

WHY IS THE CORONER CALLED WHEN DEATH IS DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES?

A coroner must not only investigate all unnatural deaths such as those due to foul play, suicide, accident, negligence, malpractice, but must also investigate certain natural deaths such as sudden and unexpected, from illness not under treatment by a qualified physician. Deaths occurring in certain types of institutions such as nursing homes, homes for the aged, and whenever questions can only be answered fairly after an investigation.

How is information obtained?

Information about the death may be obtained from the coroner as it becomes available. When the investigation is complete, the coroner will provide on request to the immediate family (spouse, partner, parent, child, brother, sister) or personal representative, a copy of the coroner's investigation statement. This statement includes information as to date and place, cause and means of death and relevant postmortem findings.

RESOURCES

London Police Service - Crisis Intervention/ Victim Support Unit & Victim Services Middlesex London (519) 661-5636

Provides victims of crime and/or traumatic circumstances with immediate support and referrals to available programs and services.

Reach Out (519) 433-2023 - is a free, 24/7, confidential mental health and addictions support and services line for people living in Elgin, Middlesex and Oxford and London.

Mental Health & Addictions Crisis Centre

The Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Centre is open 24/7 if you are a high risk of suicide, experiencing personal distress or symptoms of a mental illness or if you would benefit from talking to someone to initiate stabilizing supports. The Crisis Centre supports individuals who are 16 and older. 648 Huron Street, London, ON

Bereaved Families (519) 686-1573

Bereavement support provided to parents and families following the death of a child at any age, including adult children and pregnancy loss.



LONDON POLICE SERVICE
601 Dundas Street
London, ON N6B 1X1
Phone: 519.661.5670
www.londonpolice.ca

LONDON POLICE SERVICE GRIEVING THE DEATH OF A CHILD



**DEEDS
NOT
WORDS**

www.londonpolice.ca

THE GRIEF OF THE PARENTS: A LIFETIME JOURNEY

There is no more devastating loss than the death of a child. Losing a child to sudden death is a disruption in the natural law and order of life. It's heartbreak like no other. Parental grief is different from other losses – it is intensified, exaggerated, and lengthened. *i*

Grief is a process. Although you would wish otherwise, grief cannot be bypassed or hurried; it must be allowed to happen. As a parent, you do not go through grief and come out the other side as before the loss. Grief changes you. *ii*

Accepting the reality of the loss:

Embrace all your feelings and emotions. You're entitled to whatever feelings come up. You may experience intense anger, guilt, denial, sorrow and fear, all of which are normal for a bereaved parent. *iii*

WORKING THROUGH THE PAIN

It is necessary to acknowledge and work through the pain of grief, or it will manifest itself through some symptoms or atypical behavior. Not everyone experiences the same intensity of pain

or feels it in the same way, but it is impossible to lose someone with whom you had been deeply attached without experiencing some level of pain. Many emotions such as shock, anger, guilt, and depression may be expressed. You need to allow yourself to indulge in the pain: to feel it and know that one day it will pass. Some say it is easier to express emotions with someone who knew the child or who can relate to the experience directly. *iv*

Re-evaluate your relationships if they become hurtful:

It's not uncommon for friends to pull away during this grieving period. Some people simply do not know what to say, and those that are parents may feel uncomfortable with the reminder that the loss of a child is possible.

If friends urge you to "get over" your grief and try to hurry you through your grieving process, set boundaries with them regarding what is and isn't an acceptable topic for conversation. If necessary, distance yourself from those who insist on dictating your grieving process. *v*

WAYS TO COPE AND HEAL

- Admitting to yourself that your grief can be overwhelming, unpredictable, painful, draining, and exhausting.
- Allowing yourself to be angry and acknowledging that you may feel helpless, vulnerable, and disoriented.
- Trying to understand that to grieve is to heal and integrating grief into your life is a necessity for now.
- Acknowledging the need and desire to talk about your child.
- Trying to be patient and forgiving with yourself, and others.
- Refraining from making hasty decisions.
- Counting on, confiding in, and trusting those who care, listen, and hear, those who will try to understand your emotional and physical limitations.
- Accepting that you are allowed to feel pleasure and continue to live your life, knowing your love transcends your child's death. *vi*

i,ii,iv,vi US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration. (n.d.). The Death of a Child - The Grief of the Parents: A Lifetime Journey.

iii, v US Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Infant Death Resource Center. (2005). How to Survive the Death of Your Child. McLean, Virginia, USA.