

10 Things for Bereaved Parents to Know

Created by bereaved parents for bereaved parents.

What we wish someone had told us when our baby passed away from NEC.



1



You are always your child's parent.

Empty arms and the passage of time cannot erase your child's existence. Your child is forever a part of your life.

2

You are not alone.

Tragically, thousands of bereaved parents know your grief because they also lost a child to NEC. The child loss community can help you navigate the difficult days, months, and years ahead.



3

Do what feels right to you. There is no "right way" to grieve. We all grieve in different ways. Give yourself permission to follow your own lead on this lifelong journey. Your loved ones may grieve in a way that is different from you. That is okay. The key is common grace and empathy.

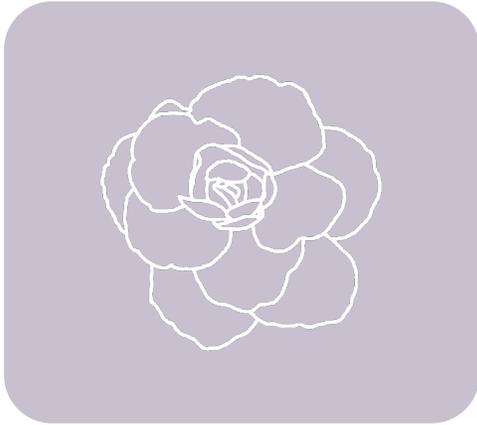
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Nature can be soothing. A walk in nature or time in the garden can have a calming effect. Spending time outside can help you process the trauma of child loss and clarify what you need to continue to move forward with your child in your heart.

5

There is no "moving on" from child lossThe loss of your child is unfair and devastating. Time does not heal all wounds. This is not a loss to "get over." A parent's love for their child is enduring, even when they are not physically with us.



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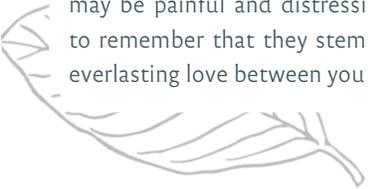
Grief, joy, and gratitude coexist. Give yourself permission to experience and feel the full range of your emotions. If you have questions about what happened to your child, it can be helpful to share these questions with your child's doctors, even months or more after your child's passing. Know that there will likely be some questions that no one can answer.

7

It is helpful to find ways to honor your child. It can be small or elaborate, quiet or public, just as long as it feels right to you. Creating art or keeping a journal can be meaningful ways to honor your child. Honoring your child can help you find a sense of peace and meaning.

8

Some experiences will trigger strong emotions. In the coming weeks, months, and years, you will have certain experiences that remind you of your child. You will learn to anticipate some triggers, but others will be sudden and unexpected. While these triggers may be painful and distressing, it is helpful to remember that they stem from the deep, everlasting love between you and your child.



9

Tell your loved ones how you want to be supported. You can help them understand that nothing and no one can ever replace your child. You can let them know what is helpful and what is hurtful. Loved ones mean well, but they often need guidance on how to provide their comfort and support.

10



You will learn how to carry the crushing weight of your devastating loss. You will learn how to carry your child in your heart instead of your arms. It will never be easy. Every day you will become stronger. You can lean into the community of families who have also lost their children to NEC.