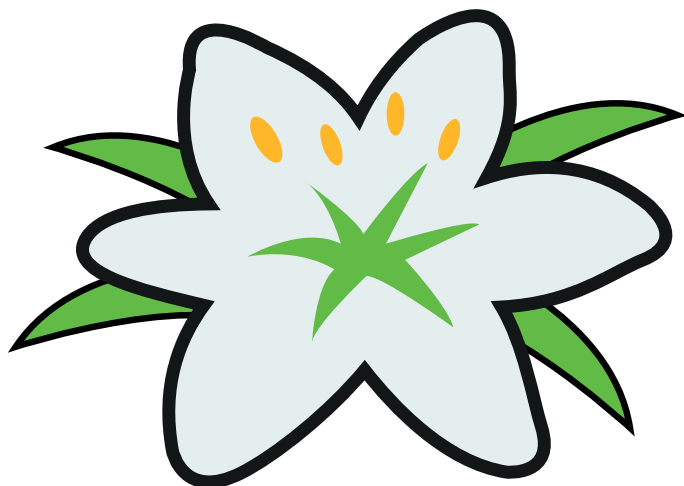




Paths

Support for birth
trauma or baby loss

West Yorkshire
Health and Care Partnership



Baby loss support leaflet

Experiencing grief after the loss of a baby is a deeply personal and unique journey. Grieving is a natural response to loss, and there is no “normal” or “right” way to grieve. However, many people who go through the loss of a baby may experience a range of emotions and reactions. Some of these are a normal part of processing the experience and loss. Some people may need help from services to support their journey.

What are some of the things I may feel after baby loss?



Shock and denial – it’s not uncommon to initially feel shock or disbelief, especially if the loss was unexpected.



Intense sadness and emptiness – grieving parents often experience profound sadness, a sense of emptiness, and overwhelming waves of sorrow.



Guilt and self-blame – many parents may question if they did something wrong or blame themselves for the loss, even if it was beyond their control.



Anger and frustration – feelings of anger, frustration, or helplessness may arise as individuals grapple with the unfairness of the situation.



Yearning and longing – parents may long for the baby they lost, imagining what could have been and yearning for the experiences they had hoped to share.



Fear of future loss – there may be anxiety or fear about the possibility of future pregnancies or the potential for additional losses.



Isolation and withdrawal – some individuals may withdraw from social activities or isolate themselves as they navigate their grief.



Physical symptoms – grief can manifest physically, leading to changes in appetite, sleep patterns, and overall energy levels.



Mixed emotions – grieving people may experience a range of conflicting emotions within a short period, such as moments of laughter and joy followed by deep sadness.



Difficulty concentrating – grief can affect cognitive functions, making it challenging to concentrate or focus on daily tasks.



Spiritual questions – some people may struggle with empirical questions, seeking meaning or purpose in the face of such a profound loss.

It's important to note that these responses to grief are individual, and there is no predetermined timeline for healing. Every person's journey is unique, and it's okay to seek support from loved ones, friends, or professionals as needed.

Losing a baby is an incredibly difficult experience, and it's completely normal to feel a range of emotions.

What might help me with my grief?

Share your feelings with friends and family who are understanding and supportive. Let them know if you need someone to talk to, or if you prefer some time alone. Being open and honest about how you feel and what you need from them can help them to get it right for you and understand how to help.

Professional help



Seek help from a counsellor, therapist, or support group specialising in grief and loss. Talking to a professional can provide a safe space to express your emotions and receive guidance on coping strategies. Forget Me Not children's hospice offers a range of support through the process.

Support groups



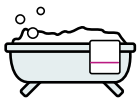
Joining a support group for parents who have experienced baby loss can offer a sense of community and understanding. Hearing others share their stories can provide comfort and help normalise your own feelings.



Creating a memorial or remembering your baby

Find meaningful ways to memorialise your baby, such as creating a scrapbook, planting a tree, or lighting a candle on special occasions. Celebrate the love and connection you shared, even if it was for a short time.

Self-care



Take care of your physical and emotional wellbeing. Make time for activities that bring you comfort and relaxation. Be patient with yourself and recognise that healing takes time.

Expressing your feelings



Write in a journal, create art, or express your feelings in whatever way feels right for you. Sometimes putting your emotions into words or creative outlets can be therapeutic.

Understanding grief



Understanding the grieving process and the emotions associated with baby loss can be helpful. Knowing that your feelings are a normal part of the grieving journey can provide reassurance.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and everyone's journey is unique. Seeking support is a courageous step, and reaching out to those who care about you can make a significant difference in the healing process.

