



## **Grieving After Miscarriage or Stillbirth**

What was meant to be a time of great joy and happiness has now splintered into a time of shock and pain. A sense of disbelief and confusion may occur as you wonder *Why me? How did this happen?* The many feelings you are experiencing are natural as you grieve the death of the child you were expecting. Be gentle with yourself as you try to make meaning out of what has happened.

### **Giving your grief a voice...**

Often the grief surrounding miscarriage or stillbirth is minimized and misunderstood. Varying reactions from your partner, family or society may encourage you to keep your grief hidden. Acknowledging what has happened will help you to begin processing your feelings.

### **Your unique journey...**

In addition to the typical physical and emotional expressions of grief, here are others that are specific to miscarriage or stillbirth:

- You may feel stigmatized, isolated, and powerless.
- As you leave the hospital without your baby, see the nursery you prepared, or think about the space you would have brought your baby home to, you may experience a sense of emptiness.
- Echoing images, thoughts, and questions may be floating in your mind as you try to make sense of your baby's death.
- You may find yourself wondering if you should tell others about the miscarriage or death, and if so, what to say or how to talk about it.
- It may feel as though others don't understand your grief and say things that are not helpful.
- Seeing pregnant mothers and babies might be difficult and bring about strong emotions.
- You may experience some guilt or self-blame, telling yourself, "I should have known or done something differently to protect my baby."
- Questions may arise about your relationship with your partner and other family members.
- You may worry that a miscarriage or stillbirth could occur again, as you consider if, or when, you should have another child.

### **Give yourself time...**

- While some may expect you to "move on," "return to your old self" or "try again," allow yourself time to readjust to your life without the baby you were preparing for.
- Find ways to memorialize and honor the life you were dreaming and hoping for.
- Connect with others who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth and help each other through this heartbreaking time.

Remember that you are not alone as you move through your journey of grief. Share your thoughts, feelings, and hopes for what could have been and know that the love you feel for your baby will be with you forever.