

Helping someone who is grieving

Be a good listener

Grieving people need to talk about their loss, acknowledge that they have been through a difficult experience. You can't fix their grief but you can be there, hear their story, and share their journey.

Be a shoulder to cry on

Allow them to cry with you, crying helps the release of emotions and this helps with healing.

Be in touch with them

Drop in, call on the telephone and say "I was thinking of you today" write a letter, send an email, remember special days like Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries.

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments to be made in their lives. These could bring uncertainty, frustration, fear, sadness and change as each new day comes along. Grief is about adapting to change in life, thoughts, hopes, beliefs and the future.

Be a friend

Often being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

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Miscarriage

Grief reactions associated
with miscarriage

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A miscarriage is the unintended ending of a pregnancy. About 1 in every 5 recognised pregnancies end in miscarriage. Most miscarriages occur in the early months of pregnancy and some occur later on. Most are unexpected and come as a surprise and a shock to women and their partners.

With the realisation that the pregnancy has really ended, the sense of grief and sadness can be overwhelming. However, for some women, the disappointment may not be so great.

Why does it happen?

Miscarriage can occur for medical reasons, which your doctor can talk to you about. Often there is no explanation, because much is still unknown about the causes of miscarriage. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor to explain anything you are uncertain about. It is important to remember that most miscarriages cannot be prevented, and that for most women a second miscarriage is unlikely.

Your loss

The loss of your pregnancy at any stage can have a big impact on you and your partner, and the family. One day you are pregnant and planning your future life with your child, and then within a short time your pregnancy ends, and your dreams and plans have changed.

Your grief may be even harder to bear as you have nothing to show for the pregnancy and you have no memories to grieve. Friends and acquaintances may have been unaware of the pregnancy. With this lack of acknowledgment

and the absence of memories, it may seem as if your baby never existed which can add another dimension to the feelings of loss and grief.

You may wish to find ways to remember the pregnancy eg. planting a bush or writing a poem. It is very normal to feel a range of emotions at this time.

These feelings can be very intense and may include:-

- sadness
- anger
- irritability
- disbelief
- guilt
- confusion

You may have:-

- difficulty sleeping
- dreams / nightmares
- loss of appetite

It is important to remember you will recover, but you will do it in your own way and in your own time.

Partners

Partners as well as the mother also suffer the loss of dreams and plans for a future with their child. As their experience of the coming baby has been different from that of the mother, their feelings of loss and grief may also be different. Additionally, anxiety for the welfare of their partner can also occur.

Going home

If you need to go to hospital your stay will probably be very short. Talking to the hospital staff while in hospital may help mothers to understand what is happening physically and mentally at this time.

Discussion may help to ease the feelings of the unknown. You will need time to recover both physically and emotionally. Although some women find it difficult to face everyday situations and talk to others, other women find talking about their loss can be beneficial.

Coping

- Allow yourself time to grieve, to cry, and to talk about the emotions you feel.
- Partners can also experience a wide range of feelings and may be unsure how to comfort and help their partner. Remember males and females grieve differently. Talking to each other can help you to be aware of each other's feelings.
- Find someone you can talk to who will understand and listen.
- You may benefit from contacting a support group (like SANDS) and talking to other parents who had had a similar experience.
- Do not expect too much of yourself, and try to be with people with whom you feel most comfortable.

Looking ahead

Future pregnancies may be anxious times although another miscarriage is generally unlikely. In a future pregnancy let others know your fears. Doctors, labour staff and family all need to know when support is needed. Remember, the grief will ease and meanwhile there are many people like doctors, social workers, SANDS members and extended family to care if they know about the pain.

Adapted from Grief Link resources website:
www.grieflink.asn.au