

Father and Infant Loss Podcast: Adding a New Resource for Bereavement Support

Barb Himes, CD



Saving babies. Supporting families.

First Candle's efforts to support families during their most difficult times and provide new answers to help other families avoid the tragedy of the loss of their baby are without parallel.

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One area we have seen growing is peer-driven bereavement support by and for fathers. There are many private Facebook groups, books, blogs, and retreats (1) And in early January 2023, what is believed to be the first such podcast program in North America, Guys and Grief, will begin weekly broadcasts on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

The podcast is being hosted by three fathers whose existing friendships were strengthened by mutual support around pregnancy or infant loss. Brian Scruton and his wife lost their first child in January 2019, Brad Kogut and his wife suffered six miscarriages over four years, with one successful pregnancy, and Brandon Thurman and his wife lost their daughter in 2019. None is a medical professional, and the program is designed to be approachable to the layperson.

"A podcast can be a safe space for people to listen and grieve, and you can do it wherever you are," Scruton says.

A 2020 meta-study (2) of literature published between 2007 – 2019 that evaluated grief and bereavement behaviors of fathers following the death of their child concluded that in Western societies, despite evolving gender roles over the years, "many fathers navigate loss through stoicism, self-isolation, and hard work."

"We want to let dads know they are not alone and to help them grieve in the way that dads grieve," Kogut says. "Group therapy is not for everyone."



Did you know that premature and low birth weight babies have a 4x greater risk for SIDS?

At First Candle we're educating parents, grandparents and caregivers about safer sleep to make sure all babies reach their first birthday. Learn more at firstcandle.org



A PODCAST DESIGNED FOR MEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED PREGNANCY OR INFANT LOSS

“The program, at the outset, will include a discussion of general perceptions of paternal grief, with each host outlining his own bereavement experience around miscarriage and infant loss. Podcast listeners will have the opportunity to submit questions and make requests for topics via email (guysandgrief@gmail.com) and the Facebook page.”

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As the program format progresses, there will be guest speakers, lighter moments “when appropriate,” and a goal of developing a diverse community across generational, cultural, ethnic, and gender-identifying spheres.

There is also a hope that the program may provide health care providers and other existing sources of support for families with an additional resource for grieving fathers and extended family members as they cope with infant and child loss.

Guys and grief can be accessed via Spotify, Facebook, Instagram, and Apple Podcast, and a link to the podcast will also be available

on the First Candle website.

References:

1. <https://stillstandingmag.com/2018/06/17/dads-grieve-too-and-they-need-other-grieving-dads/>
2. McNeil MJ, Baker JN, Snyder I, et al. Grief and Bereavement in Fathers After the Death of a Child: A Systematic Review. *Pediatrics*. 2021;147(4):e2020040386

Disclosures: The author is a Certified Doula and the Director of Education and Bereavement Services of First Candle, Inc., a Connecticut-based not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation. Brian Scruton is a volunteer and member of the Board of Directors of First Candle.

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About First Candle

First Candle, based in New Canaan, CT, is a 501c (3) committed to eliminating Sudden Unexpected Infant Death while providing bereavement support for families who have suffered a loss. Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID), which includes SIDS and Accidental Suffocation and Strangulation in Bed (ASSB), remains the leading cause of death for babies one month to one year of age, resulting in 3,500 infant deaths nationwide per year.