



Where can I get help?

The Children's Hospital at Westmead provides support for grieving families. During business hours you can phone:

- Bereavement Coordinator (02) 9845 2617
- Social Work Department (02) 9845 2641
- Hospital Chaplains (02) 9845 3901

If you need help after hours or urgently you can contact Lifeline by phoning 13 11 14.

The Children's Hospital at Westmead provides individual counselling as well as group support services. Bereaved parent and sibling groups are held regularly during the year. Groups for parents are available face-to-face or via telephone.

A quarterly bereavement support newsletter is available for parents and carers. For more information about counselling, support groups or the newsletter, please speak to your Social Worker or contact the Bereavement Coordinator by phone on (02) 9845 2641 or email natashas@chw.edu.au.

the children's hospital at Westmead

Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care

Cnr Hawkesbury Road & Hainsworth Street
Locked Bag 4001 Westmead NSW 2145
Telephone: (02) 9845 0000

Website: www.chw.edu.au

If you have any questions regarding the information in this brochure please contact the Department of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care at The Children's Hospital at Westmead on the phone number or email above.

PPC1001/07 _ 2011



Grief and Bereavement

Department of Pain Medicine
and Palliative Care



The death of a child can affect every part of your life. Everyone can have different experiences of grief and different reactions. Grief is an individual experience and changes over time.

What is grief?

Among other things, you may find:

- You are unable to accept what has happened
- You may feel shock, anger, despair, relief or guilt
- You may feel like blaming someone for what has happened

Grief experiences will vary for all parents and siblings. You might find you have little interest in the things you normally enjoy. It might be difficult to go to social events. You might feel lonely or distant.

Talking with other people or your other children may be difficult. You may not be able to support others in ways you might normally.

You might not be able to cry, or you might cry a lot. You might feel that things could have been done differently or that your personal relationships are placed under stress. You may also feel upset that others close to you are not really grieving or are grieving too much.

These feelings may come and go and it may take a long time for the emotions that you feel to become more manageable.

What helps?

- Give yourself time to talk to those around you
- Accept help from family and friends
- Be gentle on yourself and take time to be alone if you want
- Create a memory book or box to remember the special things about your child
- Link with a Parent Bereavement Group
- Speak to a Social Worker or Counsellor
- Consider using alternative therapies such as massage, meditation or relaxation



Asking for help

Each person has individual needs. You might want to think about asking for help from a health worker if you are experiencing the following:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Nightmares or difficulty sleeping
- Feeling isolated or not having someone to talk to
- Having difficulties with your relationships
- Relying on drugs or alcohol
- Difficulties at work or school
- Repeated accidents
- Thoughts of self-harm
- If you are worried about other family members

Useful websites

<http://www.chw.edu.au/directory/painman>
www.bereavementcare.com.au
www.sidsandkids.org
www.siblingsgrief.org.au
www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au