

## TOOL 7 – SOME COMMON SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

Grief comes with a mix of feelings, sensations, thoughts and behaviours. As you read through this list keep in mind:

- you may experience all of these symptoms or only a few
- they can occur in any order on any day
- how long each symptom lasts can vary
- if these symptoms are too intense, extreme or last for lengthy periods, seek professional help
- there is no time limit to how long your grief will last—most bereaved parents say that it doesn't ever fully go away, but you learn to deal with it better.

Tool for family  
members

### Feelings — *the experience of loss*

Sadness—a deep emotional response

Shock—a sense of disbelief

Loneliness—emptiness and isolation

Denial—difficulty accepting the loss

Anxiety—frustration, blaming, agitation

Numbness—initially the body goes on autopilot

Guilt—a sense of not doing enough

Acceptance—the path of healing and new meaning

### Sensations — *the physical response*

Pain—chest, stomach, headache

Dizziness—at any time

Tiredness—a deep sense of fatigue

Sensitivity—to noise and light

Muscle weakness or shakes

Changed digestion

Difficulty swallowing

Dry mouth



## Thoughts — *the mental impact*

Confusion—muddled and disordered

Poor concentration—distraction, absent mindedness

Obsession—preoccupation with what happened

## Behaviours — *the grief expression*

Eating—more or less appetite

Overactivity—restlessness, needing to be busy

Withdrawal—inability to socialize

Dreaming—about who died and what happened

Difficulty sleeping—also wishing to sleep more

Seeking—the reason for illness and death

Remember grief is a natural response to loss but the impact of the loss of a child can mean the experience of mourning will be very intense and overwhelming. Be gentle with yourself and let someone else know when you are feeling like you are unable to cope. It is normal to need extra supports at times. These times are not always at the beginning of your loss and can be some months or years later.