**Grandparent’s Grief**

*Why does the death of my grandchild hurt so much?*
A grandparent’s grief can be a complicated journey. Your grief is twofold. Not only are you mourning the loss of your grandchild, you have lost a part of your son or daughter that will never be the same. Many grandparents feel a sense of helplessness because they are unable to prevent the anguish their own child feels. Life may now seem more fragile and unfair than ever. These feelings may be frustrating, but they are completely normal for grandparents to feel as they, too, experience the loss of this baby.

*I don’t know what to do or say. How can I support my son or daughter?*
Sometimes there is just nothing to say. Just be quiet, be with them, hold their hand, touch their shoulder, or give them a hug. If you can’t find the right words say, “I’m Sorry” or “I just don’t know what to say.” Avoid clichés like “Thank goodness you are young, you can have more children,” or “God wouldn’t give you more than you can handle.” What may seem comforting to you may be very hurtful to them.

Check up on your son or daughter. Be specific in your offer to help. Perhaps offer to run errands, provide food, or do laundry. After a few weeks, people generally don’t stop by as often. Parents need a reminder that they are not alone.

One misconception is that the shorter the baby's life, the easier the grief process. The opposite is true. Chances are your child is grieving not only the loss of his or her baby, but their pregnancy or hopes and dreams for the future. Acknowledge the baby by using his or her name. This shows you value the short life of your grandchild.

Avoid giving advice. There are no rules that define how one should feel or how soon one will return to the norms of daily life. Your child needs to be heard without feeling judgment or receiving unwanted advice. Grief can make people more sensitive and vulnerable.

It is very difficult to watch your own child grieve, and after some time you may wonder why they have not gotten better. The parents of a baby that dies need more time to grieve, as the average intense grieving period could be up to 24 months. Parents will go through ups and downs during this time, but allowing them time and being patient will help them grieve.

Remember special dates or holidays. Parents, and grandparents, may be saddened by special events or dates like birthdays, due date, delivery date, Mother’s or Fathers’ Day, because it is a reminder that their baby is not here. Acknowledge how difficult these days may be without the baby, and ask how they are doing. Showing your recognition with hugs, cards, gifts, or special remembrances also helps to create special mementos.

*How do I talk to my son or daughter about the future?*
The future is best held in the hands and hearts of your son or daughter. Allow them to share their thoughts on future pregnancies or children without pressure or prodding. Even though you may have good intentions, encouraging or implying that parents should
have more children may make the parents feel as though you are minimizing their loss. When the time is right, your son or daughter will share with you their plans, and it will be all right to share your emotions. Just remember, whether or not there are more children in the future for your son or daughter, it is important to remember and honor your grandchild that died.