

Offering Support to a Friend or Family Member Grieving the Loss of a Pregnancy or Infant

You're in our hearts.

Our condolences and prayers are with each of you as you grieve for your friend.

There are no words to ease the pain of losing a child. The grief of a bereaved parent is like no other. It is the loss of hopes, dreams, and identity.

A challenging factor in neonatal/perinatal loss is there are little to no direct life experiences with the baby, which can leave individuals struggling with anger, yearning, depression, self-blame, resentment, and uncertainty.

The page that follows provides you with tangible ways to honor you friends' grief, while helping them create a new balance. Connectedness is a key aspect of wellness. Your compassionate response to the death of your friends' baby will make a crucial difference in their grief journey as it lets them know they are not alone.

Please, do not hesitate to reach out to us. You will find our contact information and our information on our Pregnancy and Infant Loss Grief Group on the next page.

With love,

Companions on a Journey

Your support makes a difference.

*You sat through the tears
and held my hand
Listened to the pain
Didn't need to understand*

*You walked towards me when others turned away
Always willing to stay*

*Whether crying or laughing
A true friend from the start
Because of your love
You will always be in my heart."*

-Tanya Lohl 

CREATING A BALANCE

Helpful Tips to Remember as You Grieve

Acknowledge their baby's death. Use their child's name if one has been chosen.

Do not try to minimize their grief with words. No words will ease their pain. When you don't know what to say, just simply say, "I cannot begin to know your pain." If you've suffered the death of a baby, then you know the heartache of being a bereaved parent; however, you do not know the sorrow which lies in their hearts. Knowing they're not alone will help them.

Words to avoid. Words can inflict hurt or bring healing. Be sensitive about how you talk about their baby's death. Bereaved parents have shared that the following phrases offered them little consolation, minimized their baby's death, and plunged them further into grief:

- "At least they didn't suffer"
- "Everything happens for a reason" or "It was God's will"
- "Look at how blessed you are with other children"
- "You can have another baby"

Listen without judgement. Be sensitive to your friend's feelings and allow them the opportunity to share about their baby's death, while expressing how they feel. Don't be afraid to cry with or in front of them. Tears can be very healing for a bereaved parent. Supportive listening is worth a thousand words.

Connect. Regular check-ins with friends during the initial weeks of grief are really important. Help them avoid becoming isolated or withdrawn by encouraging others to reach out as well. Building a strong sense of community can be very healing to those experiencing feelings of loss and grief. Remember some of the most difficult days for them will be their baby's birthday, death day, and due date. Sending them a card, calling or visiting them on these days is a great way to show support in these tender moments

Support. Ask what you can do to help them. If they don't know how, here are some ideas you can offer: provide a meal, grocery shop, run errands, help clean, or babysit if they have other children. If your friend is a coworker, you may need to help support bereaved employees by redistributing a portion of their workload as they find their balance.

Show Concern. Understand the warning signs of grief and be patient with one another. If you notice your friend withdrawing or becoming more emotional than usual, consider reaching out to them directly or let your HR director know about your concerns if they are a coworker and you are not comfortable approaching them directly.

Be patient. Grief is not a sign of weakness or lack of faith. It tends to last longer than society recognizes. Your friendship makes a big difference!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

COJ Grief Groups & Contact

Footprints on Our Hearts

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Group

This program offers support to parent(s) who have suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage or perinatal loss.

Please call for schedule. Registration is required

Mending Hearts

This program provides peer support for children 3-18 years old and families experiencing the loss of a loved one.

Please call for schedule. Registration is required.

Individual and Family Counseling Available

Please call us for details and to schedule.

We're here for you.

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