



# Grieving the Child You Never Knew:

a support booklet for pregnancy loss

On behalf of the entire staff of Lakeland Regional Medical Center, please accept our deepest sympathy for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. It is our hope that this packet answers questions and gives you guidance, as you move forward in life without your baby.

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*Additional brochures can be downloaded from the hospital's website: [www.lrmc.com](http://www.lrmc.com). Choose the "Hospital Services" tab; then choose "Palliative Care" from the right sidebar. Look under "Palliative Care Mission" for the PDF file link.*



“When your parent dies, you've lost your past, but when your child dies, you've lost your future.”

- Pat Schwiebert, RN; *When Hello Means Goodbye*

## When an Unborn Baby or Newborn Baby Dies

(Ingrid Kohn, MSW and Perry-Lynn Moffitt; *A Silent Sorrow*, 2nd ed)

Whether you suffered a full-term loss or a first trimester loss, the love and hopes for your baby have turned into grief. No matter what kind of pregnancy loss you experience, you might be unprepared for your feelings of intense sadness. This sorrow may take a long while to heal, as the baby you lost was a real part of you and your hopes and dreams for the future. Many wonder if they are alone in this sad experience. The latest information states that over one million fetal losses occur each year in the United States, with the vast majority happening before 20 weeks gestation. In other words, 6 fetal deaths occur for every 1000 live births.

Many decisions have to be made at this fragile time, such as whether or not to have an autopsy. This is a private and personal decision. An autopsy (the internal and external examination of a baby at least 20 weeks in gestation) is not performed unless specifically requested by the parents. If the cause of death is known, it may not need to be considered. When the pregnancy is complicated by birth defects or the cause of death is unknown, an autopsy may provide information about why the loss occurred. If an autopsy is desired, this should be arranged before discharge by speaking to a member of the healthcare team.

Research shows that parents begin to emotionally attach (bond) early in a pregnancy. For you, maybe the baby was real the moment the pregnancy test was positive. Maybe you had made room in your heart and your family for this new baby. Even if the pregnancy was unplanned, you still had a relationship with the baby and will still go through a time of grief. Mothers and fathers often experience and express the loss in different ways. The grief process is very individual - it takes time and no two people grieve in the same way. Grief is totally exhausting, so take care of your health. Eat regular meals, avoid alcohol and take medication only under a doctor's supervision. Get some daily exercise and try to maintain your regular sleep patterns.

Crying is normal and healthy and should not in any way cause shame. Some people prefer to cry in private; some people prefer to cry with the comforting presence of others. Crying should not be discouraged, but it alone is not enough to overcome grief. Furthermore, you should not be forced to cry if you do not wish to do so.

Grief is a normal human reaction to a loss. Research shows it is important to allow the feelings of sorrow, anger, jealousy and resentment to surface. If you don't, grief will go underground and resurface later in unhealthy ways. Try to find understanding listeners and read comforting material, perhaps from other grieving parents. If your depression is worsening or not improving, please consider professional counseling from someone who understands pregnancy loss. Often suicide "appears to be" the only way out of an unhappy situation. Occasional thoughts of suicide should not be a source of concern. As a new life-style is developed, these thoughts vanish. **However, if you're concerned that these are thoughts you may act upon, get immediate professional help.**

## Remembering Your Baby

Lakeland Regional Medical Center offers a memory box: some keepsakes that will help you remember your baby. Not all hospital staff will automatically provide these unless you ask, so tell the staff what is important to you. These keepsakes may become priceless in the years to come. Some suggestions include:

- A lock of hair
- A set of footprints or handprint
- A picture of your baby or of you holding your baby
- A chance to sit as a couple and hold your baby
- A chance to have your baby baptized or blessed by your spiritual leader
- Create your own personal video of time spent with your baby
- A chance to show the baby to older siblings or close friends/family

## The Tasks of Grief

(J. William Worden, PhD; *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy*, 3rd ed.)

Human beings tend to make strong emotional bonds with others. Grief is the strong emotional reaction that occurs when those bonds are threatened or broken. The work of grief cannot be hurried. It takes a great deal of time, usually a year or more. It may be the purest pain you have ever known. The death of a loved one is considered the most stressful of all life change situations.

There is also truth that grief creates tasks that need to be accomplished. These tasks may seem overwhelming, but can offer hope that something can be done and there is a way through the pain.

