

*National
Organization of
Mothers
Of
Twins
Clubs, Inc.*

SUBJECT: DEATH OF A MULTIPLE

RESEARCHER: Natioal Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

DATE: September 1997 - 1998

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to determine if a support group/networking system is needed for families who have lost a multiple or multiples.

METHOD: A questionnaire was printed in MOTC's Notebook and distributed in a National mailing. This survey was in two parts. Part one was to be filled out by multiple birth parents who had lost one or more of their multiples. Part two was to be filled out by the surviving multiple (if old enough to understand and answer the questions).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Thirty-one parents completed part one of this survey. Nine surviving multiples completed part two.

RESULTS:

PART ONE

1. 25/31 respondents reported that their multiple child died before the age of one year. Nine were miscarriages.
2. The causes of death were: health related (20), accident (5), unknown (5)
3. 28 of the respondents stated that they needed someone to talk to regarding their loss.
4. The most frequent reaction to the loss was grief, although anger was also mentioned.
5. 15 sets of parents said the death had brought them closer together, 10 said the death had caused a rift in their relationship.
6. All respondents would have liked to be linked with a multiple-birth family in similar circumstances.
7. 15 had been referred by their local clubs to NOMOTC services.
8. 8 stated that they had been helped through NOMOTC Bereavement Support.
9. 18 respondents sought help from other support services, (CLIMB, Bereaved Parents USA, Triplet Connection, Compassionate Friends, Support After Neonatal Death, Twinless Twins, Precious Children Remembered.)
10. Only 12 respondents felt that information on dealing with a death of a multiple was readily available.
11. 12 stated that they felt they could return to the local twin club, 16 felt that they could not. 12 belonged to clubs where another member had lost a multiple.
12. 24 affirmed that they would like to see a networking of multiples who have lost a sibling.

PART TWO

Due to the low number of respondents to this section, it was difficult to draw conclusions or make generalizations from the responses that were given.

1. If the loss of a sibling occurred at a very young age, the survivor was less likely to have a conscious memory of that sibling later on.
2. These respondents stated that they would rather parents and friends offer them support than an MOTC member.
3. Most respondents would like to be linked to other surviving multiples.

CONCLUSION:

PART ONE

1. Information on how to deal with the loss of a multiple should be made more readily available to grieving families.
2. Local twin clubs should continue to welcome MOMs who have lost one or more of their multiples. Although they should also be understanding if remaining a member is too painful for the MOM.
3. The death of a child is always a traumatic event that causes major stress in the marital relationship and in the family as a whole.
4. It is always a good idea to seek out a compassionate person to talk over your loss with. That individual can be another family member, a friend, a pastoral counselor, or a therapist.
5. Although grief is the most common reaction to a death, anger, denial and other reactions are completely normal.
6. The death of a close family member may take years to work through, not weeks or even months. A grieving person should not feel that he or she "should be over it by now."
7. If you feel "stuck" in grief, seek professional counseling.
8. Networking with others who have suffered similar losses is beneficial.
9. It is a good idea to contact a group that deals specifically with losing a multiple (CLIMB, Bereaved Parents USA, Support After Neonatal Death, Twinless Twins, etc.).

PART TWO

1. No matter how young a child is when a co-multiple dies (even in utero), that loss is experienced in some way.
2. Very early losses may not leave a conscious memory.
3. Children should be talked to openly and honestly about the death of a sibling. And they should be encouraged to express how they feel, even if those feelings seem "unacceptable" at first.

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