN AND WILL RECOVER.**

Most parents who have lost babies feel reluctant at first to ask for help, but are later glad they did.

Please call 703-933-9100 when you are ready, for additional information, and for locations and phone numbers of parent support groups, peer support, or other help with your grief.

## **YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**



## ***WHEN A BABY DIES***



## ***A GUIDE FOR PARENTS***

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## **WHEN A BABY DIES: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

There is no right or wrong way to deal with grief. Each person learns to deal with grief in an individual way.

Grieving is a normal and necessary process. The grief you feel for the baby who died is painful, and your recovery will take time.

Although family and friends may not understand what you are feeling, they want to help. Try to communicate your feeling to others. You do not have to deal with grief alone.

As you approach your grief, be aware that grief has phases and your feelings will change over time.

### **SHOCK AND NUMBNESS:**

As you deal with the fact that your baby has died, your emotions may vary. Many parents feel like an observer in the situation, detached, unreal, or in a fog. You may:

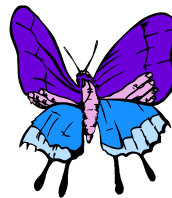
- *Sleep constantly or be unable to sleep*
- *Frequently think or say "if only"*
- *Feel exhausted*
- *Have difficulty making decisions*
- *Feel numbness, disbelief and denial*
- *Fear losing control or breaking down*

### **SEARCHING AND YEARNING:**

Feelings may now range from anger to rage. This anger may be toward your spouse, your physician or even your baby for having died. You may question your religious beliefs and feel anger towards your God. You may:

- *Feel restless, impatient*
- *Feel "empty" or have "empty arms"*
- *Feel irritable or have angry outbursts*
- *Have bad dreams or sleep problems*
- *Gain or lose weight*
- *Feel bitter or resentful*
- *Have headaches*
- *Be overly sensitive*
- *Feel weak, do a lot of sighing*
- *Be obsessed with being pregnant again*

**TRY TO WORK THROUGH YOUR ANGER. DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS OR TO ASK FOR HELP.**



### **DISORIENTATION AND DEPRESSION:**

You may have feelings of worthlessness now, as if you "have failed somehow". Feelings of depression can be very strong. You may need to ask for help during this period. You may:

- *Wonder if you're "going crazy"*
- *Be socially withdrawn*
- *Be disorganized or absent-minded*
- *Have insomnia*
- *Feel depressed or guilty*
- *Feel like a failure*
- *Feel sad*
- *Feel exhausted or ill*
- *Have trouble concentrating*
- *Lose interest in your appearance*

**Sudden Infant Death Services of the Mid-Atlantic provides one on one peer support, individual counseling, support groups, bereavement materials and books free of charge to any grieving parent, family member, or caretaker.**

**Please contact us.**

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