### **Task One: To Accept the Reality of the Loss**

Often, people experience shock after the death of a loved one. In this initial period, you may feel numb, displaying no feelings. You may have a hard time believing that your baby has died. At some point, the reality of the loss sets in. This phase is marked by strong sadness and emotions that include feelings of panic, guilt, anger, and loneliness. It is very important not to hold your feelings in. Unexpressed feelings often surface at a later time in unhealthy ways. Shared feelings help healing and can bring closeness to all involved.

Coming to accept the reality of the loss takes time. It involves knowing the baby is gone - not only in your mind but in your heart.

### **Task Two: To Work Through the Pain of Grief**

During this phase, you may need to pull back from activities and people, feeling exhausted by the slightest effort. You may need lots of rest, allowing your mind, body and spirit to rest as a result of the upheaval in your life. During this time, you may find yourself feeling weak, out of control and hopeless. You may also find yourself thinking a lot about the baby, reliving memories over and over.

There is a tendency to avoid the painful feelings in a variety of unhealthy ways: numbing the pain with drugs or alcohol or avoiding any reminders and staying very busy. Seek help from a counselor or trusted friend for positive and healthy ways to help your pain. Comments, given by others who try to be helpful, are sometimes hurtful (comments like "You are young, you can have another baby"). Seek out people who can truly support you in this process.

### **Task Three: To Adjust to an Environment in Which the Deceased is Missing**

In any situation, it is seldom clear exactly what is lost. Many adjustments have to be made after losing a baby. External adjustments - how the death affects one's everyday functioning in the world - answering questions from neighbors and friends. Internal adjustments - how the death affects one's sense of self - may refer to relearning how to live; asking "Who am I now that my baby is gone?" Spiritual adjustments - how

the death affects one's beliefs, values and assumptions about the world - may cause the person left behind to feel that they have lost direction in life.

#### **Task Four: To Emotionally Relocate the Deceased and Move on With Life**

After allowing yourself to grieve, you will come to a turning point. You will have a little more energy, more interest in activities and people around you. You may find yourself thinking somewhat differently about the loss of your baby. There will come a time when you will begin to readjust to life, reestablish old relationships, and form new ones. You begin to get on with your life. The memories and love of your baby are still there, but the wounds begin to heal. By experiencing deep emotion and accepting it, you will grow in warmth, depth, understanding and wisdom.

*Tasks can be revisited and reworked over time. Various tasks can be worked on at the same time.  
Remember, grieving is a fluid process.*

## Grieving Together and Grieving Apart

The pregnancy loss forces you and your partner to deal with a tragedy. It can either draw you together or drive you apart. For some, the different intensity and duration of grief felt by the mother and by the father can create stress in the relationship. You may feel angry or critical of your partner for grieving differently than you. Anger, guilt and attempts to place blame for the loss are the ugly aspects of grief. If your relationship is strong and you realize that anger is part of the grief, then you can tolerate these outbursts and still help each other.

But not all relationships can survive such anger. Sometimes your grief reaction is so different from your partner's that you end up feeling angry, misunderstood and emotionally distant. If these differences are not understood, they can lead to total communication breakdown. When this happens, it is important to try and talk to your partner, maybe with the help of a professional counselor. Mutual respect and trust are essential.

Pregnancy loss affects every aspect of your relationship, including your sex life. Doctors usually suggest waiting 2-6 weeks before resuming sexual relations, for optimal physical healing. However, you and your partner may have very different feelings about sex. It may remind you of the pregnancy that ended or you may lose all sexual desire. Birth control may become a loaded issue. Having sexual difficulties during a period of grief is very common. Open communication will help you meet your partner halfway.

Having endured a pregnancy loss, you and your partner may find that your relationship is forever changed. Try to have open talks, allowing equal time for each to express concerns. Listen patiently to each other's reaction to the loss. Try to understand without judging the other. A support group or counselor might be helpful at this time. Keep in mind that it takes time to grieve. Each of you may be at a different place in your road of grief. Gradually your pain will lessen. Surviving a pregnancy loss with your partner can give you a new appreciation for each other and for what is important to you as a couple.

You may be without a partner. You may need to seek support from other sources, such as support groups and bereaved parents organizations.

## A Mother's Experience

Because of your unique relationship to the pregnancy, you will probably grieve more openly and for a longer time than the baby's father. Physical, hormonal and emotional factors all add to the sorrow that you are now feeling. The further along you were in your pregnancy, the more complicated your body's response.

