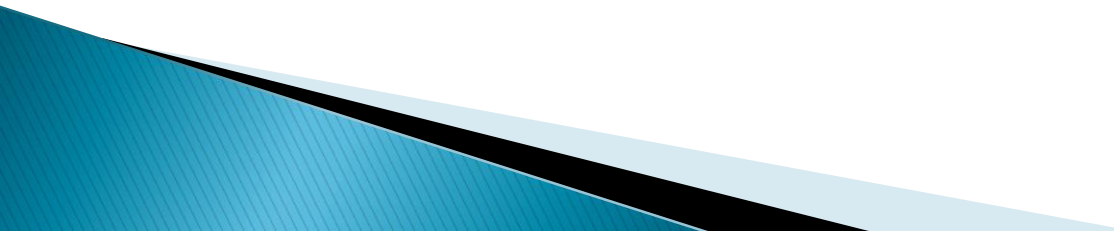


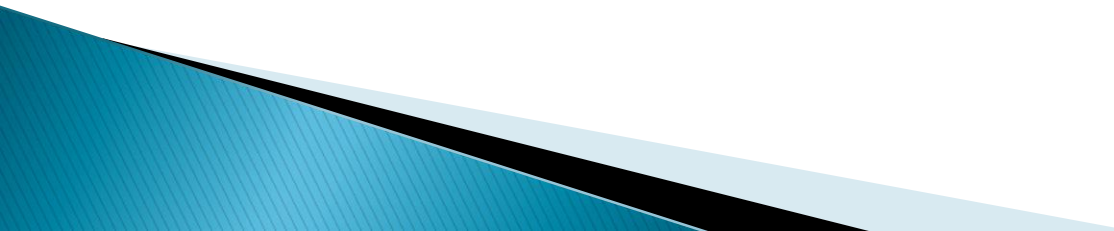
**Bereaved Parents–
A unique Grief
What Health Professionals need to
acknowledge**

Children's Palliative Care Conference
Dublin
November 30th 2013

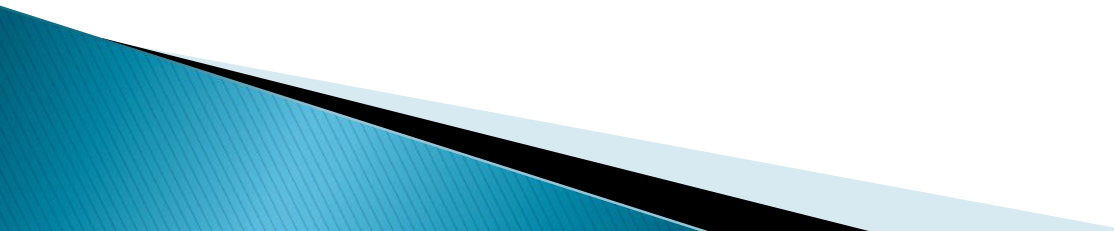
Loss of a child

- ▶ Devastating, intense and traumatising
 - ▶ Lasting changes on the family
 - ▶ Secondary trauma – employers and acquaintances
 - ▶ Loss of our future
 - ▶ Loss of dreams
 - ▶ Threatens our assumptive world
 - ▶ Impacts on us as individuals, as parent dyad, the family system and society
- 


Communicating the news

- ▶ How the news of that prognosis is broken will be remembered for a lifetime
 - ▶ Helpful
 - ▶ Unhelpful
 - ▶ Parents' views
- 


Impact on

- ▶ Individual
 - ▶ Finding meaning
 - ▶ Roles and relationships
 - ▶ Dyad- dependent on coping styles
 - ▶ Siblings- overshadowed by illness and death
 - ▶ Extended family
- 

