



# Helping a Bereaved Parent

## Some ideas of what to do

<p><b>Say each baby's name and include them in conversation</b></p>	<p><b>Approach the bereaved parent rather than waiting for them to come to you.</b></p>
<p><b>Make eye contact, gently touch them or offer a hug if it seems appropriate.</b></p>	<p><b>Just listen to them and allow them to cry. This is their time to talk and yours to listen</b></p>
<p><b>But also... let them be silent. They don't always need to talk.</b></p>	<p><b>Don't make comparisons with your own experiences of bereavement.</b></p>
<p><b>Be available – try not to appear uncomfortable or guilty if your children are still alive and well.</b></p>	<p><b>Send a message/card of condolence to let them know you're thinking about them.</b></p>
<p><b>If you ask them how they are, make sure you have the time to listen to their answer – it's important they don't feel rushed or get the impression that you would rather be elsewhere.</b></p>	<p><b>If they say they are ok – are they really ok?</b></p>



Offer practical help – take the other children to the park or look after them for a while, make a cup of tea, wash up, or bring food round. But also be aware they may want different things.

Invite them out for a coffee, but understand if they feel they can't yet be around lots of other people.

Understand their appearance of doing well may be deceptive.

Arrange a specific date to meet up, rather than vague comments that 'we should get together'.

Think about your responses – "At least you've got another one", "Try to think positively" or "They have gone to a better place" are not helpful comments to somebody who has just lost their babies.

Suggest going for a walk with them, as conversation is easier when you walk together.

Tell the father you are sorry too – don't forget him and don't tell him to "Stay strong".

It is never too late to say something – even several years later, you can always ask how they are and apologise for not being there at the time.

Don't rush their grief – it can take years to accept the loss of a child.

Don't assume that they can have more children, this may not be possible.

Remember that it is going to take a long time for them to accept what has happened. They may well not go back to being that same person that they once were. Many people say that it is a new kind of normal.

## Twins trust. Bereavement Support Group

The Twins Trust Bereavement Support Group (BSG) exists to support all parents and carers of twins, triplets or more who have died whether it was during pregnancy or after pregnancy. You can find out more about our befriending service, our Facebook support group and the other support we can provide on our website:

[twinstrust.org/bereavement](https://twinstrust.org/bereavement)

Adapted from: Hurcombe (2004); and Multiple Births: Bereavement Support website, Canada and with parents from our online Bereavement Support Group (2017)