Feeling as if you 'failed' as both a mother and a partner can make the grief last longer. Keep lines of communication open, so you and the baby's father can talk about these concerns and deal with them.

Most women grieve openly, but the baby's father may have a more reserved reaction. Regardless of the style of grief, it is important to share your thoughts about the loss and what your baby meant to you. When you talk about the loss, you make a statement that the pregnancy was real and important. Expressing your grief is an important part of coming to terms with the death of your baby.

**Key points:**

- Give yourself the time and space to express your loss - your sorrow may be more prolonged and intense than the baby's father.
- Maybe the baby's father is preoccupied with your health or with running the household. This does not necessarily mean he lacks feelings about the loss. It may just be hard to express his sadness.
- Know you will have difficult feelings about seeing pregnant women and mothers with young children. These understandable reactions should lessen over time.
- If you have other children at home, it is normal to feel over-protective, hoping to avoid another tragedy. As you cope with your loss, you may feel less vulnerable, leaving you able to enjoy your healthy children.

## A Father's Experience

As a father, you may feel overlooked. A great deal of attention is usually focused on the mother, and fathers usually tend to neglect their own grief. It is important to recognize that grieving is normal. You need to grieve in order to come to terms with your baby's death.

As a partner and father, you may feel helpless over your family's loss. You may see yourself as the provider and caretaker - having to focus on a busy work schedule or remaining children in the home. As a grieving father, your experience can be quite different from the mother's. Your loss may relate more to the disruption of plans for your family, or to your partner's distress - and less about the baby. Many fathers grieve deeply for a short time, and then make an effort to get busy with work or life. But for many fathers, grief does not end in a few weeks.

However, if you put aside your grief too quickly, you may find it returning in unhealthy and troubling ways: unexplained anger, disinterest in usual activities, resentful of others who are happy. You may lack confidence in your ability to complete tasks or goals. You may feel anxious or uncertain about life in general. In an attempt to ignore their grief, many fathers seek comfort in excessive work, sports, and hobbies. Some try to drown out their grief in alcohol, drugs, sex or food.

**Key points:**

- Give yourself time to express your feelings with the baby's mother, with another loved one, or by yourself.
- Let the baby's mother know if you are concerned about her health and safety. Often, relief at the woman's recovery is interpreted as not caring about the baby and serious misunderstandings can happen.
- Talk to each other regarding any decisions about the baby. It will help both of you feel connected during this difficult and sad time.
- Due to social expectations on men to 'be strong,' there will likely be differences in how mothers and fathers express grief.

# Coping with Friends, Co-Workers and Family

Pregnancy loss remains an awkward subject. Explaining your loss to family, friends and co-workers can leave you feeling drained and angry, especially if people's remarks are thoughtless and unkind. Once you are ready to talk about your loss, you need willing listeners who make you feel loved and valued.

Sometimes other people may not realize how upset you are - they either avoid the topic or make a clumsy remark. Others may truly help - offering to bring a meal or make necessary phone calls. You should feel free to ask for help, especially calling others so you are not overwhelmed by this unhappy task.

Comments from others may be comforting and sensitive and some may be simply intrusive and nosy. Plan what to say beforehand. Find several simple but comfortable phrases that discourage unwanted questions. For example: *"Our expected baby died and we are very sad. But we appreciate your concern."* Mothers find it helpful to alert coworkers before returning to work, perhaps asking a supervisor to inform the rest of the office. Respect your need to decline discussing details if you don't want to share.

Grandparents have a treasured feeling of tradition. When a pregnancy loss occurs, grandparents have an expected family joy turn to sorrow. Grandparents may be helpful in dismantling the baby's nursery and storing the items before the sad homecoming from the hospital.

Being a part of family celebrations with children and babies present may be difficult for the grieving couple. When sorrow is shared, it can develop into richer family ties with a new appreciation for all family members.

## Various Types of Pregnancy Loss

### **Early Loss**

A first trimester loss is a silent sorrow, since many people fail to realize the emptiness it leaves behind. Although a woman's hormones shift immediately to support the pregnancy, the changes in her body are personal and subtle. Many mothers feel shocked and lost after an early loss, but the impact on the father is usually delayed. Few people offer enough sympathy because they do not understand the impact. An early loss can create two anniversary reactions: one a year after your actual loss and another around the baby's due date. Be sure to allow yourself time to grieve - be honest about what this pregnancy meant to you, no matter how brief it was.

