

Recovering from infant loss



In 1988, President Reagan set aside one day each year to recognize infant loss. At that time he said: “When a child loses his parent, they are called an orphan. When a spouse loses his or her partner, they are called a widow or widower. When parents lose their child, there isn’t a word to describe them.”¹

Such is the “no man’s land” for those who lose a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, birth defects, SIDS or other tragic baby deaths.

From joy to grief

Almost 25% of pregnancies ends in loss.² When an infant dies, all the joyous hopes of becoming a parent end in heartache. The loss can also impact grandparents, siblings and others close to the family.

In fact, it can be hard for loved ones to know how to help. They may feel unsure of the right things to do or say.

Tips for helping

If you’re a parent who has lost a baby, you know there are no words that can make up for your loss. Time and support help you heal.

For those close to someone who has suffered infant loss, here are some ways you can be helpful²:

- 1. Understand that the loss of a baby — no matter how old — is devastating.** There’s a myth that the younger the baby, the less the grief. That’s simply not true.
- 2. If the baby was named, use his or her name when talking to the parents.** Some people think that avoiding names will make the grief easier. But the baby was a person. Using the name affirms his or her reality.
- 3. Don’t put limits on someone’s grief.** No one can tell someone else how long to grieve. Asking why someone is “still so sad” just adds insult to injury. Respect everyone’s individual needs.
- 4. Don’t worry about what to say or do — just be there.** Sometimes there isn’t anything you can say or do. It can be supportive to just be with a griever, even if you’re sitting in silence.

For more information about how to help yourself or someone else who has experienced pregnancy and infant loss, visit: nationalshare.org, october15.com and other infant loss support sites.

¹[Remembering our babies](#). Accessed June 2017.

²[Share pregnancy and infant loss support](#). Accessed June 2017.

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