What if my symptoms become worse or won't ease?

For some people, grief can become overwhelming or persist over time and can sometimes lead to prolonged or complex grief. Below are some of the common symptoms of this, although everyone will experience different symptoms.

Further help may be useful from services to get the right support and begin to move forward. We know that you can never 'get over' or 'move past' from baby loss but you can access help to move forward in a way that honours and respects your baby.

Some symptoms some people may want additional support with:

- **Intrusive thoughts and memories** – these can be recurrent and distressing memories, images, or thoughts related to the baby loss which may intrude into your thoughts.
- **Flashbacks**, feeling as though you are reliving the traumatic event, with the same emotions and sensations.
- **Disturbing dreams and nightmares** about the baby loss, contributing to sleep disturbances and insomnia.
- **Actively avoiding reminders of the traumatic event**, including discussions about the loss, people associated with the event, or places that trigger distressing memories.
- **Persistent negative emotions**, such as guilt, shame, or a distorted sense of blame, or challenges in maintaining positive emotions.
- **Problems recalling** certain aspects of the traumatic event or feeling detached from your surroundings.
- **Heightened arousal or an exaggerated startle response**. This can lead to irritability, difficulty concentrating, and constantly being on guard, as if danger is imminent. Feeling jumpy or alert can contribute to anxiety and stress.
- **A sense of emotional numbness**, detachment, or a reduced ability to experience joy or pleasure.

Urgent help

If you need urgent help with how you are feeling, or have thoughts of harming yourself or anyone else please attend your local A&E department or dial 999. You will get the support you need quickly.

For mental health advice call the number in your area.

- Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield: 0800 183 0558
- Bradford: 0800 952 1181
- NHS Direct: 111 – 24 hours a day and ask for mental health support / option 2
- Samaritans: 116 123 – 24 hours a day
- <https://suicidepreventionwestyorkshire.co.uk/support>

Support

Forget Me Not

Providing pregnancy and bereavement support to families, including emotional support, understanding and practical support.

www.forgetmenotchild.co.uk

Paths

We offer support to people who live in Bradford and Craven, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, and Wakefield.

If distress after baby loss is contributing to the development or worsening of mental health difficulties, a referral can be made.

www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/services/paths/

What might support from Paths be like?

Paths is made up of psychologists, psychological therapists and midwives.

Support may include:

- Evidence-based psychological therapies like trauma-focused or prolonged grief therapy
- Working with other professionals who are providing care
- Including partners and family members in care when this is helpful
- Suggesting other services to support you or your family

Interpreters are available.

Paths midwifery support

Our specialist midwives support women and birthing parents who are pregnant after baby loss. If needed they can provide support with birth planning, understanding previous birth and care and supporting trauma-informed care in maternity. Support can be tailored to your needs and requests.

If you require a copy of this information in any other format or language please contact the Trust.

إذا كنت تحتاج إلى نسخة من هذه المعلومات بأي تنسيق أو لغة أخرى، فيرجى الاتصال بـ Trust. (Arabic)

اگر شما به یک نسخه از این اطلاعات در هر قالب (فرمت) یا زبان دیگری نیاز دارید، لطفاً با بنیاد (Trust) تماس بگیرید. (Farsi)

Ha a jelen információk másolatát más formátumban vagy nyelven szeretné megkapni, akkor kérjük, hogy lépjen kapcsolatba a trösztel. (Hungarian)

ئه‌گه‌ر پ‌وونووسی ئه‌م زانیاریانه‌ت به هه‌ر زمان یان فۆرماتیکی دیکه پ‌یویسته تکایه له‌گه‌ڵ ئیمه پ‌یۆه‌ندی بگه‌ره. (Kurdish Sorani)

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo uzyskać kopię niniejszej informacji w innym formacie lub języku, prosimy o kontakt z Funduszem Zdrowia. (Polish)

Se necessitar de uma cópia destas informações em qualquer outro formato ou idioma, entre em contato com a Fundação. (Portuguese)

جے تہانوں ایس جانکاری دی اک کاپی دی کسے ہور فارمیٹ یا بولی وچ لوڑ اے تے مہربانی کر کے ٹرسٹ نال رابطہ کرو۔ (Punjabi Pakistani)

Dacă aveți nevoie de o copie a acestor informații în orice alt format sau limbă, vă rugăm să contactați Trustul nostru. (Romanian)

اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کی ایک کاپی کی کسی دوسرے فارمیٹ یا زبان میں ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی ٹرسٹ سے رابطہ کریں۔ (Urdu)