



DEVASTATING LOSSES

How Parents Cope With the Death of a Child to Suicide or Drugs

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This book fills a critical gap in our scientific understanding of the grief response of parents who have lost a child to traumatic death and the psychotherapeutic strategies that best facilitate healing. It is based on the results of the largest study ever conducted of parents surviving a child's traumatic death or suicide. The book was conceived by William and Beverly Feigelman following their own devastating loss of a son, and written from the perspective of their experiences as both suicide-survivor support group participants and facilitators. It intertwines data, insight, and critical learning gathered from research with the voices of the 575 survivors who participated in the study.

The text emphasizes the sociological underpinnings of survivors' grief and provides data that vividly documents their critical need for emotional support. It explains how bereavement difficulties can be exacerbated by stigmatization, and by the failure of significant others to provide expected support. Also explored in depth are the ways in which couples adapt to the traumatic loss of a child and how this can bring them closer or render their relationship irreparable. Findings suggest that with time and peer support affiliations, most traumatically bereaved parents ultimately demonstrate resilience and find meaningful new roles for themselves, helping the newly bereaved or engaging in other humanitarian acts.

Key Features:

- Offers researchers, clinicians, and parent-survivors current information on how parents adapt initially and over time after the traumatic loss of a child
- Presents data culled from the largest survey ever conducted (575 individuals) of parents surviving a child's suicide or other traumatic death
- Investigates the ways in which stigmatization complicates and prolongs the grieving process
- Addresses the tremendous value of support groups in the healing process
- Explores how married couples are affected by the traumatic loss of their child

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