

## **7.5.2011 DRAFT: FOR DISCUSSION ONLY**

### **National Alliance for Grieving Children National Poll Q & A (for families)**

#### **ABOUT THE SURVEY GENERALLY**

##### **Who are you surveying?**

We are conducting a national survey of recently bereaved families, including parents and children ages 13 to 19. Our goal: to paint a complete picture of how children and parents everywhere are coping with loss. To do that, we need the participation of families from all kinds of backgrounds, experiences, and circumstances. That's why your participation is so important.

##### **Who is conducting the survey?**

This survey is being conducted by the National Alliance for Grieving Children (NAGC) – the nation's leading network for bereavement centers (like the one that has forwarded this letter and Q&A to you). It is being underwritten by The New York Life Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the New York Life Company, a long-standing supporter of NAGC and a recognized leader in supporting bereaved children. The Foundation is dedicated to promoting public awareness of childhood grief and to providing meaningful programming for bereaved children and their families.

##### **Why a survey?**

As you know all too well, it's not easy to be a grieving kid – or the parent of one. We need to get the message out that bereaved children and their families need society's support – and to also let grieving children know that they are not alone.

A survey represents an extraordinarily powerful way to gain better insight into the grief experience – and to expand understanding of how we can better help grieving families. Ultimately, we want to develop a far-reaching educational campaign to 1) expand public awareness of bereavement's impact, 2) encourage greater public support for grieving families, and 3) help NAGC members and friends better meet your needs.

##### **How will the data be used?**

We will conduct a national media relations campaign to share our survey findings and, in doing so, raise the visibility of the issue and better educate people about what they can do when a child they know loses a parent or sibling.

We've already seen the power of the media in telling this story. A similar campaign focused on grief's impact conducted last year by the New York Life Foundation generated wide-spread media attention and deeply felt gratitude from adults who had been coping with the loss of a parent for decades.

Importantly, this insight will also allow us to better meet the needs of our member families. We will use the survey results to inform our programming and develop training materials, practitioners' guides, and curriculum guides for the people who support grieving families and children – specifically, teachers, principals, guidance counselors, caregivers, religious leaders, coaches, and friends.

**Will this be confidential?**

Absolutely. The confidentiality of your responses is our first priority. You can be assured that all survey responses are confidential. Responses will be reported out in the aggregate, and under no circumstances will survey participants' answers ever be attributed to them personally. You may be asked at the end of the survey whether you are willing to share your story with the media – however that decision will be entirely voluntary.

**What do you hope to find out?**

Through this survey, we hope to develop a fuller, deeper understanding of the experiences, thoughts, feelings, and needs of grieving families like yours. It has been developed in consultation with experts in the field of childhood loss and bereavement.

We will ask a number of questions about the ways you have been affected by your loss: How are you and your children coping with the loss? How does the loss of a parent or sibling affect relationships among surviving parents and siblings? Where do you and your children turn for help and support? How has the loss affected you and your children at your workplace and at school? How could friends, family, co-workers, and other interested parties be more helpful?

**Why is my family's participation important?**

To discover the challenges and hopes of grieving families around the country, we have to build a survey population that is truly representative of grieving families generally. As with any research project, the more responses, the higher the statistical reliability of the data. We simply cannot build this type of sample without your family's help. The more families we talk to, the better the insights we collect.

**ABOUT TAKING THE SURVEY**

**How do we participate?**

At this website, you will find links to four online surveys: one for parents who have lost a spouse or partner, one for parents who have lost a child, one for children ages 13 to 19 who have lost a parent, and one for children ages 13 to 19 who have lost a sibling. Please make sure you have clicked on the survey link that is appropriate for your circumstances (loss of spouse or child) and complete the survey. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE THIS SURVEY MORE THAN ONCE.

Subsequently, please share this e-mail with any of your children 13 to 19 who you think would be willing to participate. It's fine if you would like one of your children to participate, but not others. You can also be present if that would make you and your child more comfortable.

**Can I do the survey a little bit at a time?**

Unfortunately, the survey program does not “remember” responses, so please complete the survey at one sitting. We know the survey is a little long – it could take 20 to 25 minutes to complete – but it’s important to complete the entire survey, as partially-completed responses will not be tabulated.

**What if there are questions I can’t answer?**

Please answer as many questions as you can. Remember, these questions are about your feelings and experiences, so there are not really “right” and “wrong” answers. We encourage you to answer every question. That said, most questions have a “no opinion” or “not applicable” option.

**When do you need this completed by?**

Please try and complete this survey within two weeks of the date of this e-mail.

**ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S SURVEYS****Can I help my kids with the survey?**

Ideally, we would like for each child to answer the questions on their own. However, if he/she needs assistance reading or understanding a question, you can certainly help them.

**What if my child/children don’t feel comfortable answering a question?**

This questionnaire has been written in consultation with experts in childhood grief. While childhood grief can be a delicate subject, we’ve tried to be sensitive in the way we construct/phrase questions. We encourage participants to answer every question, but we understand if answering some questions might be difficult for your child/children. For potentially difficult questions, your child/children can simply choose the option that allows them to skip over the question or just respond “Not Sure,” “No Opinion” or “Not Applicable.” On the other hand, if your child has difficulty with a question, it may present you with an opportunity to talk through something they’re struggling with.

**What if I don’t want my children to participate in the survey?**

We would like to get as many responses from kids as possible. We understand that some parents may not want their children to participate in the survey, but we sincerely hope that you will encourage your child/children to do so. Every voice is important to us.