

E Fa'anoanoa fo'i le tama

Te mamae o te Matua

Father's Grieve Too



Society can tend to think of the man as strong, the one to be there for mum, to be the shoulder to cry on and the arms to hold her tight. But this can often lead to his own needs being ignored. You have lost your baby too and your needs are just as important. You may find that even you push your feelings to one side so you can be there for your partner. Try to balance this – how can you support, if you yourself are not supported.

#### Feelings:

Grief is very personal and there is no right or wrong when it comes to how you are feeling. Your grief can be overwhelming at times and bearable at others. Some emotional and physical feelings are listed here. You may feel some, all or none of these and that is OK

Numbness	Heart palpitations
Shock	Crying/sobbing
Exhaustion	Guilt
Sick	Fear
Panic	Helplessness
Lack of control	Protective
Anger	Frustration

#### Ways to cope with your feelings:

As we have said, there is no right or wrong way with regards to feelings however, there is a fine line between grief and depression. If you have heavy feelings that continue, it may be worth talking to someone who specialises in grief or your GP. Another time to contact a professional is if you feel that your anger may turn into violence. There is no shame in asking for help.

Creating memories can help greatly in your grief. Spend time with your baby, hold your baby, take pictures you're your baby. You may want to sing or read a story to your baby. These things may feel awkward right now but they will help to minimise regrets once your baby has been buried/cremated.

Crying and talking about your baby will help release feelings. Some people are very private and there want to wait until there is no one around, or go for a drive somewhere quiet. Others feel comfortable talking their partner or whanau/close friends.

Finding others who have been through something similar can help. We can put you in touch with other bereaved fathers if that's something you may find helpful. You may like to find an activity that you enjoy and do this with a close friend. This can often be easier than sitting face to face talking about your feelings. Having something to do with your hands as you talk can help make it easier if you are not used to expressing feelings with others.

Allowing yourself to feel whatever you are feeling is very important. Tell yourself it's OK to feel that way right now.

**You and your partner:**

Give yourselves time. Talk with each other, cry with each other and hold each other. You have both lost your baby and need each other right now. It is very important to understand that men and women often grieve differently. Respect each other's ways of grieving especially if they are different.

It is also important for you both to find support from other sources as well. You are both grieving and sometimes may not feel able to support each other.