



Child Bereavement Support
(Singapore)

Understanding What's Happening to Me

by Dr Hana Ra Adams

When we lose a child, a dense cloud of emotions can enfold us as we enter into grief. No one enters grief in the same way or experiences emotions in a predictable fashion. But know that you are not alone as you try to make sense of what is happening to you and your family.

Many of us who have suffered a loss have experienced sadness, loneliness, anger, hopelessness, frustration, anxiousness, numbness, rage, and even guilt, to name a few. We may also tend to shy away from social activities or experience ambivalence toward day-to-day activities. There are some physical symptoms as well such as loss of appetite, lack of sleep, and lack of energy. We may even experience difficulty seeing someone who is pregnant or be envious of someone who has a child. These feelings, thoughts and reactions are quite normal after the loss of a child.

You'll hear this again and again and again because it is very important – be gentle with yourself. Make the necessary time to care for yourself emotionally and physically.

Make sure to reach out and find the right support to help you. Turn to your friends, family, and support networks that are able to give you what you need. It can be helpful to freely say our child's name or talk about your memorial plans. At times, some people around you might not know the right things to say or know how to react in a helpful manner, which can be hurtful. So try to find the right support system. It can be most helpful to talk to someone else who has also lost a child because he or she knows what you are going through.

I remember when my husband and I lost our little girl some years ago, I didn't think I would ever heal. I started wanting to heal when I connected with other mothers who have lost their child(ren) on a website called SPALS (Subsequent Pregnancy After a Loss Support). Learning about what helped other mothers cope, finding strength in their voices and experiences, and sharing my own story were instrumental in helping me to cope with our loss.

Grief doesn't last for a fixed period of time or have an end date. You will never forget your child but the pain will lessen. Our healing journey takes time and care; so travel through it with patience and love.

Hana is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who holds a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from USA. She moved to Singapore with her family in 2013 and runs a clinic for families here.