

Essential Links

Parent Links

THE GRIEF PROCESS - *The ideas and theories of Kenneth Moses are the basis for this Essential Link on Grief.*

“You know more of a road by having traveled it than by all of the conjectures and descriptions in the world” William Hazlitt

As a parent you may encounter a variety of emotional responses as you struggle with issues relative to raising a deaf or hard of hearing child. Our journey is not easy. It is widely accepted that grief is a response to loss or separation. In the case of parenting a deaf or hard of hearing child it is the loss of a dream; the perception of what a child should be. At the time the hearing loss is identified and at various stages through the development of your child, parents are confronted with issues of loss and respond with various emotions (guilt, anger, denial, anxiety, and depression). The experience is natural, it can be painful and, it is healthy.

The process is natural. Feelings and emotions are human responses. They are not right or wrong; they just are. The identification of hearing loss triggers emotions in parents that are natural in a situation that is new and uncharted. Prior to the identification of hearing loss, each parent subconsciously holds a road map of life for themselves and their children. At the time of diagnosis and at various points along the way, they find themselves on a road not listed on their map and they find no way to turn back. When this happens, it is natural to feel anxiety about choices which need to be made, anger at the map maker, guilt for possibly taking a wrong turn, fear of the unknown, and possibly a time spent denying that this could even be happening. To respond otherwise would be unnatural.


The process can be painful. A parent may feel out of control, unable to deal with this new set of circumstances, overwhelmed with sadness or anger. The intensity of emotions may be uncomfortable for those who are interacting with a grieving parent. There is a tendency for others to want to alleviate the pain or at least diminish the intensity. To do so is to deny the parent their search for a new path.

The process is healthy. Through the grief experience parents may reevaluate life. They often create new maps for themselves and their children by redefining their destination, asking directions, and finding new roads. Through the process they develop strengths and skills, discovering values that were previously unknown to them. Through the pain comes growth and purpose. Parents find themselves no longer at a crossroads with no place to turn but with a revised map and new roads to travel. The roads are not better or worse, just different.

Not only is the grief process natural, painful and healthy but it is also an individual process. Each person experiences grief in their own way and in their own time. No one can or should do it for you, but **Parent Links** can walk with you as you begin your journey.

Mapping out the destination is an ongoing task, but each detour is accomplished with a little less struggle than the first. Grieving never ends, only the intensity changes. Remind yourself of the skills, strengths and values you have found in yourself since you first stood at the crossroads. Grab the road map of life and take time to enjoy your wondrous child.

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