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Death of a Family Member

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Grand Island Senior High 2021

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Abstract

Death is a tragic occurrence that affects the lives of family and friends in many ways. When a child in the family dies the parents and remaining children of the family now have to adapt to the new life that they have to live. This presentation is focused on the family of the deceased child, how they react to the situation and what are their outcomes of their reactions.

Key Points

- Parents have difficulty loving their remaining children due to anxiety
- Parents are likely to divorce after the death of a child because they lost a sense of communication
- Surviving children that are older tend to act out more and engage in elevated levels of risk taking
- Surviving children that are younger express feelings of sadness and depression

Table 1. Key recurrent themes and subthemes.

Master theme	Subtheme	N
Parental anxiety	• Concern regarding effects of sibling death	11 parents (3 couples)
	• Concern about child's peer relationships	9 parents (2 couples)
	• Fear of losing another child	6 parents (1 couple)
Conflicts and obstacles in the parent-child relationship	• Judgmental of surviving child's grieving	6 parents (2 couples)
	• Idealizing the deceased	7 parents (2 couples)
		7 parents (2 couples)
Changes in parenting style	• Neglectful parenting	15 parents (5 couples)
	• Permissive parenting	11 parents (5 couples)
		9 parents (3 couples)
Striving to support children's grief	• Helping children continue bonds with deceased sibling	13 parents (4 couples)
	• Comforting their grief	5 parents (1 couple)
	• Fostering independence	8 parents (3 couples)
		4 parents (2 couples)
Seeking outside help for parenting	• Seeking support on child's behalf	13 parents (4 couples)
	• Seeking professional help for parenting	5 parents (1 couple)
		3 parents (1 couple)

Note. N = the number of participants represented in each theme and the overlap of data from 2 parents within the same family.

Conclusion

The death of any person is awfully tragic but when it is a child in your family it is 100 times worse. The way that parents cope and carry on with their lives affect the entire family. It affects their relationship as a couple and the relationship with the surviving children. Death is an awful incident that traumatically affects the family of the deceased either by bringing them closer or separating them. For future research on this topic, it would be beneficial to go more in depth about the impacts that death makes on the surviving children in the family. How they are affected by it and how it affects their future.

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