



Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss):

Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care

Image Credit:
Ioann-Mark Kuznietsov



eBook by Melissa King

Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS)

Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS) is an inclusive community service providing information, resources, awareness, education and support programs, for anyone impacted by the loss of a baby through miscarriage (early pregnancy loss) in Australia.

Shared stories of love.



Like a butterfly, our beautiful babies cocooned inside of us, grew their wings, and left flutters of love which are embedded "forever in our heart".

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss) can be an extremely difficult time, as the shock of losing a baby is an unimaginable experience, and may take time to come to terms with.

Feelings of sadness can happen at any time, so always remember that there is support available for you to access, when you are ready.

Each person's circumstances are unique. You are not alone in your grief, and we encourage you to seek support, be kind to yourself, and to look after your wellbeing.

You matter, and the loss of your baby matters. We hope that the shared stories and information provided in this eBook, will help you to know that you are not alone, and there is help available.

Information, resources and support services are listed in this eBook. We encourage you to seek support.

We are sorry for your loss.

**Miscarriage Information Support Service
June 2024**



We hope that this eBook can help you or anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss, including partners, family and friends, to support you through this experience. This eBook includes information, resources and a list of support services and health information.

Contents

Shared Stories of Love 02 [View](#)

Acknowledgements 05 [View](#)

About this eBook 07 [View](#)

Miscarriage/Early Pregnancy Loss
Miscarriage Information Support Service
Managing Grief
Poem - "Seasons of Love"

Lynnel's Story 18 [View](#)

Poem: "Butterfly Babe"

Cryssie's Story 26 [View](#)

Reading: "Angel Child"

Jazz and Phil's Story 33 [View](#)

Reading: "To My Angel Child in the Milky Way"

Alanna's Story 37 [View](#)

Shelley's Story 39 [View](#)

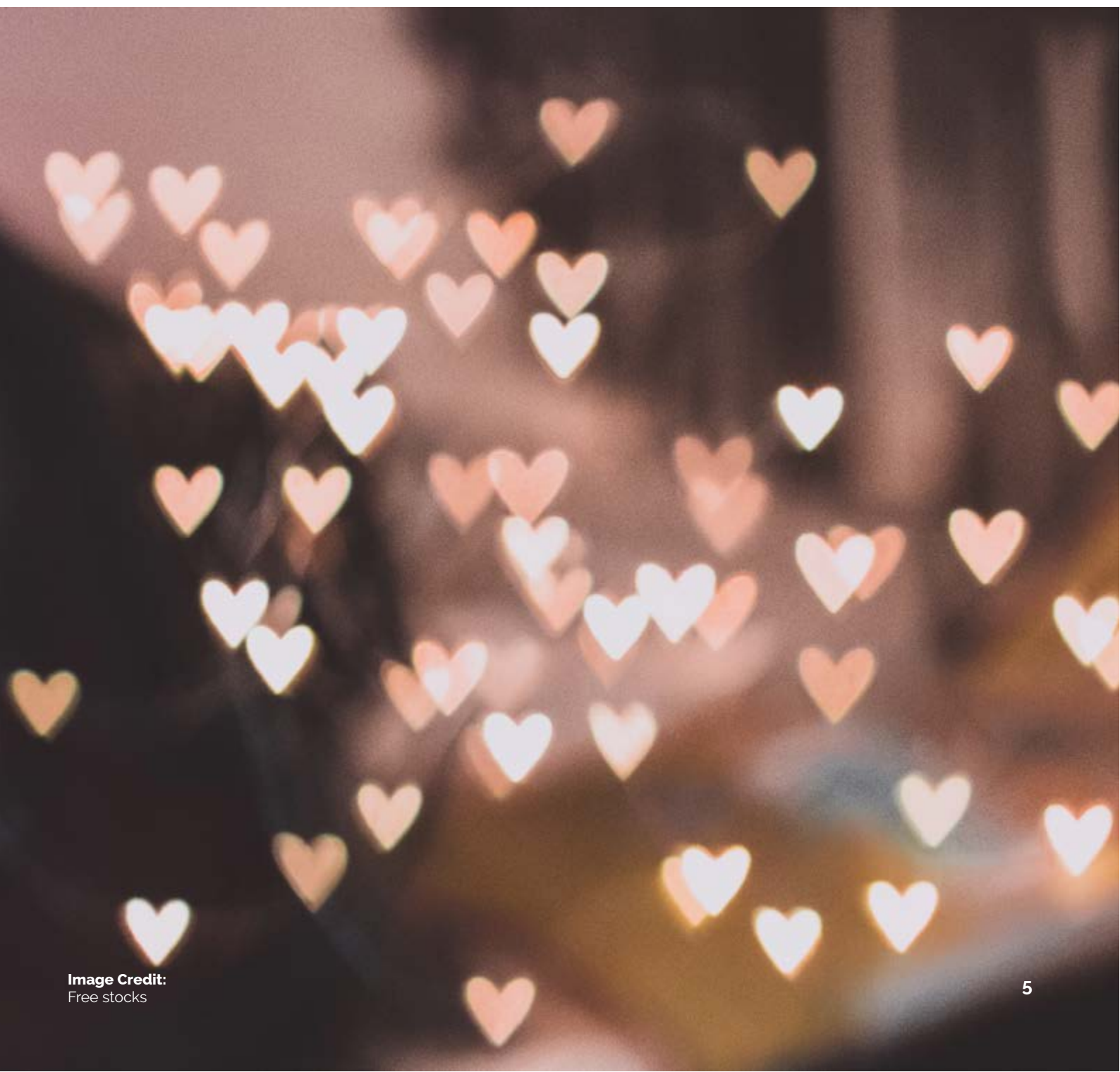
Talia's Story Reading: "The Quiet Space"	41	<u>View</u>
Peter's Story Song Lyrics: "I Didn't Get to Say Goodbye"	45	<u>View</u>
Melissa's Story Song Lyrics: "Happy Birthday in Heaven"	48	<u>View</u>
Lisa's Story National Miscarriage Awareness Day	54	<u>View</u>
Jasmine's Story "Forever In My Heart" Sculpture	58	<u>View</u>
Catherine's Story Memorial Garden at Bunurong Memorial Park	62	<u>View</u>
Susan's Story MISS Care Package Bags Information for Partners Information for Family and Friends Ways to Remember	66	<u>View</u>
Support Services and Health Information	76	<u>View</u>
Thank you	78	<u>View</u>
Contact MISS	79	<u>View</u>



"Shared Stories, Coping After Loss and Self-Care."

Acknowledgements

[Back to Contents](#)



Acknowledgement of Country

Miscarriage Information Support Service Inc acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which our families, committee members and volunteers work, live, play and visit. We pay our respects to the elders of those many nations, past, present and emerging, recognising their continuing connection to the land, waters and community.

Design

Infinity, Heart and Butterfly designs by **Debra Whitford**.

This eBook has been designed by **Tommy Debenham** from **Tommy Creative**.

Some of the eBook's imagery has been provided by unsplash.

Terminology

The words miscarriage and early pregnancy loss have been used interchangeably throughout this eBook. We define early pregnancy loss as a loss occurring prior to 20 weeks' gestation, with this definition including Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR).

Diversity and Inclusion

We acknowledge that gender identity is personal and evolving, and that individuals who experience an early pregnancy loss may not identify as a woman or mother. When the term 'woman' is used, this refers to current biological status rather than an individual's personal identity. We recognise that the term family may be used to describe biological, cultural and/or chosen social units or groups, that an individual shares common and ongoing bonds with.

Contributors

This eBook would not exist without the kindness and generosity of the bereaved parents with lived experience of miscarriage and pregnancy loss, who have been willing to share their personal stories, coping strategies and their self-care practices, to ultimately help others after their loss. Thank you to Lynnel, Cryssie, Jazz and Phil, Alanna, Shelley, Talia, Peter, Melissa, Lisa, Jasmine, Catherine and Susan for sharing your experiences.

Thank you for opening your heart and emotions, and for sharing your experiences of grief and loss. Some names in this eBook have been changed due to privacy reasons.

Not all of the contributors who have shared their stories, have utilised MISS resources or services, as some of these experiences date back many years. We would also like to acknowledge the many people who wanted to contribute by sharing their story, but were unable to because of the difficult emotions that arose when revisiting their experience of pregnancy loss.

This eBook contains readings and song lyrics written about the loss of a baby, that have been shared and utilised at events for National Miscarriage Awareness Day and International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Day.

This eBook has been developed by Melissa King, Founder of Miscarriage Information Support Service, supported by volunteers from the MISS Committee of Management.



"Shared Stories, Coping After Loss and Self-Care."

About this eBook

[Back to Contents](#)

Image Credit:
Aleksandr Ledogorov



Miscarriage (Early Pregnancy Loss) Shared Stories, Coping After Loss and Self-Care is a collection of personal stories that have been provided to help others after miscarriage.

The stories provide examples of how people have coped through their experience, and supports they have utilised to assist them with their grief.

This eBook contains information, resources and a list of support services.

This eBook also includes a number of readings and song lyrics written about miscarriage that may provide you with some comfort in your grief.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents are interactive, and can be clicked on to be taken to the selected page.

[Click here.](#)

Support Services and Health Information

Under Support Services and Health Information, you can click on the links in blue which will take you to websites, where you can access information, and support services. This eBook is intended as a support resource after miscarriage (early pregnancy loss). We hope that this will help to support you or anyone impacted through your experience.

[Click here.](#)

Disclaimer:

1. The stories and opinions expressed within this eBook are those of the individuals who have shared their stories (not the author, Miscarriage Information Support Service or the publisher). Neither the authors, nor MISS, nor the publisher can be held responsible for any loss or claim arising out of the use, or misuse, of the suggestions made or for the failure to take medical advice.
2. Although every effort has been made to ensure that the contents in this eBook are accurate at the date of publication, medical information can change over time, and any advice or opinions in this eBook should not be relied on as a replacement for professional counselling or medical advice. Always consult a qualified medical practitioner regarding your situation or condition.
3. Although the author has made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this book are correct at the date of publication, the author does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by inaccurate information.
4. To protect the privacy of some individuals/services, some of the names of people, services and places have been de-identified.



"Shared Stories, Coping After Loss and Self-Care."

Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS)

[Back to Contents](#)



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Fadi Xd

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Miscarriage (Early Pregnancy Loss)

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss) is the loss of a pregnancy before 20 weeks gestation. Stillbirth is the loss of a pregnancy after 20 weeks gestation.

In Australia, statistics on miscarriage are not collected, so it is difficult to know how many people experience miscarriage.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage, impacting over 150,000 Australians each year.

Miscarriage is experienced differently by each person. The emotional experience of miscarriage can be difficult to navigate, so accessing information, support and resources is encouraged.

Miscarriage can be part of a cycle of infertility, which can create pain and grief for anyone wishing to start or extend their family.

There are several types of miscarriage. Your doctor or specialist may discuss the kind of loss that you have experienced. These can include (in alphabetical order):

- Blighted ovum/anembryonic pregnancy
- Chemical pregnancy
- Complete miscarriage
- Ectopic pregnancy and pregnancy of unknown locations
- Incomplete miscarriage
- Inevitable miscarriage
- Missed or silent miscarriage
- Molar pregnancy
- Recurrent miscarriage
- Septic miscarriage (infection)
- Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR)
- Threatened miscarriage

Please visit Miscarriage Australia's website for comprehensive, evidence-based resources and information for those impacted by miscarriage.

www.miscarriageaustralia.com.au



Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS)



Image Credit:
Mayur Gala

Miscarriage Information Support Service was established in 2012 as Australia's first national miscarriage support service.

Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS) is an inclusive community service providing information, resources, awareness, education and support programs for anyone impacted by the loss of a baby through miscarriage (early pregnancy loss) in Australia.

A need for a miscarriage specific support service in Australia was identified in 2011, after the founder of MISS experienced a miscarriage, and had poor experiences with the health care system. At the time of her loss, she received no resources, information or links to support services.

