

FRIEND TO FRIEND



February edition

sids and **kids**[®]
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Take a leap of faith and begin the year by believing in yourself and those you love.

For those families who are struggling in their journeys or the year has begun with a traumatic loss or event, try to be patient towards all that is unresolved in your hearts and try to love the questions themselves.

The answers to your questions will come, but only after you know which ones need asking.

Try to be open to the changes that the answers will eventually bring. This may take some time but time is the New Year's generous blessing.

In this issue I have include a piece on "Grieving Mindfully – Triggers" for the calendar year. Check it out it may prove to be a very beneficial tool.

Maurissa

From the Counsellor's Desk

January, the month of new beginnings and cherished memories, beckons.

Let summer weave her wondrous spell: hot, sunny, fresh cotton clothes, warm balmy nights, savoury suppers and BBQs with friends, lively conversations and playing on the beach, or solitary joys.

...begin the year by believing in yourself and those you love.

This is the month to dream, to look forward to the year ahead and the journey within. A fresh start, a new chapter in your life, questions to be asked and answers to be discovered.

Take some time and space to ponder, reflect and come up with some hopes for your future.

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COMMON TRIGGERS

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PERSONAL MILESTONES

Birthdays

Anniversaries: "firsts" i.e. death, funeral memorial.

Beginnings/Endings: The year; calendar, school, financial.

Events: weather, sports, food, festivals, visitors, family.

FAMILY MILESTONES

Births, School, New job

Illness or death of loved one,

Weddings and Unions

SECULAR DAYS

Valentine's Day, Mother's and Fathers Day, New Year's Eve

RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL

Passover, Ramadan, Easter, Wesak, Muharram, Deepavali, Thanksgiving, Chanukah and Christmas.

GRIEVING MINDFULLY

When people suffer a major loss, their whole world can seem like a constant reminder of the absence of a loved one. In addition to people, places and things; special days and holidays can also feel overwhelming.

It maybe helpful to plot a year long calendar with space to write in dates that were meaningful in your relationship; things you might like to do or places you may wish to go at these times. Occasions and dates often establish the rhythm of our lives and relationships.

...have a short but clear statement that you can respond with so that others can understand your needs.

For the grieving family there will seem to be numerous day to day events that most people take for granted. But when you have experienced the death of a child these events become significant 'trigger's for grief. In saying this, there is a need to confront these events and take them as 'stepping stones' to recovery. These may include:

- * If your child was stillborn, two dates will be important the date of death and your due date;
- * Entering the room where the sudden unexpected death took place;
- * Handling your child's personal affects ie. clothes, toys, bedding and bottles;
- * Being in receipt of the interim and final coroner's reports. The interim can take up to 6 months, the final can take up to 2 years. In most cases the time-frame is much shorter;
- * Receiving the death Certificate;
- * Recognition that one month has passed since the death;
- * This can also occur when the realisation of the same period of time has elapsed that the child was alive to how long the child has been dead;
- * In re-establishing routines it becomes necessary to expose yourself to places like shopping centre's, day care centres, schools, hospitals and other places where there is a high likelihood of other young parents with babies;
- * Pick your times to reduce the impact and gradually rebuild your confidence;
- * Be aware that TV programs and ads can evoke triggers too.

If you are returning to work, negotiate a buffer or negotiate a slow return where you can be flexible initially. Confronting well meaning work colleagues can be difficult in many respects, few would have had the experience, many are awkward and do not know what to say or how to approach the subject. You need to have a short but clear statement that you can respond with so that others can understand your needs.

It may be wise to have a short break to deal with the grief and take the time to consult with your Doctor, SIDS and Kids Counsellor, Genetic Counsellor, Personal Counsellor or Parent Peer Supporter in relation to any fears about a subsequent pregnancy.

Maurissa and Peter

QUOTE:

Follow the three 'R's:

Respect the self,
Respect for others and
Responsibility for all your
actions

The Dalai Lama

Remembering Charlie

by Liz Sanchez

his life as best we could; and that we had found a peaceful resting place for him where he wouldn't be alone.


The memorial was a very moving and beautiful service. We had a lovely celebrant who contributed her own thoughts ideas and experience. We had both written pieces that were

...the 9 months I carried Charlie, were the happiest myself and my husband Kris have ever experienced.

read out along with a few poems.

The service followed a more symbolic feel, we released balloons at the end and had time for reflection with music. We brought a photo of Charlie along so people could see him and we put letters, photo's and trinkets in with his ashes.

Charlie brought so much Joy with the thought of his life so close not only to us but also our families. He is loved too much to ever be forgotten.



On the 30th March 2010, I gave birth to our first child. A beautiful baby boy called Charlie. He was 'born sleeping'. It wasn't something that was predicted and came as a great shock.

There has been no explanation to what caused his death just lots of maybes, whys and how could this happen to us.

Charlie's death has shocked both our families and made us question our faith in life, but the 9 months I carried Charlie, were the happiest myself and

my husband Kris have ever experienced.

After Charlie died we couldn't face a funeral and in the end we waited 6 months before we planned his memorial service.

We chose a place for his ashes to be interned in the garden of wishes at Centennial Park.

We felt waiting had meant we were in a slightly better place to plan a respectful service which celebrated

This moving book is an honest yet sensitive story about all the events that led to Grandma Jelly Bean's death in hospital. It is an innovative resource for children that provides a simple, reflective and gentle explanation about living, dying, letting go and remembering.

"Jelly Bean" lives with her grandchildren Abbey and Zac. Their lives are filled with turmoil when Jelly Bean becomes ill and subsequently dies from a massive stroke. The "secret" they had shared for so long was a project they had worked on together.

Jelly Bean wanting to ensure that her beloved grandchildren had something to remember her by when she was gone. Abbey and Jelly Bean made a mosaic out of all the things they had collected on their many long walks along the beach.

Abbey and Zac face a barrage of differing emotions as they say goodbye to their treasured and much adored friend and Grandmother. They also learn a lot about life and losing as their parents comfort and support them through their journey.

The comprehensive learning tool at the end of the book is a useful resource for parents, counsellors or teachers in assisting children to come to terms with the death of a loved one; and contains the essential message that while loss is sad, loving is triumphant.

BOOK REVIEW

by Anne Reynolds