If you suffered a miscarriage, it is important to know that the causes could be numerous. Some specialists recommend a woman have a complete workup after 2 consecutive miscarriages. Miscarriages are the most complex and frequent type of pregnancy loss - it can be caused by genetic or chromosomal causes, an imbalance in hormones, problems with the uterus, infectious factors, or immunological problems. Learn about the tests that may help you identify causes and treatments, if you plan another pregnancy.

### **Preterm Loss**

The three most common causes of a crisis pregnancy are preterm labor, premature rupture of the membranes, and cervical incompetence. Treatments often involve bed rest and hospitalization, which affects all aspects of a patient's life. Major disruptions to family life and work obligations occur - often in vain. Such sacrifices probably add to your bitter disappointment when your pregnancy ended in a loss. If you feel relief after a preterm delivery, it does not mean you did not love or want your baby. It means you welcomed the relief from the anxiety, uncertainty and physical pain of a crisis pregnancy. Accepting both the relief and the sorrow as natural reactions can help your emotional recovery.

If you were in the hospital, allow time to regain your physical strength - about three weeks for every week spent on bed rest. Reestablish your relationship with your partner and any children at home. Try not to be hard on yourself for making medical decisions that seemed to pit the mother's interest against the baby's - balancing these issues is difficult, especially when the outcome is uncertain. If you choose to plan another pregnancy, channel your energy into finding the best medical care.

### **Stillborn and Newborn Death**

Once you are beyond the initial shock of your loss, you will face the hard work of integrating this tragedy into your life. You will never forget the death of your baby. In about 50% of all stillbirths, no specific cause can be identified. The remaining 50% fall into 3 basic categories: problems with the structure or function of the placenta or the umbilical cord, birth defects in the baby or maternal conditions that affect the pregnancy.

Find out as much as possible about what might have caused your baby's death - the more information you have, the better you are able to grasp what has happened. Try to accept medical decisions you may have been asked to make quickly. Focus on the fact that you cared for your baby and wanted the best for your child. Try to let go of guilt - your sorrow is great enough without the burden of blaming yourself.

Make decisions for you and your family that feel right for you. This is *your* baby and *your* grief.

## Helping Children Cope with Death

When children experience the death of a loved one, they also need to grieve (just as adults do). They may not be able to put their grief into words. They may hold their feelings inside or express them through their behavior. They may seem not to be affected. But they are grieving, often very deeply.

As parents, we often want to protect children from the pain of grief. Because we have difficulty dealing with death, we wonder how a young child could possibly cope with it. So we exclude children. We leave them to answer their own questions as they struggle to cope with their loss. As a result, many children facing such an important loss feel bewildered and alone.

### **Ways to Help**

- Be direct, simple and honest. Explain truthfully what happened in terms that children can understand.
- Encourage the child to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful.
- Accept the emotions and reactions the child expresses. Don't tell the child how they should or should not feel.
- Offer warmth and your physical presence and affection.
- Share your feelings with the child. Allow the child to comfort you.
- Be patient. Know that children need to hear "the story" and to ask the same questions again and again.
- Reassure the child that death is not contagious; that the death of one person does not mean the child or other loved ones will soon die.
- Maintain as much order, stability, and security in the child's life as you can.
- Listen to what the child is telling or asking you. Then respond according to the child's needs.
- Allow the child to make some decisions about participation in family rituals, i.e., visitation, funerals, and socializing after the funeral. Be sure to explain in advance what will happen.

## Common Explanations That May Confuse Children

Some explanations can actually make the grief process more difficult or cause problems later in life.

*The baby went on a long journey* - "Then why is everyone crying?" "Why didn't she say good-bye?" "I thought vacation trips were supposed to be fun."

*God was lonely and wanted your brother. He was so good that God wants him in heaven* - "I'm lonely for my brother. I need him more than God does. God is mean!" "If God wants the good people, I'm going to be as bad as I can. I don't want to die."

*Your sister went to sleep* - "I don't want to go to bed." "I'll make myself stay awake all night so I won't die too."

*We lost the baby* - "Let's go find her."

## Some Behaviors of Grieving Children

School work or school life may be affected by death. Teachers and school counselors should be made aware of the situation. If serious problems arise on a regular basis, professional help should be sought for the children.

Children may react to death in a variety of ways. Some will exhibit many reactions; some only a few. Some will react immediately; some may have very delayed reactions. These reactions are very common. They should not be of concern unless they continue for several months or if they increase.

