



Coping with Grief Related to Hearing Loss

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Goal

Families will form understanding around the shared experiences of grief related to hearing loss.



Welcome to Holland



Who feels grief about hearing loss?

- ▶ Mom
- ▶ Dad
- ▶ Brothers
- ▶ Sisters
- ▶ Individual
- ▶ Grandma
- ▶ Grandpa
- ▶ Aunts
- ▶ Uncles
- ▶ Close Friends
- ▶ Anyone who is close to the family or the child.



Individualized Process

- ▶ Every person experiences the stages of grief in their own way.



Self Care

- ▶ Someone to listen without judgement
- ▶ Personal time
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Diet
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ What do you do?



The Stages of Grief

- ▶ Shock
- ▶ Denial
- ▶ Guilt
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anger
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Acceptance



Shock



Shock is a protective response.

This emotion numbs other emotions to keep them from overwhelming us.

Shock Checklist

- ▶ Do you remember what the audiologist told you during the first visit?
- ▶ Have you taken any constructive action to get help since you learned that your child has a hearing loss?
- ▶ Are you spending your time in truly meaningful activity?
- ▶ Have you begun to express normal emotions such as fear, anger or grief?



Denial



Denial is an attempt to find normalcy.

It can manifest in two different ways.

- 1) A desire for second opinions that will overturn what the professionals have said.
- 2) An avoidance of discussions or outward signs of hearing loss.

Denial Checklist

- ▶ Do you believe that your child is deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Are you able to discuss the fact that your child is deaf or hard of hearing with family and friends?
- ▶ Are you angry with the audiologist for telling you that your child is deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Have you said anything like “There’s nothing wrong with my child!?”
- ▶ Do you find yourself angry for no apparent reason, at your child, or at others who are trying to help?
- ▶ Are you seeking one “cure” after another, even though several qualified professionals have made the diagnosis that your child is deaf or hard of hearing.



Guilt



Guilt is an attempt to find a reason why.

- 1) A known cause for which you may feel responsible.
- 2) There was something that you are being punished for doing.

Guilt Checklist

- ▶ Do you feel responsible because your child is deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Do you linger on something that you did which might have resulted in your child being deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Are you pampering or overprotecting your child to “make it up to him or her?”
- ▶ Are you making unreasonable sacrifices to attend to your child who is deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Do you feel as if you are being punished for doing something wrong or for being a bad person?



Depression



Depression is the hopelessness that sets in when anger turns inward.

In this stage, we tend to isolate ourselves and tell ourselves the story that we are alone in this struggle.

Depression Checklist

- ▶ Have you been experiencing a feeling of hopelessness?
- ▶ Have you been avoiding even the most simple duties and responsibilities?
- ▶ Do you catch yourself daydreaming when you are supposed to be working on a task?
- ▶ Do you find yourself withdrawing from friendly conversations which you would have enjoyed earlier?
- ▶ Do you feel alone even though you may be with family or friends?



Anger



The stage of anger occurs when frustration from a difficult situation grows to a tipping point.

Anger always becomes directed at someone.

Anger Checklist

- ▶ Have you been losing your temper with a) your child b) your spouse c) the professionals d) anyone trying to help you?
- ▶ Do you often find yourself in conflict with any of the people mentioned in the first question?
- ▶ Are you punishing your child more than you think is normal?
- ▶ Do you see problems developing in your personal relationships since you learned that your child is deaf or hard of hearing?



Anxiety



Anxiety arises when the unknowns of the future topple your experience and skills.

The pressures to make decisions for communication modality, school placements, and a new family culture can induce the feeling that life is out of control.

Anxiety Checklist

- ▶ Are you losing sleep while worrying about the future for you and your child?
- ▶ Are you usually dissatisfied with the performance of your child's teachers/therapists?
- ▶ Do you set goals for your child that puts unusual pressure on both you and your child?
- ▶ Are you unable to enjoy activities for yourself that have nothing to do with your child who is deaf or hard of hearing?



Acceptance



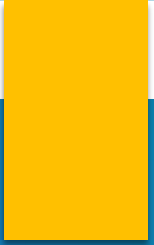
Acceptance comes piece by piece as you deal with the other stages of grief.

When you take the time to care for yourself and acknowledge the validity of your process, you will come to find acceptance.

Acceptance Checklist

- ▶ Have you stopped blaming yourself and your child because he is deaf or hard of hearing?
- ▶ Have you “worked through” the stages of grief that have been discussed in this presentation?
- ▶ Are you ready to work with the professionals to help your child?
- ▶ Are you ready to be the “manager” of the team that will plan and execute your child’s communication and educational programs
- ▶ Do you feel a sense of hope for the future?





“ You may think you will never be able to tell your friends that your child is deaf or hard of hearing. That’s what I thought. But then, after a while, I got to the point where I could say, “My son is deaf,” and smile... you know... actually smile. And I said to myself, “God, I said that like I was happy about it or something, you know.” ”

--Anonymous parent (Beginnings, 2011, p. 18)

References

- ▶ BEGINNINGS for parents of Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children INC. (2011). "Understanding Your Child's Hearing Loss: A Guide for Parents." Raleigh, NC: Beginnings for parents of Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children INC.
- ▶ Luterman, D. (1997). Emotional Aspects of Hearing Loss. *Volta Review*, 99(5), 75–83. Retrieved from <http://dist.lib.usu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ603407&site=ehost-live>



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