

## A MOTHER'S STORY

The most unimaginable words that can ever be said to a mother are-  
***"Your child has died."***

Whether the words come from a doctor who has treated the child through a long and painful illness, from a policeman who announces that an accident has claimed another life, or from a relative who utters the terrible news, the words pierce through the heart.

Many mothers say that with the death of a child, they suffered an amputation of the heart – a part of them was gone. Many explain that the mind wants to comprehend what has happened, but there is a part of the brain and the soul that simply cannot accept this terrible fact of life which is death.

There is tremendous confusion and there is still that expectation that the child will walk through the front door, spend hours on the telephone, raid the refrigerator, and do all of the things that were a part of that young life. There is anger that this has happened to one so young, one with such potential. It seems that all of the hopes and dreams for tomorrow have suddenly been shattered and there is a great sense of depression that is entrenched in every hour – waking and sleeping. There is guilt...mothers often feel they are responsible for the child in every way and death is a bitter pronouncement that they have failed in not being able to save the child. Mothers say that death is so powerful there is loss, not just for the future, but of the present when the child should be happy and a part of family life. The memory of the past must be embraced and protected and this too can be very difficult.

Many mothers find they need to talk to others who have been down that lonely path and learn how they have coped and met this grief head on.

It isn't easy trying to talk to the rest of the world. Neighbors, friends, acquaintances, business associates, and even relatives are reluctant to mention the child's name, afraid that this could unleash a rush of tears that would be difficult to stem.

Women grieve differently from men and this can become a source of irritation in some marriages. Cultural differences can make it very difficult in families if one parent has customs that differ from another. Personalities are at odds and one parent may find that talking helps while another may feel that there must be time for silence.

While some people want to help the bereaved, sometimes the words are inappropriate. It may be that an arm around the shoulder and a quiet word will be much better received than

platitudes or suggestions that one knows how a mother feels – unless one has been through loss of a child, those words can be devastating.

Healing has its own timetable and it cannot be bent, stapled, or forced...it may come though, with the help of others and certainly through Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region it can happen. By meeting with other mothers who have heard those terrible words, “Your child has died,” the struggle can be lessened. Eventually, with help, there can be a time when a quiet sweetness and joy can return to life.

Living with a child’s death is not easy work for a mother it is a time to remember.

If you are a mother who has lost a child, or you know of a mother who has lost a child, give us a call.

From “Time to Remember”  
By Barbara Klich