



## Men & Grief

Men and grief require special attention and understanding. As a man, you face unique challenges when experiencing the loss of a child. While men and women may experience the exact same loss, the way men respond may be vastly different.

When experiencing the loss of a child through pregnancy or infant loss, you may feel overwhelmed and confused. You may feel powerless to help your partner or you may feel overlooked, as much of the attention is often focused on the mother. To support your partner, you may feel the need to push your own feelings aside, which can make it difficult to process your own emotions. Please remember, your needs are important too!

Unfortunately, there is no guide on how you should grieve, and no two men will grieve in the same way. Your experience of grief is deeply personal and influenced by your life experiences and culture. Furthermore, society has created standards about how men should act, even in tragic situations. For example, men are often taught to suppress their feelings and, as the saying goes, "big boys don't cry". These stereotypes can make it difficult to express grief during the loss of a child, or any other difficult event. As a result, some men may express their grief in unhealthy ways such as silence, anger, addiction, secrecy, and avoidance.

Below, you will find several tips to managing your grief and coping with the loss of your child in a healthy way:

### **Talk About Your Feelings**

Talking about the loss of a baby can be difficult, but you are not alone. Sharing your feelings with your partner or friends and family can help you process your emotions. There are also support groups specifically tailored to fathers who have experienced infant loss. These groups can provide a safe space to share your feelings and connect with other people who have gone through a similar experience. Remember, you don't have to go through this journey alone.

## **Honor Your Baby**

Honoring a baby after loss is an incredibly meaningful and important way to keep the memory of your child alive and validate your role as a parent. Writing a letter to your baby, journaling about your baby, or creating a memorial for them are all beautiful ways to express your love and grief. Another way to honor your baby is to acknowledge them during the holidays and on special occasions. Even though they may no longer be physically present with you, they are still an important member of your family and should be remembered. Please see [Honoring Your Baby's Memory](#) for additional ideas.

## **Take Care of Yourself**

Men should be encouraged to take care of themselves in the wake of infant loss. It is important to remember that self-care is vital for both physical and mental well-being. Taking a few moments each day to focus on your physical needs can help to provide a sense of control during this difficult time. Make sure to get enough sleep, eat nutritious meals, and take time to do activities that you enjoy. Physical activities such as exercising, stretching, or taking a walk outdoors can help decrease stress.

## **Connect with Your Partner**

Remember, you and your partner are in this together. Plan for time when you can connect and communicate about how you both are feeling. Grief and lack of communication can cloud judgment and lead to misunderstandings, which can result in turmoil and friction in your relationship. Furthermore, being unable to relate to your partner's grieving process may lead to feeling disconnected from your partner. You should strive to be open and honest about your emotions and feelings, even when it is difficult to do so. Keep in mind, however, that you both may be in different places in the grieving process. You should both be sensitive to your partner's needs and provide each other with the time and space necessary to properly process your emotions. However, if you start to experience feelings of blame, resentment or difficulty connecting with your partner, professional counseling may help.

## **Seek Professional Support**

Counseling and support groups can be an important part of the grieving process for men. They can provide a safe and judgement-free space to express emotions and help to process the overwhelming feelings associated with the loss of your child. Professional counseling can also help you learn healthy ways to rebuild or support your relationship. Additionally, attending group counseling sessions can help to connect men with others who have experienced similar losses, allowing them to share their stories and gain support from one another.



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