From this moment forward in her grief, she wanted to make a positive difference to others going through this experience, by creating information, resources and support programs for anyone impacted by miscarriage.



A Committee of Management was formed on 14 April 2012, and Miscarriage Information Support Service was established as a not-for-profit organisation and Australia's first national miscarriage support service.

MISS develops and distributes resources across Australia, including information flyers, flyers for the partner, flyers for family and friends, resource support cards and care package bags. MISS has also developed wellbeing support programs after early pregnancy loss, and community awareness and education programs.

To raise awareness of miscarriage and to educate the community, MISS created National Miscarriage Awareness Day in 2019, as a day of remembrance after miscarriage and awareness. This day is held one week prior to Mother's Day each year, as the weeks leading up to Mother's Day can be triggering and emotional for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss.

MISS also creates resources to share information for a number of organisations and support services including Red Nose Grief and Loss, Bears of Hope, Pink Elephants and Miscarriage Australia.

MISS is a member of the Early Pregnancy Loss Coalition (EPLC) that was founded in 2023. EPLC's goal is to provide a collective voice to Government and advocate for critical changes needed to address the current gaps in patient care, support and funding in Australia.

www.eplc.au

MISS is a Public Benevolent Institution and is endorsed by the Australian Tax Office as an Item 1 Deductible Gift Recipient and a Tax Concession Charity.



Through the sharing of this eBook:

Miscarriage Information Support Service is advocating for:

- Operational funding for MISS
- Funding for MISS Care Package Bags
- Funding for support programs after early pregnancy loss
- An education and media campaign to increase awareness of National Miscarriage Awareness Day
- Improvements to maternity and health service-based care,
- Improved psychological and emotional support following early pregnancy loss,
- Links to counselling/bereavement support services after loss,
- Training/education for medical/healthcare staff/students relating to emotional support,
- Changes to the use of medical terminology, and
- Dedicated areas for early pregnancy loss away from maternity units.

Image Credit:
Roma Kaiuk



About MISS

Miscarriage Information Support Service is run by a voluntary Committee of Management.

MISS receives no ongoing federal, state or local funding, and relies on fundraising activities to fund our awareness, education and community programs, flyers, resources and care package bags.

Make a tax-deductible donation to support the work of MISS:

Miscarriage Information Support Service

BSB:

633 000 (Bendigo Bank, Mount Eliza)

Account:

221 632 326

For further information about Miscarriage Information Support Service Inc. (MISS), please contact us:

Visit our website



www.miss.org.au

Or email us!



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Send us a letter

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Managing Grief

Image Credit:
Eric Ward



Early pregnancy loss is a real loss, taking away parents' future hopes and dreams for their unborn baby.

Each person can respond in a different way to loss. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, as everyone grieves in their own way.

Disenfranchised grief, is a type of grief that can be experienced, when society's attitudes don't recognise a loss or death as a "real loss".

Early pregnancy loss is often misunderstood, as the loss of a baby prior to 20 weeks can be minimised, resulting in a lack of compassion and support from others, creating feelings of isolation and loneliness for those impacted. The grief accompanying this experience can be prolonged, especially when the emotional loss is not recognised and validated by others (e.g. family, friends and health professionals).

Creating new rituals such as acknowledging anniversaries of your baby's loss date or due date, participating in remembrance days, attending pregnancy loss events, or having a plaque/token at an early pregnancy loss memorial garden, can bring comfort, provide meaning and help you to begin to heal and live with the loss of your baby.



"Shared Stories, Coping After Loss and Self-Care."

Shared Stories

[Back to Contents](#)

Image Credit:
Joanna Kosinska



Seasons of Love

Poem - Author Unknown

As I sat here and thought of you, my baby today,
The sights and smells of summer were ebbing away.

I could hear the wind blowing softly through the trees,
Twisting and twirling a few falling leaves.

The shorter days arrival signaling summer's departure,
But I sit here still – immobile and broken-hearted.

Your birthday was due in Autumn's squally weather,
Silence from friends.. but we vow firmly to love you forever.

As always, Winter follows Autumn in the pattern of time,
No comfort from cozy fires, your smile's missing from mine.

Spring means new life and as the warmth seeps in,
I hear children in gardens, heartbreaking thoughts of you once again.

So many hopes and wishes we dreamt for you,
Now struggling to find something meaningful to do.

Time is again moving – I fear Summer, Christmas and all of the firsts,
Loving and missing you baby, it constantly hurts.

Another year over, Summer, Autumn, Winter and now Spring,
But buckets of guilt now that happiness sneaks in.

And as acceptance is reached, and as our lives move on,
We know in our hearts you will never be gone.

On a warm gently breeze, kisses we will be sending,
Our love holds you to us, through time never ending.





Image Credit:
Roman Craft

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Lynnel's Story

"Our miscarriage that took a piece of me with it that day."

My name is Lynnel. I was 36 years old when we lost Chloe just over four months ago, and this was our fourth pregnancy (our first child being our only IVF pregnancy and the other three were all naturally conceived).

What started off as a regular day on Thursday 25 January 2024, ended up being anything but that. Our first born was starting school that very next week on Tuesday 30 January, and I was so excited to watch her off on her first day. Daddy and Nanny were also going to take her, along with her two little brothers who are three and one and a half and we were expecting our fourth baby in July. I thought bubs was going to be a boy but I secretly hoped (having two little brothers already), that we could give her a little sister. She is very loving and very motherly especially with the youngest.

I decided to go to her primary school to collect her books and uniform that morning, so I put the baby in the pram and the other two walked to the school, so I could label these ready for school on the Tuesday, and I wasn't needing to rush to get it done.

I had a hospital check-up at 2pm with the doctor at the hospital and our adopted Grandma was to come to our place at 1.30pm and look after all three of the kids. I got to the hospital before my appointment, and because it was before a public holiday, there was an influx of women, their partners, even siblings waiting for their antenatal appointments.

I got called in about 2.30pm and the Doctor went over all three of my other pregnancies with the routine questions: what gestations

they were born, the bleeding history I had with two out of three, the preeclampsia which I had with two out of three, which both came on after 34 weeks. I was also on aspirin this time like every other time, my blood pressure for this pregnancy was already high which I thought was unusual, but I was on medication for it and having to monitor my numbers at home also.

The doctor took my blood pressure twice. I think it was and it was high so he said "I'm sorry but I'll have to send you upstairs to the maternity ward - if you have good readings three times over the space of an hour then it's okay for you to go home." My prior appointment there with one of the midwives, was to check in and just answer some routine questions (this was the Saturday morning before, and it was my first "official" antenatal appointment" for the pregnancy). The same thing was happening. I was in there for three hours, and they wanted me to stay but I felt okay, and also we had plans to take the eldest two kids out. I signed a waiver that I wanted to leave, and they said I could leave only on the provision that I had a follow-up appointment with the Doctor that week which I did. They upped my medications from three to four tablets and then I also did some bloods and a urine test for a preeclampsia baseline screening in case they needed the numbers down the track. So I knew the drill and I was fine with that.

The Doctor then said "I will just have a quick listen to bubs with the doppler", which he couldn't seem to find bubs heartbeat, I told him the placenta was also at the front of bubs and he said "That's okay. I'll go get the



sonography machine and have a look" and so he came back and had a look then and I saw the baby, didn't hear anything but it was in a funny position almost like just floating and I honestly thought nothing of it and that something had happened. I thought I'd had no signs of anything being wrong. He then said to me that he would bring in one of the senior Doctors to double check. I remember laying on the bed wondering what on earth was taking so long. Was he a new doctor and didn't he know what he was doing? Surely not, he seemed to be experienced.

The other Senior Doctor came in and he introduced him to me and said this is Dr... to which I responded that I'm sure you did my laparoscopy back in 2013, before I had my babies in (location). Of all of the people I could have got that day, he looked at the baby on the screen, spoke to the other Doctor and mentioned something to him about the baby and maybe the word elongated came up?

I am still not too sure what that meant and still even then I didn't think anything was wrong. He said "It's not good news - there is no heartbeat" and I was in total shock. Was I going to bleed out? Who do I call? How can I call my husband and tell him I've lost our baby? I bawled my eyes out for what seemed like half an hour. I just remembered thinking why didn't I know? I had no signs of it whatsoever. As far as I knew our baby was fine. I had three perfect scans we had three perfect children. How could this be happening? I was hoping that they got it wrong. The bedside manner of the Senior Doctor was just cold. I can't remember him really even saying I'm so sorry for your loss, but then again, I probably don't remember those things as our baby had died.

I asked if I could call my husband, my mum, or anyone so I wouldn't need to be alone. I didn't want to alarm my friend looking after our other three children, so I called my mum first and asked her to come to our place and have the children. She could tell from my voice and the tears there was something wrong. I told her that we had lost the baby and I would need hubby here with me. I called him and he was in shock. I remember apologising to him over and

over on the phone saying I'm so so sorry, and he said there was nothing you have done. He came as quick as he could. They ordered me another scan, which he accompanied me to and I hoped and prayed they got it wrong.

The sonographer was lovely and told us that it was confirmed that our baby had no heart-beat. We were sent upstairs where the Doctor Michael was, and he was so, so lovely and he told me I could have a Dilation and Curettage (D&C) and go under anaesthetic, but given I was second trimester and had birthed all three of my previous babies naturally, we opted to have an induced medicated labour. I was used to being induced anyhow, as I was with all my other three, due to high blood pressure with two, and the other my waters broke and it was safer to induce.

As it was a public holiday the next day, the Doctor wrote up the script and they called me the next day and I went into the hospital. I had a tablet called mifepristone, this was a quick process and then I returned home once I took it. The hospital was going to call me Sunday morning to come in.

The Saturday night I barely slept a wink, and even the Thursday and Friday night for that matter. Knowing that our baby's measurements when scanned only came back as being 12 weeks plus four days, and that baby had stopped growing and being deceased in utero for a few weeks, and I had no idea - still to this day this blows my mind.

On the Sunday we were called to come in at about 11.00am. I had some lunch and the first lot of prostaglandin was given to me, which brings on the contractions. It was a wait and see situation. They said I will have 6 hourly doses of the medications, so really I was hoping it wasn't going to be dragged out longer than it needed to be.

I didn't feel anything until about 4pm, and then I was wanting to go to the toilet and with that I had blood come, and labouring on the bed with two incredibly beautiful midwives who specialised in looking after women who had miscarried at various gestations. I could have had any pain relief I liked, but I told them I just



really wanted to make it as natural as it could have been for me, so no epidural just the gas, only Nurofen and Panadol for pain relief. Our beautiful Chloe was born at 4.43pm and I didn't see her right away. My husband cut the tiny chord and unfortunately I had a heavy bleed. I couldn't birth the placenta and they tried to get it out with a speculum to avoid theatre but they whisked me off to theatre, they removed the placenta as it came out in pieces and they did a D&C, and I had a 1.5 litre blood loss, which was my biggest fear.

The midwives took our little baby, and I didn't see her for the first time until after 8pm. I didn't know how I would handle seeing our baby knowing we wouldn't be taking her home like every other couple, but I just asked the midwives to guide me on what they thought. I'm glad I saw her. I'm glad I got to spend two nights with her next to me. The midwives and nurses were really exceptional. I needed three lots of antibiotics from theatre, a blood transfusion, an iron infusion and I just made it home in time to pick our daughter up from her first day at primary school.

I would say that I am coping at the moment on a weekly basis but I have really had only a few days here and there, where it has really hit home and I've had a good cry late at night or where I feel angry and ask why us?

Coping

Looking back now I feel I have come a long way in accepting that it happened and there was nothing I did wrong or could have done any differently. The whole experience has made me really slow down and appreciate what we do have, but also then it's hard to have that time too so that I can grieve, especially when others say things like you have three other children. But nothing will take away from still feeling empty and losing that fourth child. I knew from early on that I wanted and would need counselling and a community around me, that really understood the grief associated with baby loss, others that have lived experiences themselves. I knew it was important for both myself, my husband and our three children to make sure that the grief didn't consume me.

