

How can I help myself?

The following has been adapted and reprinted, with permission, from a brochure by: Ontario Funeral Service Association:
Toll Free: 1-800-268-2727; Web Site: www.ofsa.org

With the loss of one, more, or all of your precious babies, you may be feeling a variety of things from a heavy pressure in or on your chest, denial, anger, undeniable pain, or more. It might feel as if you will never recover from the numbness that has taken over your life. The following are some tips others have found helpful in taking care of themselves.

1. **Learn all you can about grief.** There are many books on grief available. Some of these are listed here under Additional. Libraries and bookstores also carry a wide selection of titles when you feel ready to do any reading. Remember that grief is very personal, it is a journey and not a destination and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. The right way is your way!
2. **Give yourself permission to grieve** – to feel the pain and accept the reality of your loss(es). You have been dealt a serious blow. It will be necessary to take the time to grieve.
3. **Set up a support system.** Connect with family, friends, professionals who understand your type of loss and who provide a safe, secure space to mourn.
4. **Be patient with the process.** It takes a long time. While in many aspects of your life you may expect immediate results, grief is different and each person grieves differently. You are accommodating a new reality. Take the time you need. Be patient and gentle with yourself.
5. **Men and women grieve differently.** Allowing for such differences within your relationship will make a positive difference for both of you.
6. **Get plenty of rest and eat nutritiously.** Your body needs rest, nutritious snacks or meals and plenty of fluids while you are recovering from emotional stress. The desire to eat or drink is often missing in those initial painful days.
7. **Treat yourself occasionally.** Things that add beauty or peace to your life will comfort and encourage you. Activities such as a massage, yoga or a walk in the woods can work wonders. Give yourself permission to laugh and have a good time.
8. **Find people with whom you can share your loss.** Many newly bereaved people find a great deal of support and encouragement from bereavement support groups. You may also find it helpful to talk with your doctor, clergy person, funeral director, counsellor or good friend. Multiple Births Canada's Loss Support Network is also a source of connection and sharing.
9. **Time to reflect on and reassess your life.** What did you gain from the relationship you had, however brief it was? How will that relationship sustain and guide you now? How is this experience changing you? The greatest tribute you can pay your loved ones is that you learned and experienced personal growth from them. This on-going influence in your life will help you carry on. No matter how brief the life(ves), their impact remains.
10. **Draw on the resources of your faith.** Let whatever helps you make sense out of life sustain you at this time. Perhaps for you, the journey through grief is a spiritual one. Allow your spirituality to become a focus of your life. Listen to the words and music of your spirituality. Let them speak to you and give you courage and hope to help sustain you for your journey.

Other Organizations

Centre for Loss in Multiple Birth (CLIMB), Alaska E-mail: climb@pobox.alaska.net

Other Publications

- *Living When A Loved One has Died*, Earl A Grollman, Boston, Beacon Press, 1977
- *The Lone Twin*, Joan Woodward, Free Association Books, 1998
- *When a Twin or Triplet Dies*, Multiple Birth Foundation, London, England, 1997
- *On Children and Death*, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Collier Books, 1983
- *The Worst Loss: How Families Heal from the Death of a Child*, Barbara D. Rosof, Henry Holt and Co., 1994
- *Getting Back to Life When Grief Won't Heal*, Phyllis Kosminsky, Ph.D., McGraw Hill, 2007
- *Miscarriage: Women Sharing from the Heart*, Marie Allen, Ph.D. & Shelly Marks, MS, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993
- *When Men Grieve: Why Men Grieve Differently & How You Can Help*, Elizabeth Levang, Ph.D., Fairview Press, 1998

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