

BABIES REMEMBERED

HONORING AND REMEMBERING LOVED BABIES WHO HAVE DIED

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Miscarriage and Holidays

Miscarriage.. This complicated subject deserves more attention; therefore, we have devoted most of this issue to many facets of miscarriage.

Professionals, we ask you to take a stand to improve the care and the climate for families who suddenly find themselves 'unpregnant' after the death, yes, most parents see it as a death, of their dream. Their once *alive* baby...now too tiny to live. But not too tiny to be loved. And remembered...

The time to change is now. Hospitals should not minimize these losses. Read on with an open heart. We pray that at the end you will be motivated to do even one thing to make it better for the families who come to your facility as well as for the millions whose babies die too early.

Parents, this newsletter is dedicated to you, the 75% of families whose miscarriage brings them sadness and grief each year. The millions of them in the US and the many, many more millions worldwide. Let's remember each 'forever baby.'

Studies and experience show that about 25% of families take miscarriage in stride. They do not view the miscarriage as the loss of a baby at the time of their loss. Therefore, it is important to not push these families to make more of this than they are prepared to do. Read *Helping Patient During and After Miscarriage* on pg. 6 for ideas on how to gauge whether patients view this as a significant loss or not, which can then offer you guidance to help the 75% who do feel it is a significant loss.

A true story, October 2009

The office phone rang at 10 pm. Normally, I don't pick it up that late, but I just had a feeling I needed to that night. Tayrana from Louisiana was hoping to order a miscarriage packet; she especially wanted the Miscarriage poem. Sounding sad and lonely, I asked her a few questions, and then she spent the next hour pouring out her heart and sharing her story. Her second miscarriage (she named her Gianna Michell'e) had devastated her, yet her family and friends were already tired of hearing her sad tale; after all it had been almost two weeks. Tayrana was so upset she could not eat or sleep, so her doctor prescribed medication. Having not filled the prescription yet, she wondered what to do.

A most beautiful gift!!

Lauren was hurting after her miscarriage in early summer. I helped her from a distance in a call and a few emails. So little, it seemed to me. A few weeks ago, I received a most beautiful surprise!! A video showed up in my mail box from Lauren and her wedding photographer, Tom. I can't wait for you to see it. What a gift! Once we have put some new music to it, we'll share it with you. Those who have seen this two minute touching piece all agree, it will and should go viral. Keep checking my website where you will soon be able to click on it. www.babiesremembered.org

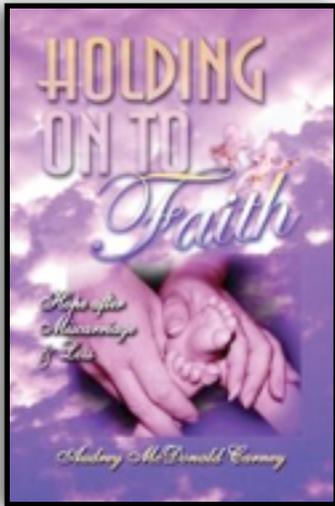


Holidays, not always Happy Days

The reason for the season is everywhere. Manger scenes depict the birth of a child named Jesus. Hanukkah menorahs burn brightly. Santa is everywhere and New Years Eve revelers rejoice. The sights, sounds, and smells of the holidays as well as the stress and hecticness are everywhere. A focus on family and particularly on children make this one of the most difficult times of the year for many, many people... especially those who have experienced the death of a loved one, and in our case, the death of a child in miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant death. Parents are not supposed to outlive their children in the world that most of us live in. So when it happens, facing those 'first' holidays is crushing and overwhelming. And subsequent holidays can also be difficult and challenging. If you are a parent, we cannot take your pain away. And we cannot teach you the caregivers and family members what to do that will magically make it get better for parents you care about. However, in this newsletter we offer suggestions for facing them, ideas for understanding them, and suggestions for being supportive to each other. And we can offer our experience. Believe, hope, cry, share, rest, give to others, pray, write, and follow your instincts. May you find peace and many reminders of love during this holiday season.



Sherokee Ilse: The author of *Empty Arms*, 17 books/ pamphlets dealing with grief and loss, and the newsletter 'Babies Remembered'. I have been helping both parents and professionals in the fields of stillbirth and infant loss, as well as promoting research on probable causes for stillbirth to save babies lives, for over 27 years. I am a bereaved mother first and a professional second. Feel free to contact me re: speaking, my books, the new CEU Units I am developing or other information at www.babiesremembered.org or by phone at 952-476-1303.



**Holding on to Faith:
Hope After Miscarriage
& Loss**

by Audrey MacDonald
Carney, LPC
www.holdingontofaith.com.

After experiencing two miscarriages and an ectopic pregnancy, Audrey, a licensed counselor, wrote this insightful book. It promotes awareness to society, understanding

miscarriage, and offers parents comfort and acknowledgment of the importance of the baby's life.

To order this special book visit
www.PublishAmerica.com or Amazon

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After listening to her anguish, I offered her support and understanding, and lots of hugs across the miles. I affirmed that loving her baby since her own childhood, long before this or any baby was even conceived, meant that of course deep sadness was inevitable. We laughed a bit, we cried, and we connected as mothers who know all too well the feelings that were oh, so normal. course she was hurting...this was her baby. Another one who had died too soon. She had every right to feel what she was feeling, no matter what others had to say. They didn't understand and weren't trying to hurt her; they wanted her to move on. But I also could tell she was not ready to move on yet. She needed to be where she was, wallowing in her pain and missing her babies. For awhile she did that.

