



Children's Bereavement Center

Lift From Loss For Adults

Hello, I am here to tell you a story about a girl and her experience with the Children's Bereavement Center (CBC). Think about a child who is important to you, maybe a son, a daughter, a friend, or any child you care about. Now, picture that child as I tell you about a little girl I cared for.

I'm the "Stuffed Heart." I've held a special place in the home of Nicole since she was six years old when I was given to her at a CBC peer grief support group. You see, I was a soft and supportive landing for Nicole when her dad died. When Nicole felt scared, confused, and alone, I told her that I would always stay with her and that her feelings were completely normal. When she missed her father, she could hold me, sleep with me, and keep me by her side. I became a gentle reminder that death can also be the beginning of a new relationship with her dad.

I comforted Nicole, teaching her ways to cope with her loss. Her dad played the guitar, so to keep him close to their hearts, her mom and sister would play his favorite songs and dance and remember him together. There were also times when the thought of her dad brought tears to her eyes that would fall on me while I was in her arms. I told her it was okay to cry. With me as a tool and the support of her friends in her grief support group, she learned how to ride the waves of her grief, gaining more and more courage each day. In those moments that might have felt insurmountable or joyless, I was there to show her that memories and celebration were a big part of her life. Even though her dad wasn't physically present, she could still have a relationship and a continuing bond with him. I told her that it was okay for her to seek comfort, feel happiness, and enjoy all the things that will make her life meaningful, well into adulthood.

As Nicole's "Stuffed Heart" and friend, I empowered her to accept her grief and to see it as a special part of who she was. Today, the lessons that I taught Nicole are still with her. She hasn't outgrown the support and love that I have extended to her over the last 25 years, and I remain on her nightstand to this day. I've watched her grow into a beautiful young woman who is confident and strong. With me in her life, along with her family and friends, she was never left to grieve alone; and this is at the heart of CBC's mission. Nicole is a champion of CBC and encourages anyone who is grieving to find something like me to be a part of their healing journey. Though her grief was uniquely hers, she shared it with a supportive CBC community, restoring her sense of hope for the future.