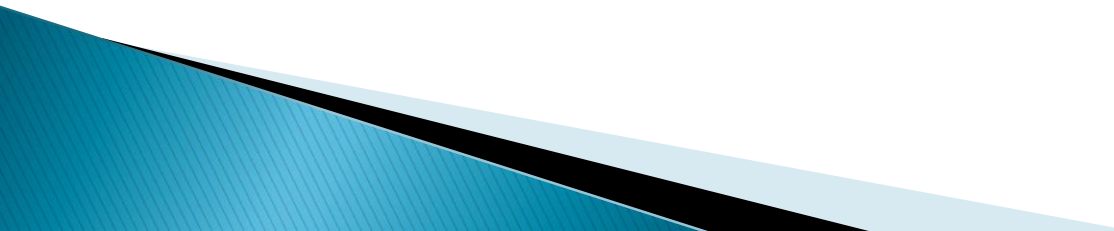
Parental loss

- ▶ Is a unique experience
 - ▶ Sense of child is kept intact through link objects
 - ▶ Need shared stories that evoke memories of the child
 - ▶ A continued bond is created and allows an inner representation of the child to form
 - ▶ Sense of their spiritual presence
 - ▶ Need to create a durable biography
 - ▶ Need to talk about the child
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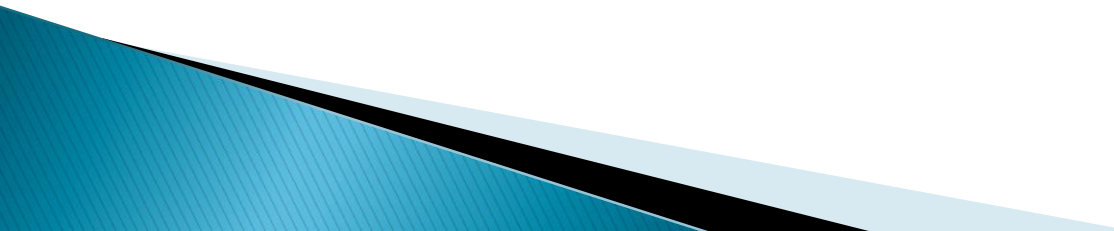
Parents need

- ▶ To value, remember, celebrate and love their late children
 - ▶ Creates empty space, deep suffering and a quest for meaning
 - ▶ Structure and stability in coping with the loss
 - ▶ To memorialise their child
 - ▶ To identify and acknowledge their status as parent
 - ▶ To validate the parent–child relationship
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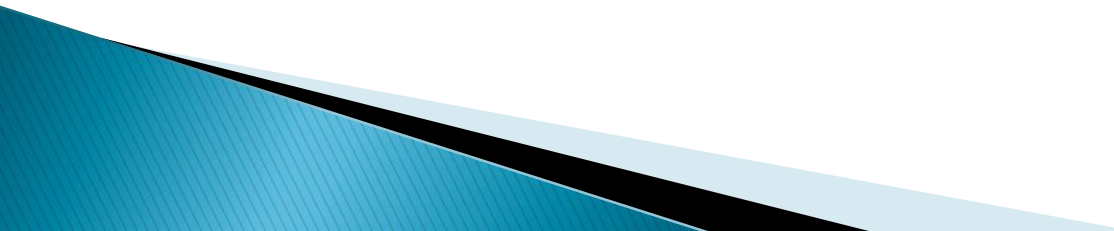
Gender differences

- ▶ Cultural
 - ▶ Social
 - ▶ Biological
 - ▶ Instrumental
 - ▶ Intuitive
-
- ▶ Beware of dissonance!
- 

The Unspeakables

- ▶ “Am I a Bad Mother?”
 - ▶ “This must be a punishment?”
 - ▶ “How could I not protect my child?”
 - ▶ “I must be to blame... I should have noticed”
- 


Siblings 'the forgotten mourners'

- ▶ Overshadowed
 - ▶ What was their relationship with the deceased child
 - ▶ Exclusion
 - ▶ Silence
- 

What are bereaved parents coping with?

Specifically related to bereavement	
Problems at work	55%
Financial difficulties	42%
Relationship difficulties	64%
Childcare problems	33%
Concerns about family coping	88%

What research is teaching us

- ▶ Need to alert GP's to the mortality risk
 - ▶ Drug/alcohol use needs monitoring
 - ▶ Need to encourage adaptive behaviours
 - ▶ Reduce the number/impact of restoration stressors
 - ▶ All bereaved parents should receive advocacy support
 - ▶ In the absence of bereavement support at a policy level, there is need to encourage compassionate employers
- 

“Compassion is a far greater and nobler thing than pity.”

Sogyi Rinpoche

