



Supporting Someone Through Pregnancy & Infant Loss

One of the most common things said by moms who have experienced the loss of a baby, is that they had no idea what it was like until they experienced it for themselves. This can make it very difficult for those who have not walked this road, to know how to help.

How Can I Help?

Take Care of Her Basic Needs

Although she does not have a baby, she had a baby. She is likely in physical discomfort and could use help with the same basics that moms of new babies need help with. Bringing meals, picking up groceries, offering to clean her house, and babysitting her other children so she can rest, all go a long way.

Also be sure to be specific in your offers for help. Rather than saying, "Let me know if you need anything," offer something very specific like, "We will drop off a hot meal tomorrow at five." This takes the burden of asking for help off mom.

Speak Gently

Avoid catch phrases at all costs. It can be so easy to let them slip out when you are uncomfortable and unsure of what to say.

Phrases to Avoid

"You can always try again."

"Everything happens for a reason."

"There must have been something wrong with them."

"God wouldn't give you more than you can handle."

Or basically any statement that begins with "at least..."

"At least you already have a kid. At least you know you can get pregnant. At least it was early." etc.

Instead Try This

In those situations where you don't know what to say, it is best to keep it simple.

"I am so sorry"

"I don't even know what to say"

"I am here for you. Do you want to talk?"

Or just sit in the silence with them.

It is better to be silent than to say the wrong thing.

Acknowledge the Baby

Not talking about the baby can make the situation even more isolating than it already is. Using a baby's name places value on his or her life and means a lot to bereaved parents. Bringing a gift that honors their baby will help to show that their baby was special to not just them, but to you as well, and will hold a place in their heart in the future as they grieve for the loss of their baby. The gift can be anything that you feel would be significant to the parents. A painting, plant, blanket, necklace, or teddy bear. It's not so much about the item as it is the gesture.

Make Yourself Available

For many bereaved parents, it can be easy to keep to themselves after a loss and not reach out for help or companionship. So be the one for offer that branch, and then continue to offer it repeatedly. Invite them out for coffee or shopping trips and make yourself available for late night conversations or text messages. Be respectful of their no, but also openly convey your willingness to be there for them whenever or however they need.

There's No Timeline for Grief

Every parent will grieve at their own pace and in their own way for their individual loss. The amount of time it can take varies from one parent to the next and has no relation to the length of the pregnancy or age of the child. It is a highly individualized experience and there is no rushing it. The only way to get through grief is to grieve. So be patient and give them time.

Remember That This was a Death

Attend any memorial that may be planned and send a sympathy card or flowers. Although the the baby's life was short, there were hopes and dreams for the future that have now vanished. The heartbreak surrounding those wounds is deep and needs to be acknowledged and handled with care.

Continue to Check-in and Remember Important Dates

Though life has moved on for everyone else, the parents may still be grieving and coming to terms with a life that is different than the one they had hoped and planned for. Continue to check-in, particularly around holidays and birthdays, and take note of important dates like when the baby was due, the baby's birthday, and most importantly, the date of loss. These are hard days and having someone remember them is incredibly comforting.



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