

SIDS AND KIDS South Australia

GRANDPARENT GRIEF FORUM

16 June 2011

It was acknowledged that the participants appreciated the support and the ability to meet other grandparents who have shared the same experience. To have an open discussion, share some tears, knowing that the others understood, having trained Counsellors there, learning some coping mechanisms, feeling that each of us are "normal" to be still grieving.

Comments supported the fact that the forum could have been longer in its format and that there was an eagerness for another forum. Participants willingly shared contact details for their own private follow-up.

Some thoughts that were shared:

-We often feel isolated from family and friends, which includes not being free to talk about our deceased grandchild.

-How do WE deal with OUR grief when we are trying to be there for our children.

-The topic of a deceased child is like "the elephant in the room" everyone knows, but no one wants to talk about it.

-Time is not the great healer for us, it makes no difference.

-The death of a child is so different from that of an adult or aged person.

-We did everything right in terms of keeping the baby safe and yet she still died.....WHY.

-There is a feeling that Grandparents' grief doesn't count, not supposed to cry, must be strong.

-It's hard to accept that sometimes there are no reasons.

-Emotionally and mentally it wrecks us too.

-Where do WE 'move on to' when we are in a vacuum of grief.

-It's really difficult going to shopping centres and watching T.V. with constant reminders in our face.

-We share the same triggers like Mother's Day and it has the same effect as it does on our children.

-My grief will last until I die.

-Having a 'special' grieving place helps.

-It's heartbreaking to see some kids who are not being loved by their parents and then our grandchild, surrounded by love, dies. What have we done wrong? Why do some people have children they don't deserve?

-Our children don't understand our grief, as they are consumed by their own grief.

-There is no measure to say one is grieving more than the other. It's not a competition. It something we need to share.

-It's really hard when we are not allowed to grieve within the family.

-Where there is a Great Grandparent, it's hard to be the 'buffer' between them and our own child.

-In some cases grief can bring families together as much as it can sometimes pull them apart.

Our Thanks go to the wonderful group of Grandparents who took a leap of faith in opening up on their personal grief.

Maurissa Ailion

Peter Papps

Dorothy Crosby