***Monitor the grief responses of children. Behaviors that are illegal, dangerous or self-destructive need prompt professional intervention.***

# Coping with Holidays and Special Family Occasions

Holidays, anniversaries, birthdays, graduations. These are usually happy times that people celebrate, as they look forward to the future. If there has been a death in the family, emotional wounds are left that can ache during these times of warmth and cheer. Feelings of isolation and loneliness can magnify.

With planning and forethought, it is possible to get through these times. Hopefully, the following suggestions are helpful to you:

1. Family gatherings may be difficult, especially if there are babies or pregnant women present.
2. Engage in spiritual activities which nourish your faith and hope.
3. Initiate activity yourself; do not wait for others. Plan your own holiday. Make phone calls to your friends or relatives. Calls to people in similar situations can be worthwhile. Follow through with these activities.
4. Remember that one is a whole number. You do not need be part of a couple to enjoy yourself. Time spent by yourself can also be rewarding.
5. Be gentle with yourself; all wounds take time to heal. Realize you will feel sad at times.

## Physical and Emotional Recovery

Maybe you were pregnant for only a few days, or maybe you knew for weeks or months. You might be wondering if this is a life worth mourning and missing. Attachment is the emotional bond of preparing and caring for your baby. Only you know how much this pregnancy meant – how many dreams you had for your baby. Your feelings of attachment for your baby will influence your feelings - you might feel minor disappointment or intense grief or something in between.

Maybe you were not ready for this pregnancy. Maybe you felt unsure about having a baby or had a difficult time accepting that fact that you were pregnant. If so, the baby's loss may have left you feeling emotionally untouched or confused.

A woman's body goes through a number of physical and emotional changes in the process of returning to normal after conception. This can take weeks and even months. Eventually, the fullness in the abdomen and breasts goes away, the nausea stops, and the uterus returns to its normal size. Breasts may be tender and full for some time, and you may have milk 'let down.' If you planned to breast feed your baby, you may have more grief. Your body was prepared to feed and nurture your baby, but there is no baby.

Some of the common feelings that may surface at this time are:

- Tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- An empty feeling in the stomach and loss of appetite.
- Restlessness; inability to concentrate or finish things you've started to do; aimlessness
- A feeling that the loss isn't real, that it didn't actually happen
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent dreams about your baby
- Intense anger
- Crying at unexpected times; Physical weakness;
- Intense Feelings of being all alone
- Feelings of guilt - "Is there something I did to cause my baby's death?"

## *Spiritual Affirmations After a Pregnancy Loss*

In this time of loss I call upon my spirit within to guide me to my strength so that I may find peace and completion.

I will use this strength to demand of myself and others my need to grieve completely, for this will be my first step to healing.

During my time of grief I will seek guidance not only from my inner spirit but from loving persons who may offer wisdom and comfort.

I need to understand that the soul as well as the physical body needs healing and to pay attention to this. I will learn to accept that the soul may never heal completely.

I will learn to live not in fear and once again see beauty in my world and purpose in my existence.

In spite of my new knowledge that things happen that cannot be controlled, I must call upon the places within me that tell me I do have control over much of my life and use this control to aid my healing.

Let me recognize the gift in my ability to conceive and carry life however briefly.

Let me take joy in my ability to love so deeply and desire to nurture a soul unbeknownst to me.

Let me find healing in the belief that this soul knew my love for it and that that love helped it to pass to another place.

Let me honor this short life not only with my love but in finding meaning in its existence.

Let me recognize this meaning in not only my ability to survive, but in my fullest appreciation of all the moments motherhood will bring me, along with my deeper compassion and sisterhood to other women who've experienced loss.

Let a part of this soul be reflected in the spirit of my future children, born or adopted, so that I may know it through them.

I will listen to and trust the place in my deepest heart that tells me I will once again be reunited with this soul and will fulfill the need to hold it in my arms.

I will help myself to feel comfort in the knowledge that there is a star in heaven that belongs to me.

*By Stacey Dinner-Levin*

“Grief is one of the most universal human emotions - and one of the most isolating... Grieving is the mark of having been close to another person. The only way to avoid grieving is to avoid having loved.”

- Joanne Lynn, MD

Handbook for Mortals: Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness (1999)

## Suggested Resources

### **Suggested Reading for Parents**

Lorraine Ash; Life Touches Life: A Mother's Story of Stillbirth and Healing.

Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin; Tears of Sorrow, Seeds of Hope

Deborah L. Davis, PhD; Empty Cradle, Broken Heart: Surviving the Death of Your Baby (revised edition).

Ellen M. DuBois; I Never Held You: A Book about Miscarriage, Healing and Recovery

Ingred Kahn, Perry-Lynn Moffitt, and Isabella A. Wilkins; A Silent Sorrow: Pregnancy Loss-Guidance and Support for You and Your Family (revised and updated 2nd edition)

Christine O'Keefe Lafser; An Empty Cradle, a Full Heart; Reflection for Mothers and Fathers after Miscarriage, Stillbirth or Infant Death.

Stacey McLaughlin, PhD; Surviving Miscarriage- You Are Not Alone.

Tim Nelson; A Guide for Fathers: When a Baby Dies.

Kathe Wunnenberg; Grieving the Child I Never Knew.

### **Suggested Reading for Grandparents**

Nina Bennett; Forgotten Tears: A Grandmother's Journey through Grief

Nadine Galinsky; When a Grandchild Dies: What to Do, What to Say, How to Cope

### **Suggested Reading about Siblings**

Joan H. Arnold, Penelope Buschman Gemma; A Child Dies: A Portrait of Family Grief.

Rabbi Earl Grollman, Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child

Maria Trozzi; Talking With Children About Loss.

### **Suggested Reading for Siblings**

John Adams, Barbara L. Gibson; The Dragonfly Door.

Cathy Blanford; Something Happened: A Book for Children and Parents Who have Experienced Pregnancy Loss.

Leo Buscaglia, PhD; The Fall of Freddie the Leaf.



## On-line Resources

*"I haven't just lost a baby, I have lost a part of myself." - Anonymous*

[www.mend.org](http://www.mend.org)

M.E.N.D. (Mommies Enduring Neonatal Death) is a Christian, non-profit organization that reaches out to families who have suffered the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or early infant death

[www.nationalshareoffice.com](http://www.nationalshareoffice.com)

SHARE is a resource center for parents who have lost a baby before, at, or shortly after death. Its website has articles, information, and a chat room

[www.compassionatefriends.com/Brochures/stillbirth.htm](http://www.compassionatefriends.com/Brochures/stillbirth.htm)

A resource center with a collage of information to assist families towards a positive resolution following the death of a loved-one from miscarriage, stillbirth and infant death.

[www.hygeiafoundation.org/](http://www.hygeiafoundation.org/)

The Hygeia Foundation is a non-profit organization. Hygeia® has become the most enduring program of compassion, empathy and support pertaining to Perinatal Loss. Hygeia® provides programs to educate, counsel and support families who grieve the loss of a pregnancy or newborn child, advocate for the healthcare of women and children, worldwide, and promote humanism in the education of tomorrow's healthcare professionals

[www.babylosscomfort.com/what.html](http://www.babylosscomfort.com/what.html)

Baby Loss Comfort was created to help provide real physical support as well as emotional comfort and resource information for women who have experienced baby loss from miscarriage to stillbirth.

[www.bornangels.com/index.html](http://www.bornangels.com/index.html)

Born Angels (BA) is a special place to spend some time for grieving parents who have lost a baby at any stage of pregnancy; ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage, stillbirth, and neonatal loss.

[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)

Grief Watch provides bereavement resources, memorial products and links that can help you through your personal loss. Products are available that are specific to pregnancy loss, such as Strong and Tender (a book for fathers) and various personalized cards and announcements.

[www.the\\_griefstore.com](http://www.the_griefstore.com)

The Grief Store offers books, tapes, cards and memorial gifts. Products have been specially selected to promote healing, teach about grief, and provide support to the bereaved. Online or Toll free number 888-564-6018.

## Local sources of help during this difficult time:

Lakeland Regional Medical Center's Center for Counseling (863) 687-1222

Cornerstone Hospice Bereavement Department (863) 291-5560

[www.cornerstonehospice.org](http://www.cornerstonehospice.org)

Hope Hospice Bereavement Department (863) 688-4715

[www.hopehospice.org](http://www.hopehospice.org)

Good Shepherd Hospice Bereavement Department (863) 968-1707

[www.goodshepherdhospice.org](http://www.goodshepherdhospice.org)

Bethany Center for Grieving Children and Teens (863) 968-1707

[www.goodshepherdhospice.org](http://www.goodshepherdhospice.org)

Peace River Center (863) 248-3300

[www.peace-river.com](http://www.peace-river.com)