Support Resources

The resources I received from the hospital were both pamphlets about Red Nose and also Bears of Hope. The reason I heard about Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS) was through a really close friend of mine, who works as the State MP for Carrum, Sonya Kilkenny MP. She told me about MISS and gave me the MISS website details, so I decided to have a look at the website and thought it would be a good idea to order a care package bag for myself. I have used the pen and notepad, putting in things that I found useful, relevant and relatable to myself on the Pink Elephants Instagram page, poems relating to Miscarriage and even books that I have heard others reference to.

I have my infinity necklace hanging on the side of Chloe's "In loving memory certificate" that I have framed to know that we are forever bound to one another. I have planted my seedlings with our three children and used the tissues, and also worn my yellow miscarriage awareness pin on three separate occasions. One was for our sons Mother's Day morning tea at kinder, on National Miscarriage Awareness Day, and also the week after on the Saturday for the Bears of Hope Morning Tea for bereaved parents.

Self-Care

I have been journaling. I also have a diary that has Chloe's name on it that a friend gifted to me that I sometimes write to her in. I go to the gym and do classes such as yoga, Pilates, Zumba and body pump. I do meditation (I find it works better for me at night and helps me drift off to sleep), walking and being out in nature and I've also found that connecting with others to share our thoughts and feelings has really helped. I sometimes have a bath, do a body scrub, put on some nice moisturiser, have a pedicure, read a book, watch some Netflix or whatever will relax me on the given day.



What has helped you the most?

What has really helped is having the counselling there when I need it (be it an online chat, a peer support call with Pink Elephants, a Red Nose or Bears of Hope online zoom grief support chat and connecting with others in the bereaved community). Also helping others in their grief, and also organising some MISS care package bags for them to feel a little less alone. We also gifted a bear from Bears of Hope to a friend of mine from high school, who lost her little girl three months prior to Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR), and we also gifted another bear in Chloe's honour to someone in a similar situation which has really given me comfort. Hugs from my husband when I think he can tell on days I may be struggling with no words needed, and also a hug from the senior midwife on the day of our loss at the hospital, which I never knew I needed, have provided me with great comfort.

Experience in the healthcare system

I feel the Hospital Doctors in the clinic weren't so empathetic (especially the Senior Doctor who was called into my outpatient appointment for a second opinion on the scan). I remember just sobbing there with my head in my hands for what felt like ages, and I can't even remember if I got "I'm so sorry for your loss". The majority of the midwives that looked after me were very supportive and were trained in that area (fortunately and unfortunately), they were attentive and made me feel like I was cared for and did all they could to make the best they could from a really sad situation.

They took photos of Chloe for me on my phone, they dressed her up for me and tried to put the little hat and beanie on her. They let me listen to music on their phone during my induced labour, tried their best to get hand and foot prints of her, checked in on me and my husband, gave me the most beautiful sunset room in the hospital. They explained on the day that we found out there was no heart-beat, what the procedure would entail with the medication I had to take (that Doctor was love-

ly). Once I had her, they gave me a box with some little booties and a hat, a little handmade teddy (which was the same size and weight almost as Chloe) from the Treasured Babies program, and some pamphlets on where to find help (Sands and Bears of Hope). They also had a social worker come in and see hubby and myself. The midwife sent off some referrals for counselling services and also was able to give me a list of affordable places to call, to organise a cremation. They took blood tests for me, sent off both the cord and the placenta, and found out the gender of our baby. We didn't want to know until we had our missed miscarriage, as we wanted to give our child a name which was important for all of our immediate family. Before being discharged, I was given a letter which had a time and date for 12 weeks' time for an Outpatient Appointment with the Loss Clinic to see if they could find an answer as to why.

This appointment was triggering for me as the female Doctor who was in the room when I arrived, was sporting a baby bump and this was the first thing I noticed. As I like to ask questions, I asked was this her first and she said no her fourth, and she was due within like a day of what we would have been. I just thought this could have been better handled by the hospital with putting a pregnant doctor in, on that appointment that had been booked for 12 weeks knowing we had only recently lost our child. I complained only to get back that we never meant to upset you, we had your best interests at heart as she was the best one suited to that appointment given her qualifications.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

What I think could better support healthcare outcomes following miscarriage, is that that the same level of care should be offered to all women when they experience a miscarriage regardless of their baby's gestation. I think that brochures need to be given out with what support groups are available, referrals sent off for some counselling through Red Nose or the hospital at the first point of knowing that the



women could be or is experiencing an early loss, but not after the trauma or the D&C if it can be helped (obviously some cases you won't be able to predict that). Even a follow-up call from the hospital checking-in and maybe too if birthing a child who is going to be born sleeping, that it is separate to the maternity ward if possible as it can be so very triggering, seeing people have a healthy live baby knowing yours will never cry.

Also, I feel like doctors delivering the news need some better training on bedside manner and empathy. A child no matter what gestation it is, that you have your loss is referred to as a baby not as a product of conception or tissue. I definitely think that bereavement leave is incredibly important for your husband/wife/partner to take also as they also have lost a child as well. Reading stories about early losses, I really feel for those women who to go emergency and go into their miscarriage alone and are left waiting and bleeding and are just told to wait it out and go home, and let their baby pass naturally. How women feel it's taboo and almost like they need to get on with it, we need to feel supported, validated and heard.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day
I attended for the first time this year the National Miscarriage Awareness Day event through MISS at Bunurong Memorial Park, and whilst I was really nervous attending on my own I was glad I did. We have three living children and I'm glad that this is a day that is recognised separate to Mother's Day. The event felt really powerful and uplifting to have all the MP's advocating to make sure that miscarriage is now being recognised in both Federal and State Parliaments. I think I will now continue to mark this occasion yearly, and connect with others and share our stories, even if we are lucky enough to achieve our double rainbow. It made actual Mother's Day more bearable knowing I could recognise the two separately.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

With the area that has been designed for people who have lost a child through miscarriage, I think that having the Memorial Gar-

den at Bunurong Memorial Park is a beautiful thing, because it really does give acknowledgement and validation to our loss, and depending on the cost, it will also be a possible option to purchase one plaque/token for Chloe where our children can go and remember their sister. Also my Mother-in-law is buried at the same cemetery. The space really is beautiful and has really been thought about when creating it with the symbolic heart.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

I feel the positives that have come out of this situation is that we have been able to give back in some way by purchasing two bears from Bears of Hope, and have also donated some of my wedding dress to the Treasured Babies program through Red Nose for their Angel Boxes. I have found that there is power and validation in sharing with others, and also feel I am lucky to have gotten to see Chloe, to have held her, to have played some songs to her in the hospital, to have her on my bed with me whilst I read my very first book on miscarriage, that I got to spend two days with her. I never want her to be forgotten and she never will be.

Advice to others

Advice I would give to others going through a miscarriage or early loss is please, please, please if you need to reach out for support in whatever way works for you please do it and don't be afraid to seek the help, or think that it makes you less of a person. The same if your partner is struggling too and wants the help, it is there for them too. Everyone grieves differently and that's okay, but just the same as it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes a strong support network to navigate your way through losing a child. There is help there whether it is face to face counselling, through zoom, support groups online and even grief hotlines for bereaved parents. Take each day as it comes. Sometimes in the early stages it's a minute, an hour or a day at a time. You are forever changed. Feel however you are feeling and know that is perfectly okay. Where there is deep grief, there is an enormous amount of love for your child.



Anything else to share?

We will never get over the loss of our daughter Chloe, because it's not just the child who has died - it is the hopes, the dreams, the milestones, the celebrations, the firsts, the family you were anticipating. But we need to look to the future and move forward, and not see it as us moving on. Chloe will always be our daughter and the little sister in the family, and her memory will always live on in both our family and in all of our hearts. It's been the most difficult and excruciating time in all my life since becoming a Mum, and a moment we wouldn't wish upon anyone.



[Back to Contents](#)

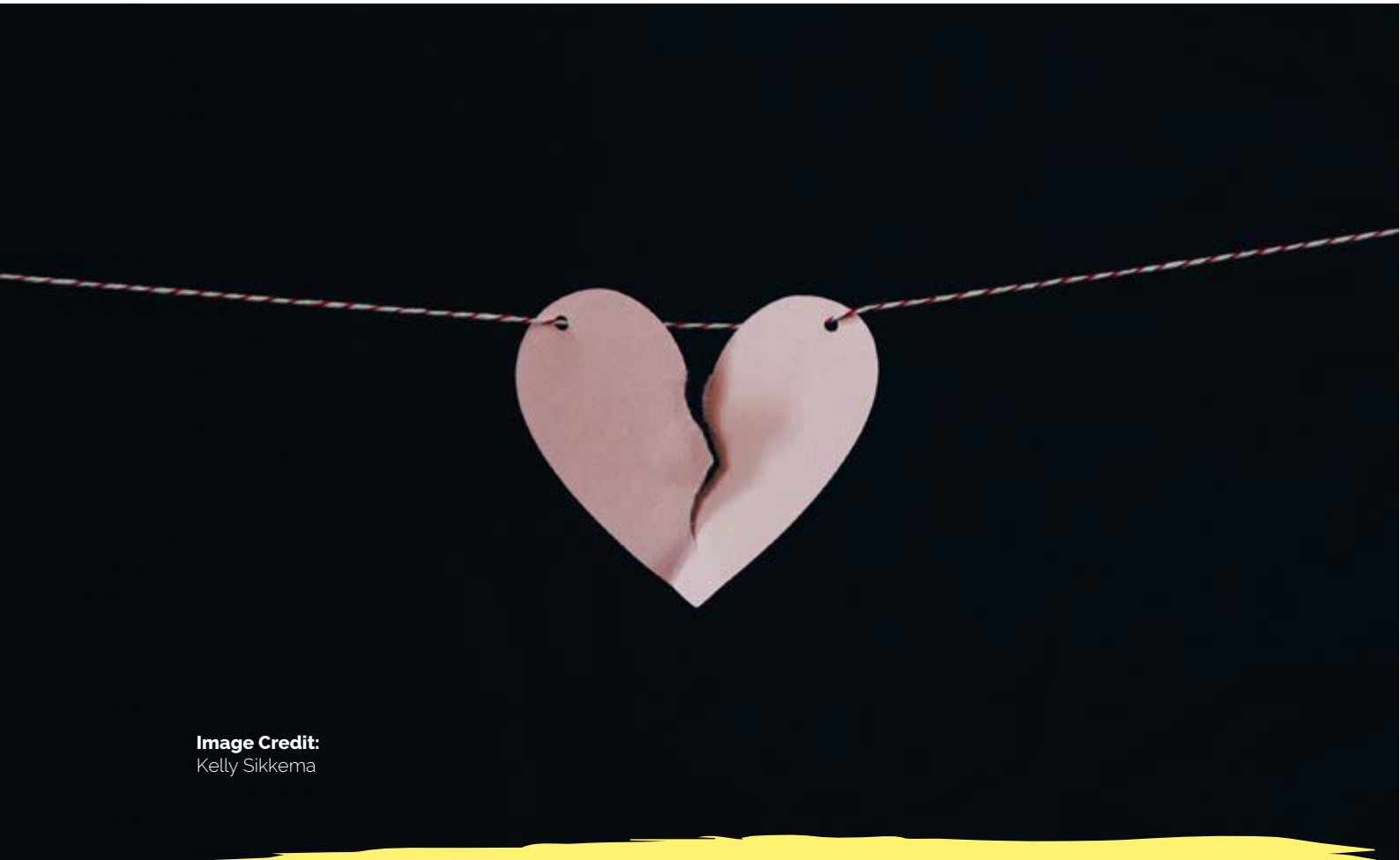


Image Credit:
Kelly Sikkema



Butterfly Babe

By Shez Cain

"Written with love from the deep well of my heart".

Tiny wings flutter deep within your heart,
the beating of your life that soon may start.
Your life cocoons, softly nurtured and growing,
we caress and capture this precious unfolding.

Yet you, my sweet butterfly flew skyward, too soon,
Lifting up to the sky like a floating balloon.
A part of our heart has left with your wings,
Exquisite dreams of a future life gone...and it stings.

