



Supporting You Following the Death of Your Grandchild

The death of a grandchild can bring deep and complex grief. You may feel the pain of losing a child you loved, while also witnessing the heartbreak of your own son or daughter. Wanting to protect them, wishing you could “fix” what has happened, and feeling powerless in the face of their grief are all natural responses. Balancing your own emotions while supporting your child can feel overwhelming and may take time.

Every Family Is Unique

Families are formed in many different ways—through birth, adoption, fostering, blended families, and more. Your relationship with your grandchild, and the structure of your family, may influence how others perceive your loss. But none of these factors change the depth of your grief or the significance of your grandchild’s life.

When Grief Feels Unexpected

The death of a grandchild can bring feelings of guilt—guilt that you are still alive, guilt that you have lived a long or fulfilling life, or guilt that the natural order has been disrupted. This is sometimes called survivor guilt. It can be shocking and disorienting to outlive a grandchild, and these emotions can be intense and difficult to manage.

Feeling guilt doesn’t mean you’ve done something wrong; it means you loved deeply. Finding ways to honour your grandchild memory — telling stories, supporting a cause they loved, or simply thinking of them — keeps that connection alive.



Grief Reactions

When someone we love dies, we may experience a wide range of emotions, including:

- Shock or numbness
- Sadness
- Denial
- Anger
- Confusion

Your world may feel as though it has been turned upside down. Searching for answers or trying to make sense of what has happened is a natural part of grief. For some families, this shared experience brings closeness; for others, it can create tension or despair.

It's important to remember that everyone grieves differently. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Emotions can shift from day to day, and your feelings may not align with those of other family members. Being aware of this, and allowing space for each person's experience, can help you support one another.

Support For You

Talking about your grandchild and expressing your emotions with someone you trust can be comforting. Sharing memories, saying their name, and acknowledging your grief are all important.

Looking after yourself physically can also help you cope—eating regularly, staying active, and maintaining a sleep routine can support your wellbeing during this difficult time.

There are grief services specifically for grandparents, and connecting with others who have experienced a similar loss can be reassuring and grounding.

Supporting Your Child and Family

Many grandparents want to help their grieving child and family in practical ways. You might:



Prepare meals
or help with
shopping



Support with
household
tasks



Help care
for other
grandchildren

Surviving grandchildren may also need extra love, reassurance, and help understanding what has happened.

Talking together about what support would be most helpful can make a difference. Open and honest communication is valuable—what feels overwhelming one day may be welcomed the next. Simply checking in can be a powerful way to show your love and presence.

Grief can affect how people ask for or accept support. Remember that everyone grieves in their own way and in their own time.



Walking Beside Your Child

One of the hardest truths is that you cannot take away your child's pain. But you can walk beside them in their grief. The death of a child changes a parent, and this can be difficult for other family members to understand or accept. With patience, compassion, and communication, you can support your son or daughter in a way that feels meaningful for both of you.

Useful Contacts

■ The Compassionate Friends

0345 123 2304 helpline 0288 77 88 016 NI helpline
www.tcf.org.uk

■ The Child Death Helpline

Helpline 0800282986
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

■ Cruse Bereavement Care

Helpline: 0808 808 1677 Mon, Fri 9.30am – 5pm and Tues, Weds, Thurs 9.30am – 8pm
www.cruse.org.uk

Please contact us on hello@bodiehodgesfoundation.co.uk or call **0116 2436367**
or visit our website www.bodiehodgesfoundation.co.uk

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