

Dealing Emotionally with Miscarriage

Suffering from a miscarriage or **stillbirth** can be very traumatic. Not only is it taxing on you physically, but emotionally as well. While a woman's body can heal and recover relatively quickly from a miscarriage, emotionally, the healing process can take much longer. Although many women do not want to deal with their feelings after a pregnancy loss, facing them can help you pull through and emerge a stronger person.

The Grieving Process

As with any loss, it is normal for couples to feel grief after a miscarriage. Unfortunately, far too often, outwardly displaying signs of grief is seen as a sign of weakness, causing some to be tempted to bottle up this emotion. Though you may want to appear emotionally strong to those around you, it is important to keep in mind that entering a grieving period after a significant loss is a perfectly normal human emotion.

There is no specific amount of time that a couple is expected to grieve after a pregnancy loss. How long a woman and her partner mourn for will vary from couple to couple and is not dictated by the length of a pregnancy. Whether you had an early miscarriage or stillbirth, the pain can be equally acute. Only you will know how long you need to grieve for.

Moving Past the Grief

Grief is not the only emotion associated with miscarriages. Other typical emotions reported by women who have lost a pregnancy include depression, loneliness and isolation. Although these feelings are perfectly normal, if you are having troubles coping day to day because of your emotions, you may want to make an appointment with your health care provider. When your emotions begin to interfere with your daily activities, it can be a sign of major depression, a health issue that requires professional attention.

Another common emotional response to a spontaneous abortion is self-blame. Many women often feel that if only they had done something differently, if only they hadn't had that glass of wine

before they found out they were pregnant, they wouldn't have miscarried. These thoughts can ring in your mind for weeks, making it even harder to get over your loss.

Miscarriage can also cause a woman to feel intense anger and jealousy towards other women, even friends, who are pregnant. While these emotions can be appalling, they will eventually pass and fade.

The Male Side

Miscarriages can make men nervous to talk to their partners. Not only are they upset about the loss, but also they are grieving for their partner. As a result, you may find that your partner is reluctant to broach the topic, fearful that he may upset you. Be honest with your partner; if you are not ready to openly discuss the loss with him, say so. But don't forget to also let him know when you do want to talk.

After a miscarriage, a couple's relationship can become noticeably strained. Dealing with such a significant loss can cause individuals to turn inwards and away from each. Yet, this is when you each need each other the most, for support and for a shoulder to cry on. Discussing your feelings after a miscarriage is often difficult for couples, but it is necessary. If you find that there is too much stress on your relationship right now, seeking out couples counseling can help you work through your grief as well as improve the communication between you and your partner.

Finding Support

Coping emotionally after a miscarriage is not easy and your friends and family are one of your best sources to find the support you need during this difficult time. Unfortunately, sometimes those that you want the most support from are the ones that make the situation worse by ignoring it. Though this can lead to feelings of hurt and anger, perhaps even causing you to withdraw from those closest to you, try to keep in mind that perhaps they are avoiding the topic for fear of upsetting you. Like your partner, it is important to be honest with your friends and family, letting them know when you do and when you don't want to talk about your miscarriage.

Another great place to turn to after a miscarriage is a support group. Talking with other women and couples who are also dealing with the aftermath of a miscarriage can breakdown those feelings of isolation and loneliness. Alternatively, speaking with a professional therapist one-on-one can help you come to terms with your loss.

Coping Tips

Here are some tips that may be useful in helping you deal with your miscarriage:

- **Write it Down:** Journal writing is an excellent method for people to air out their emotions. Because a journal is private, you can be honest with yourself and your thoughts, allowing yourself to reflect on just what it is that you are feeling. Furthermore, studies have found that writing in a journal can actually speed up the recovery period during sad times.
- **Set Some Rules:** It can be difficult for your friends and family to know whether you feel comfortable hearing about other women's pregnancies and pregnancy losses. To help yourself and those around you feel better and more at ease, make it clear which topics, if any, are off limits with you.
- **Go Away:** If you don't feel ready to face the world right after your miscarriage, then don't. Take some time off of work to focus on yourself. If you can, arrange for your partner to also have some free time so you can be together.
- **Remember:** Finding a special way to commemorate your child can turn a negative situation into a positive one, helping you to let go of your grief. Some parents choose to hold a memorial service while others decide to plant a tree in a local park or their backyard. Some even choose to write about their experience or create a website in order to help others.