It pinch-stopped your heart, double-beat became one,
and then, you so quietly flew to the sun
Yet, oddly, it seems, that you never did leave.
For we mourn and we love you and forever grieve.

Each time a bright butterfly flits softly nearby,
May I feel it's your presence, like a cloud in the sky.
A cloud that appears, hope of rain for dry land,
When it breaks, sprinkling raindrops that bring green to red sand.

So hard to express, but perhaps it is you?
You're a spirit who loves me, and I love you back, too.
We always remember what we never forget,
Your life is so precious, never caught in a net.

Our love for you then carries through to this day,
As free as the butterflies who flutter and play.
Little Butterfly Babe, share my love, hold my soul,
May you keep me uplifted every day, 'til I'm old.

I thank you for sharing a short time and space,
for your invisible love we so warmly embrace.

Be free my butterfly.
Take my love.
Fly softly in the light sky,





Image Credit:
Birger Strahl

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Cryssie's Story

My name is Cryssie. I was 39 at the time of my loss, just over four and a half months ago.

As a solo mum by choice, I embarked on my IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) journey in 2022 to start a family using a sperm donor. Over five rounds of IVF, I produced 14 beautiful embryos. During every round of IVF, I would sing to my eggs-in-waiting, and also to settle my own anxieties surrounding my egg collections. I would sing the 80's ballad 'Waiting for a Star to Fall' by Boy Meets Girl. I knew that would become my children's lullaby.

Only one single embryo came back as genetically healthy. That embryo was likely my only chance to have a biological child. That embryo was transferred back into my body in November 2023, and a couple of days later, I just 'knew' that I was pregnant, I didn't need a test! I felt a little spirit attach itself to mine and knew I wasn't alone. I also 'knew' he was a boy, straight away. His name is Phoenix Caspian, because he rose from the ashes.

Unlike my egg collections, I felt very little anxiety during pregnancy - only absolute elation for my growing child. I had waited so very long to have the chance to be a mother, and my body had worked so hard. I finally had my child growing within me! I rubbed my belly constantly, spoke to my son all the time, I sang to him so much to make sure he always knew my voice. I sang our song, 'Waiting for a Star to Fall', every day. My favourite thing to do when I woke up was to wish him a 'Good Morning'. Who needs coffee to energise you when you're growing a human! He was the best part of my day, and my greatest achievement. All he ever knew was love.

I went into my dating scan at 7 weeks and saw his tiny heart flickering on the screen. I had to stop myself from crying, because the sonographer couldn't get an image with my uterus jumping around through my tears! I was absolutely in awe that my body now had two heartbeats. I was overcome with so many emotions, and I was also very aware of how quickly my pregnancy was progressing. I had my due date - 1st August 2024. My son would be a Leo. I always knew he would be feisty and bold, because that's how his embryo developed too. He was ready and frozen a whole day before any of his embryo siblings. It's as though he was yelling out 'I'M HERE MUMMY!'. I knew I would have my hands full, but I was ready! Well, I wasn't ready at all, but I was ready to not be ready!

I imagined our future laid out in front of us. I couldn't wait to see his face, and have his tiny hand gripping my finger. What colour eyes would he have? What would his giggles sound like? I couldn't wait to make him laugh, and for him to be a hilarious dork like his Mummy. He had limitless talent running thick through both of his bloodlines, and I couldn't wait to harness those talents. Would he be an amazing artist? A master in the kitchen? A creative writer? Would he be an incredible guitarist? Even if he could barely play the triangle, I couldn't wait to be front row at every concert. I imagined my son running barefoot with his little toddler feet slapping on the wooden floorboards, as I chased him around the house. He and I wearing matching denim dungarees. A little older, on a Mummy-Son date. Me sipping a coffee to stay alive, and Phoenix with his too-long fringe and an upper lip lined with hot chocolate. Wearing matching



double denim, back -to-back and crossing our arms with sass for a photoshoot. A lifetime in a heartbeat.

I walked into my 13w ultrasound, so excited to see him wiggling and maybe even sucking his thumb.

But he was so still.
Smaller than he should have been.
And his tiny heart wasn't flickering anymore.

I'll never forget the silence in the room...
It was then that I knew, but held my breath anyway as though my breathlessness would give my baby life again.
And then those words that will ring in my memory forever...
'I'm sorry'

My world was shattered in an (absent) heartbeat. I was trying desperately to think straight, but it was as though my thoughts became liquid, slipping through my brain, intangible. I had no idea where to turn. My body had been clinging onto my son for dear life, although his tiny strong heart had stopped beating four weeks earlier. I knew when his little spirit had attached onto mine, but I was so blindsided and confused because I never felt his little spirit leave. At my gestation, a Dilatation and Curettage (D&C) was my only option - which I gladly accepted. I wanted to remember Phoenix as I had always imagined him in my mind. We were robbed of a physical lifetime together, but now our love transcends the Universe.

Coping

Being a Solo Mum By Choice with a very small family, I was very aware that I needed immediate external emotional support. First, I called SANDS and spoke to someone late at night, trying to process any of my emotions. I joined the Pink Elephants Miscarriage Support Facebook page to try to talk my feelings out to a community of mothers who really understood. I have been accessing counselling through Bears of Hope and through Red Nose. I attend the Bears of Hope and Red Nose monthly groups as often as I can. I have called

Red Nose late at night, when I was having a panic attack and felt that I was unable to cope. The person on the other end of the line stayed with me until I could string a sentence together. I am forever grateful for an on-call service that will help any time of the day or night. And I have attended the "Say Their Name" ceremony, also run by Red Nose.

I attend a lot of events and groups to feel connected to others who are also experiencing loss. Every time I speak and connect, it allows me to not only share Phoenix's beautiful life, but allows me to process my emotions in safe spaces. It's important to allow myself to grieve and feel every emotion, because bottling it up or burying it is not a healthy option, and can also lead to dissociation. Because of how much I speak and allow myself to feel (no matter how painful), the intensity of the initial shock and those early feelings has lessened significantly. I have just begun to settle into the reality that these feelings will always be with me, and with that brings a sense of (almost) acceptance. This doesn't ever mean that I will 'get over' my beautiful son, rather it means that the memory of him is weaved into everything that I do, and every decision I make. It's as though he gives me strength, and I feel invincible with Phoenix by my side. I do everything in his honour. We are a team now, and he can never be taken from me ever again. His memory is settling into my bones. How precious it is to hold my son in my heart and soul forever!

Support Resources

I received absolutely zero resources and basically zero information on support services through my hospital. I received a MISS care package at the International Bereaved Mother's Day service run by MISS at Bunurong Memorial Park. I opened it and found it so thoughtful and well curated. There were appropriate leads to support services, tissues, an Infinity necklace, a lemon yellow ribbon pin to commemorate miscarriage....it was like receiving a hug from someone who understands and wants to help. I appreciated it so much, but I would have loved to have been handed something like this, months prior when leaving the hospital without my baby.



Self-Care

I took 5 weeks off work after my D&C. I allowed myself to be isolated and to have a head start on my grieving and healing journey. All I did for those first few days was cry and cry, but I made sure that I showered each day. I tried not to let the dishes or the laundry pile up. Going grocery shopping was hard because I had to leave the house, but if I included treats in my shopping then it gave me motivation to go.

I have been going on beach walks, to feel the ocean breeze on my skin and to let the waves take my sadness out to sea. I have been journaling a lot to make sense of my own emotions. I kiss Phoenix's urn most mornings/nights. When I don't kiss his urn I try not to feel bad - I feel his spirit around me all the time and I talk to him often. When I hear 'Waiting for a Star To Fall', I know that's Phoenix singing back to me. There are many songs that remind me of him, and I like to belt them out at the top of my lungs and let the tears flow. I like to light a candle for him. One of the first friends I told that I was pregnant (Phoenix's favourite Aunty) gifted me a plush Phoenix that I can cuddle.

I was accepted into a six-week bereavement support program through Pink Elephants, which gave me an incredible 'toolbox' of coping strategies and ways to notice my emotions and embrace them and process them rather than fight them.

I have an incredible GP that supports me every step of the way, and sometimes we just talk without an agenda. I have an amazing acupuncturist who helped me move major trauma through my body at the beginning, and has prescribed me with Chinese Herbs to help me through the postpartum stage. And although I have now returned to work, I have dropped one day per week and I use that as a mental health day.

What has helped you the most?

Taking as much time as financially possible to process my emotions properly, instead of just putting my head in the sand and continuing with a broken spirit, and pretending like my pregnancy and my trauma never happened. Being kind to myself is the best investment I can ever make for my wellbeing. As Phoenix's mother, I owe it to my beautiful boy to be the best version of myself.

I educate my friends and my workplace what language is appropriate when discussing my pregnancy and loss. I established boundaries very early on about what is acceptable. I refer to my son by name all the time, so everyone knows that he is a person and that's how he is to be treated in discussion. I remove people from my life that try to diminish my own grief or Phoenix's life. My job as Phoenix's mother is to protect his memory, at all costs.

Experience in the healthcare system

After I left the sonographer's rooms, I called my GP, but she was away on leave. Out of desperation, I called the hospital that I was due to give birth at. They told me to present to the emergency department where a gynaecological team was waiting for me. The next four hours were new torture, waiting while women turned up with their babies while I held my lifeless baby in my body and cried and cried and cried. Having to explain to the admissions nurse that I was pregnant, but I wasn't, and the confusion that I felt while trying to articulate my situation was just breaking my heart over and over and over again. I fell asleep from exhaustion and then awoke again to a fresh wave of flash hot tears, like a nightmare I could never awaken from. Once the hospital had received my ultrasound report, I was eventually called into a small room at the end of the corridor. The nurse discussed my 'options' with me, but because my sac was measuring 13 weeks, there was only one option. I was booked into Day Surgery for a D&C the next morning. I asked the nurse if I could have my Phoenix's remains returned to me for cremation. I was told - point blank - that this was not an option. The thought of him being discarded like he was nothing was extremely



upsetting and I voiced strongly again that I would like my child back, but I was again told that his remains would not be returned to me. I was losing my baby and also losing the right to lay my child to rest with dignity.

The next day when I presented to Day Surgery for my D&C, I was once again insistent that I wanted Phoenix's remains returned to me. A wonderful nurse told me that his remains would be sent to be analysed by the Histopathology department (with my consent), and then he would be returned to me. The nurses who looked after me during my D&C were amazing. All of them were so kind and so compassionate, and I felt very cared for and supported before and during my surgery. A wonderful person named Beth met me as soon as I entered Theatre - she watched me stop dead in my tracks and begin to cry as my knees buckled - but she swooped in and told me that she was a support worker (I think) and that she was there for me. The nurses held my hands as I went to sleep.

When I woke up, I felt as though people were looking out for me, but not really looking after me. The level of support I was given once Phoenix had left my body was barely existing - as was I. I was whisked out of my bed very quickly and into the seated recovery area. I'm not sure if this was to protect me from other surgeries of a sensitive maternal nature coming after me that may have upset me, or if that was standard procedure. I was in recovery for a couple of hours with hardly anyone talking to me - I was pretty much left alone and I felt abandoned. I would have appreciated a post-procedure visit from a social worker or pastoral services or even a midwife to sit and talk to me for a little while, to help me understand the changes in my body, to give me some information on support services, and what to expect when leaving the hospital. All I was ever told was 'don't put anything in your vagina for 4 weeks' and 'if you fill a pad with blood every hour, come back to emergency'. It was weeks before anyone told me that a miscarriage still brings post-partum changes, physically and emotionally. I was completely unprepared and uninformed.

