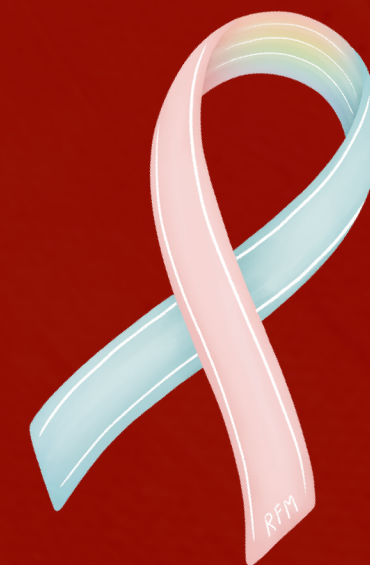


Deck the Halls

...or don't

Triggers

Rainbows
for Makenna



Triggers

A trigger is anything, a sight, sound, smell, phrase, event, or even a thought, that suddenly and intensely brings your grief to the surface. Triggers can feel like being pulled back into the rawest moments of loss, often without warning.

They can cause real, intense, physical reactions.



Triggers

Common triggers during the holidays:

- Pregnancy announcements
- Photos with Santa
- Family gatherings: seeing children who would be the same age as your child
- Gift giving: buying gifts for other children but not your own
- Family photos: feeling like someone is missing
- Traditions: participation in things your child will never do





Triggers

Preparing for Triggers:

1. Identify the places, things, and people that are most likely to trigger you.
2. Have an exit plan: have a phrase ready such as “I need a moment”, or “I’m going to step outside”.
3. Bring comfort items: a piece of jewelry with your babies ashes, their photo, a weighted stuffed animal.
4. Set expectations with loved ones.





Triggers

Setting expectations ahead of time with family so they can help avoid triggering you.

1. “Please don’t pressure me to join activities I’m not ready for.”
2. “It would mean a lot if you use my baby’s name.”
3. “I’d like to include my baby’s photo in our family photos.”
4. “I’d like an empty seat at the table for my baby who should be here.”
5. “Please check in with me throughout the night.”





Triggers

In the moment coping strategies if you get triggered:

- Try a grounding exercise: 5,4,3,2,1 is a common one: name 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste.
A grounding exercise brings you back to the right now and can prevent spiraling into the what ifs.
- Set up a safe word with a trusted person. This safe word can be a clue to them to either steer the conversation in a different direction or let's them know you need out NOW.
- Excuse yourself. "I need some air" requires no explanation and allows you to regroup and decide your next steps.





Triggers

I was triggered and my coping strategies aren't working. Now what?

1. You don't need to stick it out. Give yourself permission to leave early if that's what you need.
2. Have a grief-safe friend on standby. Text you go-to loss bestie that just gets it. Sometimes being able to vent to someone who has been there reminds us we are not alone and recenters us.
3. Speak to yourself kindly and give yourself grace. This is hard and that is okay.
4. Remind yourself that being triggered does not equal failing.

*Remind yourself that being triggered engages a physical and emotional response. It drains your heart, your mind, and your body. Taking care of yourself after experiencing that is not failure. It is survival.



Triggers

If you need a fellow loss parent to connect to, these are Instagram accounts ran by loss parents that the Rainbows for Makenna community voted as some of their favorites:

- @grievinglikeamother
- @touchofteddy
- @littlebeanfoundation
- @lossmomclub
- @thekatherinelazar
- @alexandramadison
- @reallytrishh
- @sad.dads.club
- @onenightcloser
- @payalponders
- @zoeadelle
- @heart.of.harper
- @joyfulmourning
- @themiscarriagemom
- @heylossmama
- @guys_and_grief

