

The death of a child is the ultimate loss, leaving a family devastated and often not knowing who to turn to for support. It is also isolating for the grieving family for farming families, who are already isolated, it can be such a lonely and frightening time. The loss of a child can provoke feelings of pain, exhaustion, fatigue, fear, guilt, judgement and loneliness

What is Grief?

Grief is a natural process of reaction and adjustment to loss and change. When we lose someone or something that is important to us, we grieve.

There is no straight road through grief. The different stages of grief can happen over and over again and at times occur simultaneously. Grief is a personal and individual experience, what may be helpful for one person may not be helpful for another. Try not to compare your journey with others as there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Feelings

Painful intrusive thoughts such as regret, anger, fear, can leave us feeling that no one understands. It is also not unusual to feel:

- tired,
- numb,
- irritable,
- angry,
- guilty,
- lonely,
- anguished,
- helpless,
- frightened,
- envious,
- unable to concentrate.

Shock

This is often the body's first response to news of a sudden death. The reality of what has happened can be too much to take in. Shock is often nature's way

of helping us through the early days and weeks. It can allow the sudden death of your child to slowly become a reality

Guilt

We find ourselves helpless and unable to change what has happened. The 'what ifs?', 'why didn't I?', and 'if only' are natural, and can lead to self-blame for a period of time. No matter how irrational these feelings are, it is helpful to talk them out, sharing with family, friends or other bereaved parents who you feel comfortable talking to.

Anger

It is okay to talk about your anger and work your way through it.

Trauma

We can easily startle, worry constantly and no longer feel safe. If these feelings persist with disturbing or distressing memories or thoughts intruding into your sleep or daily thoughts, it would be important to talk to your GP or a professional. They will understand traumatic loss and the effects it can have on those left behind.



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Embrace FARM is governed by a
voluntary board of directors.



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Farm Accident Support Network

Loss of a child

*There is no footprint
too small to leave an
imprint on this world*
Unknown



www.embracefarm.com | #WeRememberYou



Rituals to remember

It might help to incorporate rituals into family events like lighting a candle or planting a shrub.

What you may experience

- When the death of your child comes without warning, the shock and disbelief can be overwhelming.
- The intensity of your grief can be suffocating
- The early days and weeks are like being in the most horrific nightmare. It takes time for the reality of what has happened to sink in.
- The constant questioning of ‘what ifs?’ and ‘if onlys’ are normal, however, they can make you think that you are going mad.
- The sense of utter helplessness that you cannot change what has happened to your child may add to your grief
- Some parents talk about being restless, others lose all interest in life and just don’t want to go anywhere or do anything. Our confidence is shattered. We wonder: “Who are we now when our child has died?”
- A sudden traumatic death of a loved one can sometimes make us feel fearful and anxious. We can easily startle, worry constantly and no longer feel safe. If these feelings persist with disturbing or distressing memories or thoughts intruding into your sleep or daily thoughts, it would be important to talk to your GP or a professional. They will understand traumatic loss and the effects it can have on those left behind.
- You may feel like you are going crazy. You aren’t! Everyone processes trauma differently and at the moment your mind is trying to come to terms with this massive change in your world. You might say and do things that are out of character. Don’t judge yourself for this, it will settle over time.
- Go easy with making life-changing decisions in the first six to twelve months, it will take time to settle into this new life and be able to make thought-out, measured decisions again, take your time.
- Everyone in the family will deal differently with their grief and may need different types of support. Initially that support will be your extended family, friends or a professional.
- Time becomes both important and irrelevant. Be gentle with yourself, always. Try to practice self-care every day in a way that is meaningful to you.

What may help

When someone close to you dies, everything can change in an instant. Initially you might find it helpful to keep busy and take care of practicalities like funeral arrangements, but at some point – perhaps after the funeral, for example – when your life appears to go back to “normal”, the reality of the loss can really hit home, leaving you wondering how you’re going to survive. Here are some things that may help: At first there will be many tough days. Try to cope with one day at a time rather than thinking too far ahead.

Continue bonds

Death ends a life, but it doesn’t end a relationship. Many people continue to talk to the person who has died, it can bring comfort. Others may find it helpful to write down what they want to say, in a journal or a letter.

Spend time with others

Talk to people who you are comfortable to talk to. People around you may not want to intrude on your grief and may believe that you will contact them if you need to. It can be very hard to pick up the phone or text someone to say you’d like to talk or go out; but it can be really helpful to find the courage to make that call/text. Although it can be an effort to be proactive, it can be better than spending too much time alone. Meeting others who have been through similar circumstances can be very helpful in the grieving process.

Listen to your body

Try to allow yourself be. If you need to cry, cry! If you need to sleep, sleep! If you need to talk to someone, then seek out someone who’ll listen, whether that’s a family member, friend, G.P. or bereavement support service.

Lower expectations for yourself

Try to be gentle on yourself. Don’t expect to run at full capacity with the same energy as you did before; grief can be exhausting. You may find your ability to concentrate and focus is reduced for a time, so don’t pressure yourself to perform as well as you did before your loss.

Take time

Many people who are bereaved find keeping themselves busy is helpful. However, keeping yourself too busy and not allowing yourself time to ‘feel your grief’ can be a distraction from your grief and can be unhelpful.

Do the familiar things you used to do

When you feel up to it, perhaps do some activities and hobbies that you enjoy.

Keep a journal

Writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you make sense of what’s happened and work through your grief.



What may be Unhelpful

- Self-preservation is key. Don’t put yourself through anything you don’t feel able for. Always go with your gut feeling.
- People can have all the best intentions yet sometimes they can drain your energy and thoughts with unhelpful advice which can lead to you feeling more pressure and stress on top of your grief. Sometimes it is best to avoid them until you are stronger.
- Don’t forget that it’s ok to say No! You decide what is helpful for you and what is not (with no apology required!!)

There is no right time to do any of these things and there is no wrong time. There is only the time that is best for you. Listen to yourself.

If you need additional support, we are here for you.

Grief is our natural reaction to a significant loss and most bereaved parents work through their grief with the support of family and friends, however, if you feel you would like additional support through our Encircle Programme, please get in touch with us #HereForYou

Embrace FARM Peer-to-Peer Supports (Encircle Programme)

Embrace FARM offers Peer-to-Peer supports connecting families who have been through similar circumstances

Embrace FARM Practical Supports (Encircle Programme)

In addition to your grief, you may experience practical issues regarding the family farm which may require seeking some guidance on how to manage different areas of the farm i.e., legal, financial or Agri issues. Embrace FARM offers free practical supports such as Legal, Financial, Succession and Agri Supports along with one-to-one Counselling for those who have lost a loved one within the farming community.

Personal Testimonies

“Even though grief is my own, I am not alone”

“It was just so beautiful to be with people who understood”

“I gained so much love and support from everyone”



Embrace FARM works in collaboration with charities and organisations in supporting farm families and individuals in its network. Please visit the ‘Supports’ page www.embracefarm.com for further details.