I remember asking my discharge nurse if there were any brochures to link me to grief support services. She told me that she didn't have any, but that she used to work at a different hospital and she would print me that hospital's support sheets. I was grateful for a starting point, but I was baffled as to how my own maternity hospital had nothing to give me. I realise that I went through Day Surgery, but I was still a maternity patient, I still left the hospital without my baby, and there was just no support for me upon discharge. In the depths of my grief and extremely lost, I shouldn't have had to turn to Google to research where to seek help. There is a massive gap between Day Surgery and a Maternity Ward, because somehow myself and my baby were classified differently? It hurts to know that Phoenix wasn't considered to be a baby - simply 'products of conception' - because he passed in my first trimester. I had massive hopes and dreams for my son and the life I had planned for us was ripped away. When the junior doctor I spoke to began using the terminology 'products of conception' and then stopped and asked me what language I would prefer her to use, I will never forget how that made me feel. I smiled for the first time, and said 'My son's name is Phoenix'. Finally, someone cared to ask me!

Two days after I had returned home, I received a text message with a date for my first maternal appointment. I had waited in earnest for this appointment my entire pregnancy, and to suddenly have that message was extremely triggering. Instead of the hospital simply correlating my health records and seeing that my pregnancy had ended, I was faced with calling the hospital, in tears, explaining why I didn't need the appointment anymore. And then I wasn't even given condolences for losing my son - I was given an attitude of 'these things happen' and the conversation (or lack thereof) was over. When my whole world was torn apart.



Phoenix will always continue to be so very loved, and cherished, and no mother should have to fight to have her child recognised as 'viable'. I think medical staff really need to step outside of their scientific training and use far more compassionate language towards all pregnancy losses. Following on from that, they particularly need to 'read the room' and be led by each individual parents' needs. If we are using our child's name when discussing our pregnancy, then our child's name should be used by medical staff. If the pregnancy was so early that a name was not chosen, perhaps a discussion should be opened to give that option - either by medical staff or a social worker - to help parents understand ways to honour their babies and begin the grieving process. Abandonment doesn't provide these options.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

I never knew this existed until Lynnel (Chloe's Mum) shared the event with me through social media. I found the event to be very cathartic, with many speakers who are campaigning for change within Parliament. There was a beautiful poem and a song performed about miscarriage and there wasn't a dry eye in the house. It was wonderful to be in a room full of people who really understood. Safe spaces are so important after experiencing miscarriage, and a day to honour Phoenix and honour myself as a mother is so powerful!

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

This would mean the world! Since Phoenix was cremated, I don't currently have a 'place' to go to honour him. I'm trying to start a small garden for him at my house, but it's taking longer than expected. It would be so lovely to have another place to reflect on my own loss and the loss of so many. My Mum has had a few losses herself, and it would be healing for her to have somewhere to go to honour all of her children. The memorial would also bring awareness to those who have not experienced loss. It would help them to see that babies who are miscarried are not to be 'forgotten', rather they are to be cherished and remembered, always.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

Phoenix finally made me a Mummy, and that is the greatest gift I have ever received! I have connected with so many families which is wonderful. We are the best people united in the worst way. I am part of a 'Loss Mumma Tribe' and we chat every day. Our babies play together in the stars instead of at our feet, but we are incredible mothers and we honour our babies so beautifully. We all met through Bears of Hope and Red Nose groups

Advice to others

Seek help! Seek all the help you can get. Too much is literally never enough. Talk, keep talking, and talk some more. I promise you that it helps, even when you think it doesn't. And never look at the giant mountain of grief ahead of you. Only ever look back at how far you've come, even if that's hour by hour. With proper help, your layers of strength will return.

Phoenix left my physical body and was interred back to spirit in January 2024, and I am amazed at how far I have come in a few short months, even though I'm looking behind me through tears.

xxxx

[Back to Contents](#)



Angel Child

Reading - By Shez Cain

**"From my heart to yours.
Created for love for MISS....
as we honour the small souls now
dancing in the sky – because
hearts are never isolated."**

May 2020

Hello, My Angel Child...Thank you for being here.

You came to me from a place of love.
You created such cherished happiness in my soul. I love that about you. I always will. Even though you are gone from this physical reality, we can still touch you, just as you touch us. Yes --- "hello" to you in here, in our hearts, as you are just a handspan away from our fingertips. We are with you.

Your softly floating soul blows soothing puffs of tingly air gently against my eyelashes each time I blink. You are that close to me. You never left. I feel you with every breath, feel you as I reach my hand upward to touch the clouds. Even when my thoughts may be someplace else, I know that you are there, you are there. You always will be. Thank you.

You altered my history. And now my future. And I am grateful for it. No, you didn't make it into this crazy world, not in the traditional way, not past the spirit-place that kept you as an Angel because you were simply too beautiful for earth. And so I never got that moment where you lay on my tummy, or that visceral preciousness we parents ever-cherish in the warm touch of your skin against ours. We didn't softly kiss your forehead, or smelt that yummy smell of you, or learn your favourite

snuggly way of being held. You never even reached the scales. And so, we never had the splendid sleepless nights, cuddled and soothed you as your tiny teeth poked their way through your gummy gums, film your first steps, see you smile as we beamed back, or to boast about the colour of your eyes. We didn't even see them. We never had the chance to say hello. Nor the chance to say goodbye. It was all too swift and incomprehensible. And too hard to explain out loud how the blood just stopped in our veins on the day you left. To explain of the impact made in your short time.

I wonder about these things, as today, in this strange time in history, I leave my place of Splendid Isolation to be with just you. Connected by internet magic and by a rare connection to others who share with me their loss, their grief. ... But you? You, and every Angel-Child that were lost before that Hello and also before that Goodbye... are you are dancing together? You must be. For you create the magic. The magic of wonder. I wonder what my world would be today with you. I wonder what you would be today within my world.

This may be a historical moment in time. But you were the historical moment that created my history. You were my tiny dream, my speck of brightness. I will keep you little light shining bright as you keep a little sparkle in my eyes as I remember you with sadness, but with a difficult to understand happiness of all that you might have been. And of all that you are.

You are remembered, my Angel-Child with love. Keep touching my eyelashes with your soft breath. I will cherish every tingly, tiny, magical puff. Dance on.





Image Credit:
Todd Kent

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Jazz and Phil's Story

"We are a couple who are both nurses, and we were so happy when we found out that we were pregnant - the happiness even doubled when we found out we were having twins."

Hi. My name is Jazz and I have a partner named Philip. I am 34 years old and Phil is 37 years old.

It was 29 February 2024 and we were so blessed to find out that I am pregnant. On 19 March 2024, we had our first ultrasound at 5 weeks and everything is normal. They saw two gestational sacs and yolk sacs, there is no foetal pole at that time, presumably due to the early gestation.

Then I got some minimal spotting on and off, until it got worse for almost two weeks. So we decided to call, and they told us everything is normal, just normal spotting. The next day my spotting gets heavier, but I have no pain at all. On 3 April 2024, we went straight to Emergency at 12 midnight, and again they told us it's all normal spotting, and there is nothing to worry about. But I knew deep inside that there was something wrong. And I told them it was getting worse, and I had some small clots.

We waited for four hours to get my bloods done. I told them that I was feeling dizzy. It was then 7am in the morning, and we were still waiting for any updates for any Doctor to see

me, or any plans for me. It had been 7 hours of waiting. I asked one of the staff what was happening? They told us that they were waiting for the Early Pregnancy Service team to see me at 9am. Still waiting.

At 8:30am, a staff member spoke to us, and delivered us the most devastating news of my life, that my HCG blood level had gone from 30,800 to 500. I don't know how I felt. That we had waited for so long just to hear that sad news. It had been a long night, we were exhausted, with so many tears. They could have just told us to come back later, or have a sleep, or have a rest and come back in the morning to see the Early Pregnancy Service team.

We waited for more time for my ultrasound, for a confirmatory test that I had miscarriage. One of the staff offered us a bed while waiting for my ultrasound, so that we could have a rest, because it had been a very long night for us. At around 3:30pm, my confirmatory ultrasound happened – this was 15 hours of waiting, with no sleep, and no proper food. It was the most heartbreaking event so far in my life, that at 8 weeks, they can still see a clear vision of my twins. I agreed to do an internal ultrasound, and there were still 2 gestational sacs and 2 yolk sacs with no foetal pole, and I was still constantly bleeding. It has been a really a difficult time for us. I know there is always a reason for everything, and our faith to the Lord is our strength.



I wish that our experience would not happen to any pregnant woman. Our experience adds more sadness, in the loss of our twins.

Coping

It was really hard during the first few days/weeks, but with the help of God, loving people around us, thinking that our twins are now our guardian angels, comforting us throughout the process.

Support Resources

MISS care package bag- we put the necklace on our twins photo.
Devotional books, Bible, inspirational music and videos.

Self-Care

Prayers, we encouraged each other especially when someone feels really down (me and Phil).

What has helped you the most?

Our Faith with God, Our Family and Friends.

Experience in the healthcare system
Our negative experienced were in the Emergency Department – detailed above.
Our Positive experience was our post miscarriage support with the Early Pregnancy Service clinic, as they helped us until the termination of pregnancy.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

For the health care team who are directly treating a pregnant patient, to have more empathy and to show more concern, especially when there's even the slightest signs/symptoms of miscarriage.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

That miscarriage happens more commonly than people know, and going through it is one of the most, if not the most painful experience, one person or a couple can experience.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

This will give the ones who have had miscarriages, a special place to remember their beautiful angel babies.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

Yes. As a couple we have become closer and stronger, and learnt to lean on each other more. Our relationship in God has become deeper knowing that despite of everything, we know that his love for us is abounding.

Advice to others

It's difficult, but accept that there is a reason why it happened, and hope that something better is always ahead prepared by God, let go and let God.



[Back to Contents](#)



To My Angel Child in the Milky Way

Reading - By Shez Cain

Do you have any idea? Do you have any clue?
I mean, truly...the beginning of your beginnings
was the start of something more incredible
than humanly imaginable! The moment your
heart began beating within me, I was your
mother, we were your parents. Filled with
excitement. Hope. Love. Joy!
Creating a future right then! You electrically
cemented our quivering-with-excitement souls
with your own brand of bonding-gunky-Love-
Glue, and we say thank you, our Angel Child.

I was your mother then, and I still am. Nothing
can ever change that. We share a love story
brighter than the milky-way. Stronger than
the pull of the ocean. And more tearful than
watching Beaches a hundred times over.
For your physical time on our planet was
intense, overwhelming, and then, it was over
before it could begin – but over --- in only a
physical way.

For your presence within my spirit continues
to beat within me each moment of every
day. Whenever I hear a baby cry, you're there.
When I see a toddler in a shopping trolley, it's
you. Or when soppy tv ads for pointless
products tear at my heartstrings, you rush to
me holding your hand across my heart to keep
me steady and my breathing even.

And you've stopped my speech. For at times,
I can't speak of You. I can only think and feel,
and be the Me-For-You that I have always
dreamt of. Because I think I'm supposed to
stay silent about You, as it seems. who can
understand what it is that I feel each day? And
because, after You left us to fly across our
private sky, You could only ever be a dream in
a soft cloud. A dream that I cherish.
And I dream of Your future each day.

Only another Lost Mum like me could
understand how you, my Angel-Child,
You and Your Future is now a dream that has
left a never ending what-could-be-black-hole
within my soul. Yet it isn't empty, nor even
black. For it is brilliantly filled with shining stars
that twinkle with their own personality, just as
you would have. You give me love - deep and
eternal. I thank you for the gift of you.
(I know you're listening!!)

Know that I love you. You taught me that love
is forever. For me. And for you. We were
written in the stars. You shine in my daytime,
glow in my moonbeams, and gleam through
the nights.

I am your Lost Mum – thank you for finding me.

Goodnight, Sweet Angel-Child. Dream gently.





Image Credit:
Natalie Granger

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Alanna's Story

Hi, my name is Alanna. My partner, Angus, and I met when we were 21 and always dreamed of having a family. We began trying when Angus turned 30. I remember having my last drink at his birthday party, filled with excitement for what was to come.

About three months into trying, I peed on a stick and saw two lines! We were over the moon, spending the next few days privately planning how to share the news, figuring out our due date, and getting lost in the dream of becoming a family. But soon after, my period arrived.

