

# GRIEF: What can I expect?

We often have expectations of grief which are unrealistic and unfair. We may question ourselves or our loved ones and wonder if we are 'grieving right'. Whilst everyone is unique, here is a list to help you know what to expect from grief:



## GRIEF IS:

- Unique
- A **normal response** to bereavement or loss
- A process which **allows for a gradual adjustment** to life beyond the death of your child
- Hard work and exhausting at times



## GRIEF IS NOT:

- An illness which can be cured
- A weakness that needs to be fixed
- A process which can be hurried

## I AM LIKELY TO FEEL:

The intensity coming in **waves**, these will get gentler, and spread apart over time, but larger waves can take you by surprise.

A **longing** to be with your baby or small child.

As if you have changed as a person, or you don't quite know who you are or how you fit in the world anymore.

A huge range of emotions including, sadness, anger, confusion, loneliness, anxiousness, fear, despair, guilt, emptiness, pride, happiness and love.

*Sometimes it can feel 'easier' to accept the more difficult emotions such as despair and anger as these are the emotions we come to expect from grief. However, happiness is important too. It does not mean you have forgotten your baby or young child, or love them any less; but it can help to build your reserves for the moments that feel more challenging. If you are struggling with accepting happy feelings, try to imagine what your loved one would want for you if they were here, or what you would want for a good friend who was going through the same thing. If you have other children at home, allowing them to see your full range of emotions including the happier ones will also give them permission to feel the same.*

Triggered at times. Remember what helps or brings you comfort. Over time you will build up a tool box of self-care.

Please see our trauma resource for more ideas.