

# Compassionate Tips to Help Cope with The Death of a Baby

The loss of baby is a devastating and traumatic experience for many couples. About 15%-25% of couples experience a pregnancy loss through miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death. This statistic does not include the unfortunate loss of infants within the first year of life.

Individuals and couples experiencing this type of loss may feel as if their loss is minimized or unacknowledged by others leading to an increased sense of isolation and grief. With the understanding that each loss comes with its own individual challenges, what can individuals do to cope with the death of baby?

## Healing as an Individual

The excitement experienced at the beginning of the pregnancy process can turn to despair and hopelessness when a loss is experienced. For those who have experienced a pregnancy loss, it can lead to feelings of guilt, anger, and self-doubt about one's physical ability to have a child. Similarly, those who have experienced the death of an infant can begin to question their role as a parent and focus on the "would've, could've, should've" associated with the death event.

Seeking help from a licensed professional can assist with processing the complex and painful emotions following the loss of a baby. Giving yourself permission to take breaks from social responsibilities and engaging in moments of self-care are crucial at this time. Mourning rituals are also a meaningful aspect of the grieving process, which allows you to honor your child in a compassionate way.

## Healing as a Couple

A couple grieving the loss of a baby often experience multiple forms of loss. Throughout pregnancy and infancy of a child, partners envision their identity as a parent and who their child will grow up to become. The loss of this future can be challenging for many couples. In working together to create a new co-narrative, couples can navigate conflicting emotions and find support from each other. Equally important is accepting the different grief reactions from our partners; grief is an individualized process and understanding this can reduce the feelings of disconnection after a loss.

Rebuilding one's life as a couple is a significant part of the grieving process. Reminding each other of the mutual love and support in the relationship can be healing. Intentionally engaging in activities together and expanding on the vision of your future as a couple can allow you to connect with other parts of your life together.

## Supporting Children

Children who experience the loss of a sibling can feel confused and unacknowledged in their grief. Make space for children to process the loss of their younger sibling and what it means for them. Remain available for your child or children to ask questions and express their feelings—remember, this will be a process which takes time and many conversations. Also allow children to participate in remembrance rituals through art or music activities where they can express themselves in a creative way. In honoring their younger sibling, it can provide the space and time children need for their grief.



## Accepting Support

Many individuals dealing with perinatal and infant loss can find it difficult to feel supported by friends and family. In some cultures, there is also a resistance to talking about this type of loss. For others, they may feel helpless and lack understanding on how to provide support. It is important to maintain connection while still creating a space for healing by communicating with family and friends about one's needs during this time. Setting healthy boundaries and advocating for oneself can provide loved ones with a better idea of how to be present during this difficult time.

Seeking out a support group can be an important way to allow yourself to connect with others who are also grieving. The Children's Bereavement Center holds free weekly grief peer support groups for individuals and couples who have experienced perinatal and infant loss and we welcome new participants each week. Remember, there is no timeline for grief. When you feel ready to join in one of our support groups, feel free to contact us at 1-888-988-5438 or email [intake@childbereavement.org](mailto:intake@childbereavement.org).



childbereavement.org

888.988.5438

CALL TO REGISTER