Coping

I was confused and heartbroken. It happened so quickly that I also felt guilty about my grief. I was only about six weeks pregnant, so how dare I feel upset about a fleeting few weeks when some women experience miscarriage months into their pregnancy? I was 28 years old. I found myself telling close family and friends but then reassuring them I was fine. I'd say it was good because it meant pregnancy was possible for us, or I'd repeat my doctor's words: "You wouldn't have wanted this baby anyway." But deep down, I was scared. I wondered if being a Mum would be possible for me, if my body could carry a baby, and who that little life might have been.

Support Resources

It has been 3 years since our chemical pregnancy. I didn't receive support afterwards but I wish I did. I think the acknowledgement of your personal experience is so helpful in the healing process.

Self-Care:

Meditation, yoga, walking with my partner. These three things kept me strong and really looking after my mind!

What has helped you the most?

Never losing hope. After 2 years of trying, and many failed fertility treatments later we had our little miracle baby girl Gwen. During that two-year period the longing for a child weighed heavy on my heart every - single - day. But I never lost hope, I kept my vision of my baby in my mind always and held on to that vision. Now when I hold my little girl, I feel an incredible amount of gratitude.

Experience in the healthcare system

I was most likely too early on to receive extra support.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

We need to talk about it more! The less alone you feel, the more empowered you become which makes room to keep trying - and to heal from your loss.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

National Miscarriage Awareness Day is a day to remember you are not alone. Miscarriage touches many of us, and it's vital to honour the life you once held within you.





Image Credit:
Sage Friedman

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

I think this is so special, and gives parents a place to visit and remember their babies. Grief can hide in the corner of our hearts and a garden like this is a beautiful shared space to support your healing.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

Through our conception journey, I discovered a deeper version of myself, undergoing profound healing and personal development. I truly believe that without this experience, I wouldn't be the Mama I am today. The joy Gwen has brought into our lives is beyond words, and not a day goes by that I take her for granted.

Advice to others

Grieve. Let yourself grieve. You don't have to "be ok" immediately, you don't need to pretend you're not hurting. Lean into the hurt, and let it out with someone who can really hold space for you.

Anything else to share?

I'm sure many women reaching out for support are also wondering how I came to have my baby girl. After trying nearly everything before IVF, we were diagnosed with "unknown infertility." This lack of answers made me question whether a solution could ever be found. Eventually, we discovered I have accelerated NK cells (natural killer cells). Essentially, my body was attacking the sperm before fertilization could occur. This discovery changed our journey. Armed with this knowledge, we took extra medications and I became pregnant on our first round of IVF.

I encourage anyone in a similar situation to investigate this possibility.

[Back to Contents](#)



Shelley's Story

My name is Shelley and here is a little glimpse into my story.

For years, my partner and I tried to conceive naturally, but our journey to parenthood wasn't straightforward. After many attempts, we turned to IVF, and our dreams came true when we welcomed our first child into the world. I believed our struggle was solely about getting pregnant, as I had never experienced a miscarriage before.

However, our path took a heartbreaking turn after our first birth. I began to experience multiple early losses, a reality I was unprepared for. Later, I faced two particularly devastating miscarriages, one at 10 weeks and another at 11 weeks. I was 31 – 33 years of age when I experienced these miscarriages. These experiences were the most challenging I had ever encountered.

During these pregnancies, I had to attend frequent appointments to monitor our babies' heartbeats. We were told they were not growing adequately and that these pregnancies would not be viable. The anguish of waiting for the heartbeats to stop, knowing what was coming but having to witness it repeatedly, was beyond words.

Through this pain, I discovered a resilience I never knew I had, and a determination to keep pushing and trying, and our determination paid off – today, we are blessed with three children through IVF.

I understand how fortunate we are, knowing that not everyone who faces these challenges is able to have children. To anyone going through a similar heartache, please remember you are not alone, and in the darkest times, there remains a glimmer of hope.

Coping

I coped with these challenges by relying on my resilience and determination. While my coping mechanisms may not have always been perfect, I found comfort in having backup plans ready if the current path didn't work out as expected. This approach helped me navigate the uncertainties and setbacks along our journey to parenthood through IVF.

Support Resources

Counseling sessions were available, and looking back, I wish I had booked more of these sooner, as they greatly helped us. While my husband and I supported and encouraged each other, we now realize we needed that additional support along the way. The care package bags available at MISS are such a compassionate and helpful tool that I would personally give to a friend going through this experience.

Self-Care

I would often take walks around our block. These walks helped both of us clear our minds and find moments of peace amidst the challenges we were facing.



What has helped you the most?

What has helped me the most throughout this journey has been a combination of factors. The unwavering support from my husband, seeking counseling, and practicing self-care through activities like walks have all played crucial roles in helping me navigate and cope with the challenges we faced.

Experience in the healthcare system

My journey through the healthcare system was uniquely influenced by the IVF process. It's essential to be proactive in scheduling counselling appointments and actively seeking the support offered by your chosen specialist. Without being proactive, there's a risk of not receiving the necessary help and guidance. Reflecting on my journey, I realize the significance of this proactive stance. I wish I had taken these steps sooner, as it would have made a substantial difference in navigating the complexities of miscarriage and early pregnancy loss more effectively.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

It would be beneficial if General Practitioners has more comprehensive information to share with their patients, especially since many people learn about their situation through their GP and may not receive further support afterward. More awareness of specialized counsellors and dedicated phone lines - Having trained professionals who specialize in miscarriage support can provide invaluable guidance and empathy. It's often challenging to open-up to others who haven't experienced miscarriage themselves, so these resources would offer a safe space for individuals to seek understanding and support during such a difficult time.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

National Miscarriage Awareness Day is a significant step toward destigmatizing miscarriage and encouraging open discussions, which is so important to me. Wearing a symbolic ribbon is a touching tribute, symbolizing unity and recognition.



Image Credit:
Rebecca Peterson-Hall

Early Pregnancy Loss Garden

The Early Pregnancy Loss Garden is a symbol of compassion and support, providing and promoting awareness within our community where families and individuals can honour their babies. This may help individuals navigate their grief and could be important in their healing journey.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

Through my journey, I've gained a profound sense of resilience and inner strength. Facing the challenges of miscarriage and navigating through fertility treatments has not only taught me perseverance but has also deepened my empathy for others. These experiences have strengthened the bond with my husband, reinforcing our mutual support and commitment to overcoming obstacles together.

Advice to Others

My advice is to prioritise what feels right for you, rather than feeling pressured by others' expectations. Trust your gut instinct and listen to your body's needs during this sensitive time. Whether it's a partner, a friend, a colleague, or a counsellor, lean on someone who genuinely cares about you. Having at least one person in your corner can make a significant difference in navigating through the emotional challenges.

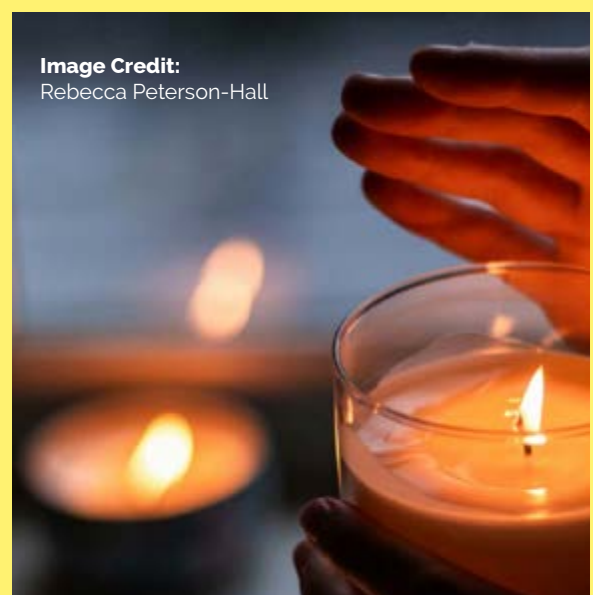


Image Credit:
Rebecca Peterson-Hall

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Talia's Story

My name is Talia. My most recent loss was when I was 38 in 2018. I experienced other losses in 2018, and 2016.

Starting a family a little late in life.....our first child was born when I was 35, (my husband 45) which we found quite easy to conceive. I knew I wanted to have more than one child as I was the only child growing up and found myself quite lonely, as my mother was a single mother who travelled a lot.

So, I thought our journey would be as easy as our first

My first two pregnancy losses were still at the early stages of 7 and 9 weeks gestation, however my last pregnancy was a Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR) at 14 weeks due to foetal anomaly.

Coping

I felt so broken and went into a whirlwind of emotions of anger, guilt, anxiety and the rollercoaster of grief. I came to the realisation that we would only have our one baby, which I was so blessed for and she was so happy and healthy.... but it didn't take away that hole in my heart of loss. Grief is a big part of my life that I have carried since the age of 15, when I lost my mum to a drowning accident. My coping mechanisms kicked in to just carry on and get on with life, as this is what I have done from such a young age.

With that 8 months later I fell pregnant again, and we now have another beautiful girl and are so BLESSED x

I have continued support from my circle of friends, my foster mother and most of all my husband.

Support Resources

The support resources like the MISS care package bag was such a beautiful gift, especially when you are going through all of the emotions, knowing that you are not alone and it's okay to recognise your loss, and let it not be forgotten.

Self-Care

My self-care and wellbeing is an ongoing journey. With my grief counsellor, meditation and sound baths, it makes me feel at peace.

What has helped the most?

The thing that has helped me the most is that I'm not alone. I have support, and there are so many women / families that have been or going through the same situation.

Experience in the healthcare system
In my experience, I wished that someone had come into the hospital after my procedure, and to ask if I wanted continuous support when I got home.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

National Miscarriage Day is a nice time to reflect and say a prayer for the ones that are not here with you today.





Image Credit:
Brooklyn

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

The memorial garden will mean so much to people. We hold onto our emotions all of the time, and this will be a place where we can let them go, and have some peace with ourselves and loved ones.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

Positive things that have happened, are that I found a small tribe of women that have been through similar situations, and are always there to talk when you are feeling a little lost.

Advice to others

The advice that could help others after loss:
Those we LOVE don't go away
They walk beside us every day
Unseen, Unheard..... but always near
Still Loved, still missed and very dear xx

Anything else to share?

I'm happy to share my contact number for people to share to help with anyone going through the same experience. Contact MISS and they will pass on my details.

[Back to Contents](#)



The Quiet Space

Reading - By Shez Cain

In a quiet space within our bodies was once
your breath, your beat, your heart.

Until your tiny heart took a final,
beautiful gentle breath, and that breath left our
body, raised softly to the air, and added
oxygen to our souls, in a mix of pain, wonder,
and broken love. You then became My Star
Child.

At those moments, we wonder.... when the air
is still, as we feel a breeze on our cheek.... in
times of complete silence, when we hear a
soft whisper... or in those inexplicable nights
when we wake from sleep after a voice has
spoken, yet nobody is there, we ask .. Is It You?
My Guiding star?

You... you were too beautiful for earth. And
you fill my universe. You caress my soul. I was
supposed to be the one looking out for you,
yet now, as a tiny, delicate, free and flying
angel who lands lightly on my shoulder,
I wonder, are you guiding me, helping me
awkwardly move on, all this time after you left?

You were a Missed Moment, a Missed Future,
a Missed Child of Mine, of ours, and we'll miss
you every day. (Not everyone gets that.)

Mums, Dads, Aunties and Uncles,
Grandparents, Cousins, all of us... we still
puddle about in our worlds, because life in its
physical sense continues.

But you're not forgotten by us ... far from it.
You're remembered every day. In the quiet
that is my soul. In the softness that is my face.
In the tiny empty closet that is closed inside
my heart.

My candle was just a pillar of wax, until you lit
the wick with hope and the radiance of your
life shone so brightly, with such expectation,
lighting the world immediately around you
with joy and exaltation. ... Almost as suddenly,
the flame began to flicker, falter, shake and
quiver, until it was gone, just the saddest wisp
of smoke remaining. Yet it never quite puffed
away.

And so each time a candle is lit, I watch it burn
as long as it can. Like a distant star,
it's intimate shine illuminates my hesitant smile
as I am reminded of you and all you could
have been. And you still are that
special someone to me. To us.

