



FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN YOUR GRIEVING CHILD

Bringing your child to join an OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center group is an important first step in helping them cope with their grief. There are other things that you can do now that will help them heal as they adapt to their life without their parent who died.

Research has consistently shown the importance of the caregiver's adjustment to the death as an important determinant of how well the children will adjust. (Worden, J. W., 2009). Additionally, research into the factors that contribute to resiliency in parentally bereaved children has found that the immediate caregiving environment has the biggest impact on the psychological outcome of the grieving process. (Kaplow, 2012)

Specifically, factors that contribute to a healthy adjustment after the death of a parent include:

- Caregivers who have a warm and engaging style of parenting
- Caregivers who include their children in an open and ongoing dialogue about their loved one who died.
- Caregivers who are empathetic and supportive of their child's grief process including encouraging their child to express their feelings and help the child feel heard
- Offering positive reinforcement for helpful behaviors
- Setting appropriate and consistent limits with their child
- Caregivers who use communication skills which include active listening, open-ended questions and mirroring, and who can validate their child's feelings

While you may agree in principle that the above suggestions are desirable, it may be hard to maintain this type of parenting when you are a single parent and are grieving too.

In addition, finding time for self-care may seem like an unsurmountable luxury. Participation in a grief group at OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center can give you the support you need for your own grief so that you can be more available for your child.

In other cases, time-limited family or parent-child therapy can provide an opportunity to learn new communication skills while your family is adjusting to their life without your loved one who died. Ask OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center staff for referrals for grief specialists in your area.

OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center
www.OurHouse-Grief.org
West L.A. location: (310) 473-1511
Woodland Hills location: (818) 222-3344