



Babies Remembered

## Advice for Grieving Family and Friends

For additional information, *What Family and Friends Can Do*, Sherokee Ilse And *Shattered Dream: How family and friends can help after a baby dies*,

The DVD Shattered Dreams can be downloaded.

Available from [www.wintergreenpress.org/shop](http://www.wintergreenpress.org/shop)

- Offer a tear, a hug...a sign of love and concern. Listen, ask about their son or daughter. Say the baby's name out loud from now on and forever. There is nothing sweeter than the name of our loved one. Don't be afraid it will cause pain. The pain is there; saying the name is a gift,
- Recognize and do things that show you understand this was the death of a baby, not an event they can get over quickly, Thus, treat this as a baby. Give gifts that can become mementos of the baby – a stuffed animal, a baby plaque, books on infant loss, a memento box, cards with messages that say the baby's name and share your thoughts, jewelry such as footprint, heart, or an angel, or a candle that could be lit whenever anyone is thinking of the baby,
- Realize the parents are sad because they no longer have *this* baby—*this* special person. He or she can never be replaced by any other baby or anyone else.
- Helpful comments might be, "I am so sorry about your baby," "Would you like to tell me about what happened?" "I know this is a bad time for you and I would like to help," "Please tell me what you would like me to do...bring food, screen calls, find you websites or books or others who have had such a loss...", "This is so unfair!" While these might seem trite to you, they really do help parents feel that you care,
- Unhelpful comments should be avoided—"It was for the best," "The baby might have been abnormal," "You can always have another baby," "Forget it, put it behind you," "It was God's will," or "At least she didn't live for 2 years or more, that would be harder." These type of comments deny the importance of this baby,
- Bring a book on perinatal/infant loss or grief, give a dinner or massage certificate, Ask parents about their preference regarding donating money and memorials. You could do this in the baby's name,
- Be aware that they will never be the same people you knew before this loss. Their lives have changed; their perspectives and goals will be different. They will need to find a 'new' normal and so will you as you all integrate this experience into your lives. Remember them on due dates, anniversaries, and holidays. Send a card, write a note, take them out to dinner, or bring it in. Do not be afraid that you will hurt them more. Instead, you may be one of the few people who joins them in remembering. They will never forget, especially on those special days.