We love you every day. Thank you. You light
our world. Shine on,
Beautiful Star Child.





Image Credit:
James Wheeler

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Peter's Story

My name is Peter. We lost our baby in September 2011, and I had just turned 42 years old.

It made me so happy knowing that I was going to be a dad again.

I was devastated when I found out that we had lost our baby.

Coping

I tried to cope by blocking it out.

Support Resources

I was not provided with any support resources from any of the services (Ultrasound, GP and Hospital) that I went to with my wife, as we were not provided with information or support resources.

Self-Care

I started reading about miscarriage. I was also supporting my wife through this experience, so we were there for each other.

What has helped you the most?

What has helped me is naming my baby, and visiting the memorial garden at Bunurong Memorial Park.

Experience in the healthcare system

I felt that so many of the specialists and nurses lacked compassion for my wife and I.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

I would recommend that professionals in the health care system, be educated about the emotional side of miscarriage. Many of the nurses and specialists that were supporting us, lacked compassion and understanding.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

For me, this is a special day to remember our baby.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

This provides me with somewhere to go to remember.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

This experience has reminded me to always be kind, as you don't know what other people are going through.

Advice to others

I would recommend for people to talk about their experience, and get information and resources from services like MISS.

[Back to Contents](#)



I Didn't Get to Say Goodbye

Song - By Melissa Jane

(Verse 1)

It's been so hard, since you went away,
My life has fallen to pieces.
I take a deep breath and I try not to cry,
Oh Why, oh why, oh why.
I take a step forward, then I take two steps back,
Try to plan my life without you,
Thinking of you every day,
Missing you in every way.

(Chorus)

I didn't get to say goodbye,
I know you'd be a beautiful Angel.
Wishing you were by my side,
Missing you every moment.
I didn't get to say goodbye,
Missing you my Beautiful Angel,
Wishing you were by my side,
You are safe, you are here in my heart.

(Verse 2)

Time goes on, so slowly each day,
I try to pull my life together.
Wishing you were here with me now,
Wishing you were with me forever.
I walk outside, to your special place,
Sunlight shining down upon me,
Looking down, I fall to my knees,
I can't breathe, I can't breathe,
I can't breathe.

(Bridge)

And as the darkness falls every night,
You are always on my mind.
As the stars they come out to shine,
One special star is mine,
Your special star will shine.

(Chorus)

I didn't get to say goodbye,
I know you'd be a beautiful Angel.
Wishing you were by my side,
Missing you every moment.
I didn't get to say goodbye,
Missing you my Beautiful Angel,
Wishing you were by my side,
You are safe, you are here in my heart.

(Outro)

Wishing you were by my side,
You are safe.
You are here, in my heart.





Image Credit:
Artem Sapegin

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Melissa's Story

My name is Melissa. My husband and I lost our baby through miscarriage around 14 years ago.

After turning 40, and trying to get pregnant for a long period of time after already having 2 children (a beautiful daughter aged 10 and an amazing son aged 7), we finally had a positive pregnancy test. This was the most exciting news for us both, having our dream of another baby come true. I had always longed for a third baby to complete our family.

Our first ultrasound was at around 5 weeks, and all was going well. At around 9-10 weeks, I felt a bubbling feeling inside my stomach, which was not something I had ever experienced before. After becoming concerned, we made an appointment with our Doctor who was very compassionate and caring. Our Doctor made a referral for us to get an ultrasound.

My husband and I attended the ultrasound, and it was beautiful to see our baby on the screen. However, we were in shock to hear silence, finding out that our baby's heartbeat had stopped.

We were absolutely gutted, devastated, lost and grief stricken. It was like time stood still. I was in shock. Knowing that I was turning 41 in the coming weeks, and knowing how hard it was to fall pregnant, I was facing a life-changing moment. Our plans for our future had been shattered.

Coping

After my experiences, I found it really difficult to cope. At the time, I did not know of anyone close to me who had experienced miscarriage/early pregnancy loss, that had spoken about their loss. Often people did not know what to say or how to respond to our loss. They often unintentionally said things that weren't supportive, and minimised our grief. I received comments such as "It happened for a reason", and "You will have another one", and "Don't worry, it was for the best."

All I needed was for them to say "I'm sorry", and "I'm here for you if you need anything". It was a really difficult time. I started googling everything miscarriage, and reading every book I could find about miscarriage. I started writing poems, and decided to go back to University to complete a Master of Counselling.

I also investigated studying grief and loss, and undertook training to run a bereavement support program for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss.

My husband was really supportive, and encouraged me to study. I also joined a singing group, met new musical friends and adopted a beautiful cat called Princess who needed lots of cuddles. I was grateful that I had my husband and my 2 beautiful children, who I could also love and spend time with.



Support Resources

My husband and I were given no support resources about miscarriage/early pregnancy loss. After my procedure, I sat alone until my husband came to pick me up, and I was offered no counselling or support, no nursing staff to speak to, and no support service information. I never received any counselling or support.

Self-Care

Walking has been very therapeutic for me, especially walking to the beach or walking in nature. Also finding joyful experiences such as watching sunrises and sunsets, and following my passions. I also started new hobbies, and started a business running meditation and wellness programs. I also had to choose which events I attended for my own mental health. There were many experiences with other babies or children, that made it really emotional for me, as there were a few people around me that were pregnant with a similar due date. I also started to avoid some group situations, as I did not want to be around people who were not compassionate or empathetic about our loss.

What has helped you the most?

I am so thankful to my family and friends who have supported me through this experience, who continue to support me and all that I do. I am so grateful for the ultrasound scans of our baby, as this is a beautiful reminder of our baby that I will always treasure.

We continue to acknowledge our baby's due date with a birthday cake, and include him in other celebrations. Knowing that he is always with us, in our heart is comforting.

Experience in the healthcare system

Although there were some lovely doctors and nurses/midwives who looked after me, there were many healthcare staff who lacked empathy and compassion, who exacerbated my feelings of loss.

Once we were advised that our baby had no heartbeat, our Doctor requested a copy of the ultrasound scans for our baby.

We went to the sonographer (who was located in the same medical centre), and asked for the scans. The sonographer then said something along the lines of "Why does the Doctor want the scans – there is no heartbeat, what does he think he will see? There is no use looking at these".

I was distressed after losing our baby, and these comments made me feel even more upset, like our baby was nothing. There was no need for the sonographer to be so negative. They could have just handed over the scans to us, without the need to make their own personal comments about these.

We took the scans back to our Doctor, and he explained that we had experienced a miscarriage, and talked about what would happen next. We were then sent to the Maternity unit to have some tests done to investigate why this might have happened, and the 2 female Doctors were very kind and explained everything to my husband and I, and then sent us home. We were advised that if I experienced any bleeding, I would have to call the hospital to notify them.

I started passing blood on the Sunday night, and I contacted the hospital, and they asked me to come in at 8am the following morning for a D&C, and to meet back at the Maternity Unit.

When my husband and I arrived at the Maternity Unit, I let the midwife at the Maternity front desk know that we had experienced a miscarriage. She looked at us with a blank face, and said "You are in the wrong place – this is where you have a baby". There was no sorry, or I am sorry for your loss, and no care at all. She showed no compassion or empathy. Did she think that we did not know that we were in the maternity ward, with all of the new parents and sounds of newborn babies crying?

We hurried down the steps, devastated, not knowing where to go, trying to find the day surgery unit, which was out of the building in



a newer section of the hospital. We found a lovely nurse who walked with me to the day surgery unit. When I arrived, I changed out of my clothes into a hospital gown, completed some forms and sat on a hospital bed. I was in a room full of older males and females. This was not the type of environment that I wanted to be in, as I was grieving the loss of my baby and had no privacy. One of the doctors came over to see me at around 11.00am, closed the curtain around me, then inserted a tablet, to begin the process for my D&C.

A senior nurse then approached me whilst I was waiting in bed, and told me that I had to lie down after the tablet had been inserted.

At approximately 12.30pm, I rang my buzzer and asked for the senior nurse but was advised that she was on her lunch break, so I asked the nurses on duty (one male and one female) if I could use the bathroom, and explained that the senior nurse had asked me to lie down, and I was unsure if I was able to go to the toilet? The nurses spoke with each other, and assured me that I could walk to the bathroom (that was outside of the room that I was in), and they then both assisted me out of bed and walked with me to the bathroom.

Whilst I was being supported back from the bathroom to my bed, the senior nurse entered the room, and raised her voice from across the other side of the room and called out "What are you doing!". She then shut the curtains around me (mind you the room was full of patients and nursing staff and everyone could still hear through the curtains) saying loudly that she instructed me to lie down on the bed.

I tried to explain to her that I had used my buzzer as I was unsure if I could go to the bathroom, and that I had asked the nurses if I could use the toilet. She would not give me a chance to explain, and spoke over me. She made me feel humiliated, and I could not hold back my tears.

At this stage, if I could have walked out of the hospital, I would have, as I was so upset. She did not even care - she proceeded to show no

empathy towards me, speaking over me, and she would not let me respond.

She continued in her loud voice and said "They (the other nurses) do not know why you are here, and what procedure you are having done." How was I supposed to know what the nursing staff knew. She at no time advised me that she was the only one looking after me. She then said in her loud voice "Women have lost their babies in the toilet - do you know that - did you lose any blood clots or pass anything". (She kept saying this over again).

Even though I had lost some blood clots, there was no way after being spoken to like this, that I would disclose that I had lost any blood or clots. I was so upset, that I held my hands over my face and could not stop crying. I was in disbelief at how I was being treated.

She then walked back to the area where she was sitting. Because of my circumstances, I could not leave (although I desperately wanted to leave), and there was nothing I could do except wait in the bed, in this room full of people, until I went into surgery.

Did this nurse even care, that I had lost our much wanted our baby? She showed no empathy whatsoever, at any time. She was not personal at all, and simply did not care about my grief. If she had asked me to "not go" to the toilet, I would not have even rang the buzzer to ask.

I hid my face under the sheet and cried. It was humiliating when she came back to put me in a wheelchair, to take me into surgery.

I hope that in the future, no person is ever treated by any specialist, nurse or doctor the way that I have been - especially any woman who has lost her baby and is undergoing a D&C.

After my experience, I went to see a Doctor and asked for a referral to see a Psychologist. I booked in a session with a Psychologist, in the Medical Centre, but I was unaware that he had no experience in grief and loss. He spoke about his Mother's experience of pregnancy loss, and he suggested that my husband and I



should start going to "hot yoga" sessions. This was not the type of support that I was seeking to deal with my grief.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

Kindness, Listening, Compassion, Changes of medical terminology, A separate area for early pregnancy loss away from the Maternity Unit, Information flyers with support services, care package bags with information for the partner and family.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day

National Miscarriage Awareness Day is a special day for me, when I focus on my baby and on my healing, as Mother's Day can still be a difficult day for me.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden is absolutely beautiful, and I will definitely visit this garden in memory of our baby regularly.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

I am the founding member of Miscarriage Information Support Service, and have been so grateful to make a difference to support anyone impacted after early pregnancy loss. With the Committee of Management, we have been able to show those impacted that they are cared for, through creating support flyers, resources, care package bags, lemon ribbon pins, awareness and education initiatives, support programs and the early pregnancy loss Memorial Garden. I also have a wonderful network of friends who have been a great support, and who volunteer at the MISS events. I have a greater understanding of grief and loss.

Advice to others

If you experience a miscarriage, I encourage you to get information and seek support from early pregnancy loss support services and organisations, to connect with others who might be going through a similar situation, and to grieve the loss of your baby.

Anything else to share?

Always be mindful, kind and compassionate.

