



Australian Perinatal Loss PROFESSIONALS NETWORK

www.perinatallossprofessionals.com.au

BY
Robyn McKinnon
CONSULTANCY
& COUNSELLING SERVICES

PREGNANCY AFTER LOSS

IN YOUR TIME

Deciding when is the right time to try to have a baby after you have experienced a baby die is a really individual decision. There is no timeline for grief, but finding a place in the journey when you individually and as a couple feel able to start that journey again together is important. Of course, this might also be determined by medical advice.

MANAGING OTHERS EXPECTATIONS ON HOW YOU "SHOULD FEEL"

You must be so excited.... is often just one of the comments people hear, but what if you feel a mix of emotions about this new baby? It is okay if you find yourself experiencing other emotions too, and sometimes we need to educate those around us about this and what you need to hear from them that would help you feel more safe and supported.

CREATE SPACE FOR GRIEF

Be gentle with yourself. It often feels like your heart is torn between two. The love you feel for the baby you never met but forever hold in your heart and dreams, and for the one you so dearly hold your breathe for, hoping this time you will get to bring home at the end of 9 months alive. You might find unexpected emotions and grief throughout this journey. If you can, allow yourself to be present with them.

INTRODUCING YOUR BABIES

For some parents, having a way to "introduce" or connect their babies to each other may be an important part of the journey. How each person does this might look different. For some it can be acknowledging their new baby as a "rainbow" baby, or a present or item of clothing or toy passed on from the baby who has died to their sibling, that is later then shared as part of the story to help them know of their older sibling who they never met.

3 + 9 = 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Sometimes, you might find yourself pregnant in the first few months after your baby has died. This can sometimes mean as you head towards the due date of your new baby, you might also find yourself heading towards the milestone of the 1st anniversary of your babies death, bringing a mix of emotions. This can be a bittersweet time for some.

NEW PREGNANCY NEW RULES

One of the hardest parts of a new pregnancy is trying to not compare and worry that the same thing will happen again which is easy said than done, whilst balancing the knowledge that you may not feel truly safe until baby is finally earthside. Finding a mantra or saying that can guide you through this pregnancy such as "new pregnancy new rules" can help to acknowledge the new path you are on.

FIND A GOOD SUPPORT TEAM

After pregnancy loss, finding trust in one's body, one's instincts, and sometimes in other people including caregivers is not something that comes easy at all, and understandably. This can add a sense of anxiety to a new pregnancy. Finding a good team of support around you throughout your pregnancy to medically and emotionally support you can be vital to guide you through the journey.

PARENTING AFTER LOSS

Sometimes after you have held your breathe for possibly what felt like a whole eternity, the sheer relief of baby being alive and home for some may bring another wave of grief. Along, with a mix of hormones and tiredness, there may be an array of emotions that come up as you wrestle with adjusting to a newborn and begin experiencing milestones that perhaps you didn't get the opportunity to do before with your other child. Remember to breathe, and acknowledge what a journey you have been on and it is okay to feel this way.

If you are experiencing a pregnancy after a loss and would like some additional support to guide you through, we can offer you face to face and telehealth counselling appointments.

Please call us on (03) 6701 5227 or robyn@rmcounselling.com.au to make an appointment