Then she made an amazing statement, "You have helped me more in this conversation than anyone has in the two past weeks. I actually feel better." Imagine, a short conversation with a not so 'strange' stranger and she was feeling better. Then I shared resources with her.

As we ended our conversation, I suggested she would probably sleep for the first time that night, and I asked her to promise me should would make an effort to eat – healthy food and drink lots of water. And with a quick, but important reminder that her baby Gionna mattered and would be loved by her forever, we hung up.

A few days later she told me, indeed she slept that night. Though still very sad about the miscarriage of her daughter, she was feeling better. The right to love and miss and cry for a tiny unfinished baby is something those who has a miscarriage--ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, or blighted ovum—has the right to have. This is normal grief.

We do not want to presume what level of intensity each mother or father's grief may take, since some surely seem to easily accept it and move on. But our openness to their feelings and their process of grieving and healing is key here. Respect, love, and support can go a long way to each one of these special families.

Blessings,
Sherokee

Introducing

Babies Remembered Consulting

Sherokee Ilse & Associates

Announcing: Perinatal Consulting Services for Clinics and Hospitals

- Do you wonder if your program meets or exceed the standards of care all parents deserve?
- Is your facility suffering from low staffing, turnover, staff malaise or compassion fatigue?
- Do you need to know where to find more resources?
- Do you standardly offer patients Birth Planning or a Birth Companion? Or Discharge Meetings? Or Follow-up Programs?
- Is it time for a revitalization of your program and a rejuvenation of staff?
- Could your staff's skills and confidence be boosted with more education?

This is an exciting new project. Our team of consultants and trainers will come to your site to assist you in your mission or can help online or over the phone. Some of our present services include:

- Review and Analysis with our © Hospital/clinic Review tools of your Bereavement/Loss Program
- Birth Plan advisors and parent advocates (we will train staff)
- Bereavement Program development and ongoing support
- Training for caregivers who work in the community, in hospitals, clinics, churches/synagogues, and funeral homes
- Grief in the workplace - one-on-one support for supervisors, or team sessions
- Peer Support Program development and training for parents

Services we are considering, particularly for non-profits –

- Fundraiser consulting – advisory or fundraiser chair
- Newsletter/web designers
- Marketing support
- New book project consultant (there is potential to produce books for clients)

Let us know if you wish to have a free consultation about your project, program, or organization.

If you would like to be considered as a potential member of our team, email or call. info@babiesremembered.org

ABOUT AND FOR PARENTS

Rights of Parents and Babies in early Miscarriage

Parents who have experienced an early pregnancy loss should have the opportunity:

- To be with each other during any tests, procedures or hospitalization as much as possible.
- To be cared for by an empathic staff who will respect their feelings, beliefs and individual requests.
- To have information presented in terminology understandable to parents regarding their baby's status and or cause of death (if known), including pathology reports and medical records.
- To be told all options and to be given the choice (when medically possible) on how to proceed when their baby has died, such as D&C, natural delivery or delivery induced by medications.
- To be able to see and hold their baby and take photographs if possible.
- To be given the option to name their baby if they choose to, whether or not the gender is known.
- To observe cultural and religious practices the parents feel are appropriate to the situation.
- To be informed of the grieving process and to be given

referrals and resources that will help them through their grief.

- To be offered as many mementos as possible, for example, ultrasound photos, memory box, certificate of life.
- To be given information on the facility's disposition policy and offered choices whenever possible.* (SEE BOX)
- To be given options regarding farewell rituals such as a hospital memorial service, a balloon release, or a private burial at home.
- To receive follow-up appointments for medical tests and genetic counseling or to review lab test results.
- These rights should be granted to parents no matter how early in the pregnancy their loss occurred.

Rights of the Baby--

- To be recognized as a person who was born and died.
- To be named.
- To be seen, touched, and held by the family.
- To have the end of life acknowledged.
- To be put to rest with dignity.

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Editors Comment: * This bullet item might be read as if the hospital has the right to make policies that might take away the legal rights of parents. This is a very sensitive question...they may not actually have the right to do this. Parents should be the ultimate authority when it comes to decision-making and ownership of their babies' miscarried remains (unless there is a communicable disease issue). This is also true in most hospitals when someone wants an amputated limb back. However, be aware the hospitals may believe they have this right. There have been, and will likely be more, lawsuits and terrible publicity about this over the years. Parents may need to be careful what they sign at admittance – it is possible they may sign their rights away. Staff could help them re-sign that form if they ask for the babies' remains, since they may not have realized what they were signing. This issue has not had a full discussion nationally, but it has begun.

New Clinic Video

I Hardly Knew You – What Next?

This approx. 15 minute video (not quite final) is the first of its kind. Once the sad news has been delivered to parents and before sending them to the hospital...sit down and watch this compassionate video – a message from parents who can tell you what will happen next. Parents are encouraged to go home (with written materials and help from others) rather than rushing to the hospital while in deep shock. They will learn of their options and can begin to prepare for their baby's birth before heading off for procedures and life-changing decisions they are rarely prepared to make. To reserve your copy of this limited edition, email us at info@babiesremembered.com. The first DVD is \$100. Additional copies for your facility are \$25 each.

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