

when the worst has happened

the first days after losing a child

There is not language sturdy enough to hold this. This page will not pretend otherwise. It is only a hand held out in the dark. A few quiet steadlers for when the hours feel impossible.

Take what helps.

There is no right way to do this, and no pace you are meant to keep.



in the very first hours



Breathe. Let other people carry what they can. You don't have to organise anything right now.



Eat. Even if it's something small. Drink water. Your body is grieving too.



Say yes. When someone offers a specific thing - a meal, a lift, a load of washing.

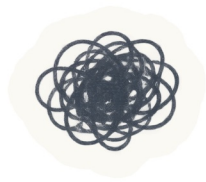


Trust. Keep at least one trusted person close who can answer the phone, the door, the messages.



Rest. Let the world reach you only as gently as you can bear.

what you may feel



Numbness, as though you are watching yourself from a distance.



Waves that come without warning.



An exhaustion that sleep does not touch.



Guilt that is not rational, replaying what might have been done differently.



Moments of ordinary life that feels like betrayals but are not.

Let every feeling have room.

Tears and laughter, rage and tenderness can share the same hour.
None of it is wrong, and none of it means you loved them any less.

gentle things that sometimes help



Lower the bar
all the way
down. Surviving
today is
enough.



keep something
of theirs
close. You are
allowed to hold
it for as long
as you need.



Write things
down, even a
single line. A
notebook can
hold what you
cannot yet say
aloud.



Step outside for
a few minutes
if you can. Not
to feel better
- only to feel
the air.

If the days feel unbearable

If you are struggling to
carry on, please reach out.
You should not have to hold
this alone.



SADAG (South African
Depression and Anxiety
Group)

0800 567 567



The Compassionate
Friends South Africa
offer support groups
for bereaved parents,
run by people who have
walked this themselves.



Lifeline South Africa
0861 322 322



Your local hospice is
also a gentle place to
ask.