

fact sheet

A GUIDE TO COPING WITH REMINDERS OF YOUR PREGNANCY AND CHILD LOSS



SELF-CARE TIP P&CL_V1_01.10.19

The trauma of pregnancy, baby or child loss is at some level, always with those who experience this type of loss.

Working through your loss with support can help you find the skills and coping strategies to be better able to face reminders of your loss without so much pain.

At any time though, the reminders can be hurtful, and it is important to remember that this is normal and part of the experience of going through such a profound loss.

It is important during your adjustment to this loss, to be able to mourn and grieve in your own way without judgement. Spend time with those who can offer you their non-judgemental support, acceptance and love.

RITUALS CAN BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR GRIEF

What may seem unusual to others, such as sleeping with your child's toy that they never had the chance to hug, or keeping your babies' ashes in your bedroom, can be a way for you to heal and connect with your lost pregnancy or child.

Rituals such as these can be carried out for as long as you need, there are no right or wrongs in this scenario. When given the opportunity to grieve in your own way, this can help process your loss and what it means to you, helping you through this most difficult time.

If your grieving process is hurried or not accepted by others this may result in more complicated grieving and it may take longer to return to what is now your new normal. Trust your instincts and what you need to do or feel.

At first your loss may seem so intense that you may not be able to face other pregnant women or want to be around babies. This is normal and should be done at your own pace and ability. There is no rush, facing such triggers will gradually become more bearable.

Grief is not something that completely goes away, although you do learn to manage it. Learning to accept and honour your own process is key. If you see and experience a lot of reminders of your loss, this can be difficult and that's ok.

BELOW ARE SOME WAYS THAT YOU CAN TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF DURING THIS TIME:

- Be kind to yourself, don't do anything that doesn't feel right, especially in the early days.
- Set aside time to think about and process your loss if that helps.
- For example, you may want to try writing in a journal, or doing something creative like painting or drawing.
- Don't feel that you need to rush back to work, unless you find this a welcome distraction.
- Remember that there is plenty of time to feel the loss, go at your own pace.
- Sometimes a break from it all can be beneficial too, as grief is intense so remember that this does not mean you are not honouring your loss.
- Find a trusted friend to talk to, explain to them how you are feeling.
- Turn off social media and alerts on your phone for a while, allow yourself a break from contact and the pressure to respond to messages.
- If you see someone or something that triggers your grief, acknowledge that it still hurts and try to talk to someone if you can, or do something else to shift your focus such as listening to music, exercise, yoga or a hobby that you enjoy.

Sometimes withdrawing from people is a common reaction to this type of loss. This is normal and appropriate however, the more you can connect with supportive people and life in general the better you will begin to feel.

If you feel that your grief is so consuming that you can't function or carry out your day to day activities, then please reach out to an experienced professional with bereavement training. A Psychologist can support you throughout your grief and help you understand what is happening, and what strategies may assist you in your own way through this time. ●



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