

International Parental Child Abduction (IPCA)

LOSS AND GRIEF

Most of the time, people associate grief and loss with the death of a loved one. However, death is not the only situation where we can experience grief. Any kind of change in life which results in loss can lead to feelings of grief. During the course of our lives, we can experience many different changes and losses, and what usually follows is grief.

Situations of loss where people may experience grief can include:

- divorce or separation from a partner
- losing a job or retiring
- terminal or chronic illness
- moving away or separation from family or friends



LOSS AND GRIEF IN THE CONTEXT OF IPCA

Having a child taken or withheld overseas without a parent's knowledge or consent may cause feelings of loss and grief. This can be one of the most difficult experiences in a parent's life.

Feelings of loss and grief may arise from:

- being physically and emotionally separated from your child;
- the inability to be present for significant events in your child's life such as, birthdays, school activities, holidays and special occasions;
- being unable to care for your child, hold them or comfort them;
- lack of access to information about your child's health and well-being.

Parents affected by IPCA may feel a range of emotions including; shock, sadness, despair, numbness, anger, blame and/or a sense of injustice. It is not unusual to notice changes in your behaviour, feel isolated or find it hard to concentrate at work. A parent's physical health can also be impacted, including loss or increase in appetite and difficulty with sleep. If these things happen to you, or someone you know, help is available.

The kind of loss parents of abducted children feel can be referred to as an "ambiguous loss". Parents in these situations may be left searching for answers and other people may not understand or recognise their grief and loss. It may be hard to know where to look for support and how to find help, but it is available from our experienced team of social workers.

ISS Australia's IPCA Social Work Service can provide information, counselling, practical, emotional support and assistance. To speak to someone, call ISS Australia on 1300 657 843 and select option 1.