

Single Parent Grief

Confusion and loneliness can be overwhelming, especially when there is no partner to share your tears or the burden of your grief with. Maybe your partner has left your side, is not actively involved with you, or possibly is very ill or has died. Whatever the reason, you need to find the strength and resources to face the tough challenge of dealing with and living through your child's death. It will not be easy, grieving over a loved one never is. It is a long and unpredictable process. But it can be done, with hard work and support from those who care about you.



As a single parent, you may find yourself alone with your pain quite often. If you are a fairly self-sufficient person, people may not feel the need to actively support you for very long as they assume that you can handle the death of your child on your own. After all, look what you have handled by yourself already. Others may also (mistakenly) believe that fully delving into work and other activities is the best way to “deal” with your grief, given the “time” your loss now gives you to realize your full potential and work on yourself.

Feeling alone in your grief is natural. Grief is a lonely process, even when you surround yourself with others. The loneliness of your grief may bring up insecurities and anxiety related to interpersonal relationships, and you may become convinced that it would be easier to share your grief with a partner.



Moreover, if you are a single father who has suffered the death of a child, you may also find a reduced level of support for your loss. Many people assume that a father has less of a bond with an infant, especially in circumstances of a miscarriage and stillbirth because they never had the physical relationship with the baby that the mother had. People may (ignorantly) think that your grief cannot be as deep or painful as that of the mother. Society also demands that men be strong, move on quickly, and be emotionally restrained. These societal expectations can create great challenges for fathers who are grieving, as these harmful public opinions minimize their loss and their right to grieve it.

Lastly, every new loss can bring up previous losses, triggering reminders of painful times in your life. New grief and new pain serve as reminders of how things have changed. Do not be surprised if you now find yourself reliving other painful events in your life. This is normal and should be talked about and dealt with in your support network.

What does it mean to do grief work? When doing your grief work, you will try to understand what has been lost and who is missing in your life. You will admit to yourself your deep sense of loss and the feelings that have resulted. This is the time to express your pain and get your feelings out in healthy ways. You will recognize that doing grief work is a lifelong process.