[Back to Contents](#)



Happy Birthday In Heaven

Song - By Melissa Jane

(Verse 1)

Every morning and every night,
I can't stop thinking of you
How I miss you near to me,
my thoughts are always with you
So lonely it is without you,
Why were you taken away
When everything was so right,
How can it go so wrong
How can it go so wrong,
How can it go so wrong
In this life

(Chorus)

Happy birthday in heaven,
I'll be thinking of you.
Happy birthday in heaven,
Happy birthday to you.
Happy birthday in heaven,
I'll blow a candle you'll see.
Can you hear my wish,
I wish you were here with me,
I wish you were here with me,
I wish you were here with me,
In this life

(Bridge)

It's been so long, since I felt you
It's been so long, here without you
Memories of you,
make my dreams come true.

(Verse 2)

I hate it that you've gone away,
But one day we'll meet again
Until that day, comes my way,
My grief will never end
Telling you I love you,
Needing you by my side
The thought of being with you,
It takes away all my pain,
It takes away all my pain,
It takes away all my pain,
In this life

(Chorus)

Happy birthday in heaven,
I'll be thinking of you
Happy birthday in heaven,
Happy birthday to you
Happy birthday in heaven,
I'll blow a candle you'll see
Can you hear my wish,
I wish you were here with me,

(Outro)

I wish you were here with me,
I wish you were here with me,
In my life.

[Click here to Listen](#)





Image Credit:
Aneta Voborilova

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Lisa's Story

Hi, my name is Lisa, and this is my experience with miscarriage before having my three children. It has been 31 years since my last miscarriage.

I have experienced two miscarriages. The first one was particularly confusing as I didn't even realise that I was pregnant at the time. I mistook the miscarriage for a particularly painful early period, only realising a year later what had occurred. At the time, I was so confused and in such pain that I didn't even tell anyone.

The second miscarriage was more traumatic. I was 23. During my first ultrasound at 18 weeks, I found out that the foetus's heart had stopped. The sonographer was chatting away happily and then suddenly had a sympathetic look on her face. She then simply said to me, "You'll have more children, I'm sure." I knew then that something must be wrong, but she wouldn't elaborate and told me to take the results back to my doctor.

My doctor was then quite clinical and simply sent me home to wait for a spontaneous miscarriage. I was given no more information and not told what to expect, so I naively went off to work in the city as usual. Two days later, sitting at my desk, out of nowhere, I had what can only be brutally described as a spontaneous explosion of blood and clots. There was only a brief warning of slight cramps, and then I collapsed from the immense pain.

My boss quickly called for my female work colleagues to come assist me. I was covered in blood, as was my chair and the carpet. Thanks to my caring work colleagues, they covered me in jackets and then helped me to the toilet, where I spent hours upon hours haemor-

rhaging before being in a state to travel back home. I was then booked in for a D&C, which was all very routine, and then life went on. If I ever spoke about the miscarriage, the usual response was, "You'll be fine and have more children."

What I wish is that more information had been given to me on what to expect once they knew that the pregnancy was no longer viable. I had no idea it was going to be that brutal. I also wish that people were more open to talking about it, as these experiences were incredibly painful, overwhelming, confusing, and lonely.

Coping

Life went on and I thought I coped fine at the time as everyone around me seemed to want to forget it, but looking back, the loss and whole experience was very sad.

Support Resources

Back in the early 90s, there didn't seem to be any resources available, and nothing was offered.

Self-Care

Over the years I've learned to talk about it more and be more open.

What has helped the most?

Having my three children, however for many women/couples this is not always how things turn out for them sadly.





National Miscarriage Awareness Day

I've only learned of this day through Melissa King and would love to honour the loss of all babies by wearing a yellow ribbon.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

I think that's just beautiful and is very much needed for many parents.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

I have been able to chat with other women going through similar experiences, and hopefully I have provided some level of support to them.

Advice to others

I would advise them to talk to caring family and friends, and seek assistance through MISS.

Anything else to share

Thank you for this opportunity to share my story.

[Back to Contents](#)

Image Credit:
Cole Keister



National Miscarriage Awareness Day

First Sunday in May annually

National Miscarriage Awareness Day is a remembrance day for anyone who has been impacted by early pregnancy loss, and is held annually on the first Sunday in May, one week prior to Mother's Day.

The weeks leading up to Mother's Day can be emotional for anyone who has experienced early pregnancy loss.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day was created to raise awareness of miscarriage/early pregnancy loss throughout Australia, to educate the community about how to respond.

Since 2023, events on National Miscarriage Awareness Day have been sponsored by Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust and are held at Bunurong Memorial Park in Victoria.

Yellow ribbon or infinity pins can be worn in memory of your baby, or for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss.



Photo of The Hon Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care on National Miscarriage Awareness Day, 2024.

Bereaved Mother's Day is also acknowledged on the first Sunday in May in Australia. Termination For Medical Reasons (TFMR) Awareness Day is acknowledged on 4 May internationally, to raise awareness of TFMR.

International Day of the Midwife is celebrated each year on 5 May, and is an opportunity for midwives to celebrate their profession, and for all of us to recognise their work and contribution to maternal and newborn health.





Image Credit:
SMCT

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Jasmine's Story

My name is Jasmine.

The loss of our first baby was in 1994.

Second loss in 1995.

Third loss in 1996.

Fourth loss in 1997.

My last loss was when I was 32 years of age.

I met my beautiful husband in 1991, and was able to have our first son in 1992, no problem. Then I got pregnant again in 1994, but at 25 weeks our baby had died. I had to deliver this baby, and after seeing him once, he was taken away from us.

Our second son was delivered at 20 weeks, but we were able to be with him – not like the first one who was taken away.

After going through what we did with our third and fourth babies that had died, I didn't feel I could go through anything ever again, but I did and with the help of Lyndon Hale at the Women's Hospital (who was just wonderful), I was able to have out next 2 children, a boy then our beautiful girl. The hardest thing for me was going up to the Women's Hospital every week, to get scanned to make sure that they were still alive, before they would inject me with prednisolone which kept them alive.

Coping

How did I cope? I just did. I had my son who needed me and I just gave him and my husband all of my love. Don't get me wrong - when I was going through IVF, thank goodness for Dr Keith How because I think I rang him every second day and talked to him about how

I was going. If I was worried about my babies he would say "Don't worry, come down to my rooms and we will do a quick scan to put your mind at rest". They were still alive. He was just the best.

Support Resources

I was offered supports from the hospital but I declined. I had such wonderful support from my husband and my mother, so I knew that I was fine.

Self-Care

I healed quietly on my own through yoga, reading and crying. Also I felt so very lucky because I was able to have 3 babies who are just the best.

What has helped you the most

Listening to myself, reflecting on life and understanding my body.

Experience in the healthcare system
Back in 1994, hospitals were not geared for people having lost a baby. You had to deliver on the maternity ward and staff and patient services assistants would come into your room happily asking what you had delivered - and I would have to reply that they died. That was hard not only for me, but I'm sure for them as well.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

Education and communication to all staff, so they are informed on all patients' circumstances.



National Miscarriage Awareness Day

I think is a lovely thought for a lot of women as it helps them to heal and remember their babies – they will never be forgotten.

Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

I think it is lovely for some families, but to be honest it is not for me. I don't feel I would use it as the babies I have lost will always be in my heart and my thoughts. Sometimes if the conversation comes up, my children ask me about their siblings – we take out the scans and I talk about them.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

I feel for some reason that I lost my babies because something was wrong, but I am so lucky to have been able to have the babies that I have – happy and healthy.

Advice to others

Advice for others is difficult because we grieve and cope in our own way. Everyone's experiences are different.

Anything else to share?

If you can, stay strong. I class myself as being lucky having 3 children because some people can't have any and that would be heartbreaking.

I also wanted to say that as a woman, some of the things we have come to endure are unimaginable, but we are strong and positive and we have to get on with life.

That does not mean we forget or even really get over what we have gone through but I feel something must have been wrong for my babies not to have survived, whether it was them or me I don't know, but I do feel what I have gone through happened for a reason.

I do not understand and there are no answers to comfort anyone's grief, but it is our precious memories that we get to keep.

[Back to Contents](#)



Forever In My Heart

Designed and Created by Brigitte Dawson

Miscarriage Information Support Service received a Stronger Communities Programme Federal funding grant in 2019 to fund an Art Sculpture, to be utilised to improve local community participation. Artist Brigitte Dawson from Melbourne's Murals, designed and created "Forever In My Heart" for MISS in 2019. This includes a mosaic design with broken mirror pieces, including 18 healing gem stones and the MISS infinity logo inside of the heart.

About the making of "Forever In My Heart", by Brigitte Dawson.

"The heart shape is widely recognised as a symbol for love and affection. I have used many tiny pieces of broken mirror for this project, as I thought it was a perfect way to symbolise a shattered reflection of a future never realised.

Mirror contains and absorbs spiritual energy and is highly reflective. Light shines in all of these tiny broken pieces, reflecting the love that we feel. Mindful reflection brings us back to ourselves, allowing us to come closer to our own body, emotions, thoughts and spirit. I have used new and old mirror as I believe the imperfections in the old mirror are like we are as human beings. We are all a little mix of perfection and imperfection. Each of our journeys are unique, like the little pieces of tiny mirror in this heart.

The gemstones have been specifically chosen to give anyone standing near this heart, positive energy, healing, inner peace and compassion, to move on with love in one's heart".

Gemstones inserted:

- Amethyst
- Dalmation Jasper
- Hermatite
- Moonstone
- Opalite
- Mookait
- Aquamarine
- Fluorite
- Red Jasper
- Apache tear
- Peridot
- Rhodonite
- Picture jasper
- Pink Calcite Mangano
- Lapis Lasuli
- Turquoise
- Emerald
- Rose Quartz





Image Credit:
KS KYUNG

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Catherine's Story

My name is Catherine, and I experienced a series of three miscarriages when trying for our third child. This happened in the mid 1990's, about 32 years ago.

We had two gorgeous daughters aged three, and 18 months when I lost the first baby. I was about 38 and we were very excited to be expecting another baby. We had told close friends and family which was quite interesting looking back. Until you have a miscarriage, it's hard to understand the trauma, and sheer blood loss and pain.

Physically it is horrible, emotionally it's even worse. When I started bleeding, we rang my brother to come and babysit the two girls while my husband Peter took me to hospital. The attending doctor was revolting, he told me to take my panties off! My panties really!

He examined me and just confirmed that I had definitely miscarried. A D&C was organised for later that night, and I was sent home the next day. I remember it was Peter's 40th birthday. What a present. At no point was I offered anything comforting about my loss.

The experience was a medical event, nothing more, nothing less. Worse was to come, I actually found very little sympathy or understanding from those we had confided in about the pregnancy and loss. One friend scolded me for telling my three year-old daughter about the miscarriage. She said my daughter was too young and wouldn't understand.

The muted silence was hurtful and challenging. I felt very isolated in my grief. I guess I just buried it and got on with my life. After all, I was incredibly busy with two young daughters. But the longing for another baby continued and when we found out I was pregnant again the excitement and hope bubbled up again. But it was not to be.

At about the 6 week mark I experienced terrible bleeding and painful contractions. This time we told no one. It was so sad, as Peter loaded our sleeping daughters into their car seats and drove me to hospital. He dropped me off and I had to go through the ordeal all over again. This time I was just numb to the emotion, and in a way, it was sort of easier than waiting for support from people who clearly didn't understand.

By this time, I was feeling like a bit of a failure, and again I just buried the grief and got on with my life. I wish I had stopped right there but there was one last try and again another pregnancy. We enrolled at a different hospital and all looked good. By this time, I was 41 and we knew it was now or never. But alas it all resulted in another miscarriage. I just remember feeling completely and utterly done! I have often thought about my lost babies over the years, and have wept silent tears for them.



Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

I have also reflected on the inadequacy of the medical profession in dealing with the emotional side of miscarriage. And also the cultural silence around miscarriage, the lack of support and the attitude that it is nothing.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

I met Melissa King at Monash University. We were both Masters students and I realised she was grieving the loss of a baby. It brought up for me my own grief and I happily joined her Committee of management in founding MISS. I wish I could have had these important services in my time of need. I would have felt acknowledged and less isolated. I might have even had a place to mourn my lost babies.



[Back to Contents](#)



Image Credit:
Laura Barry

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

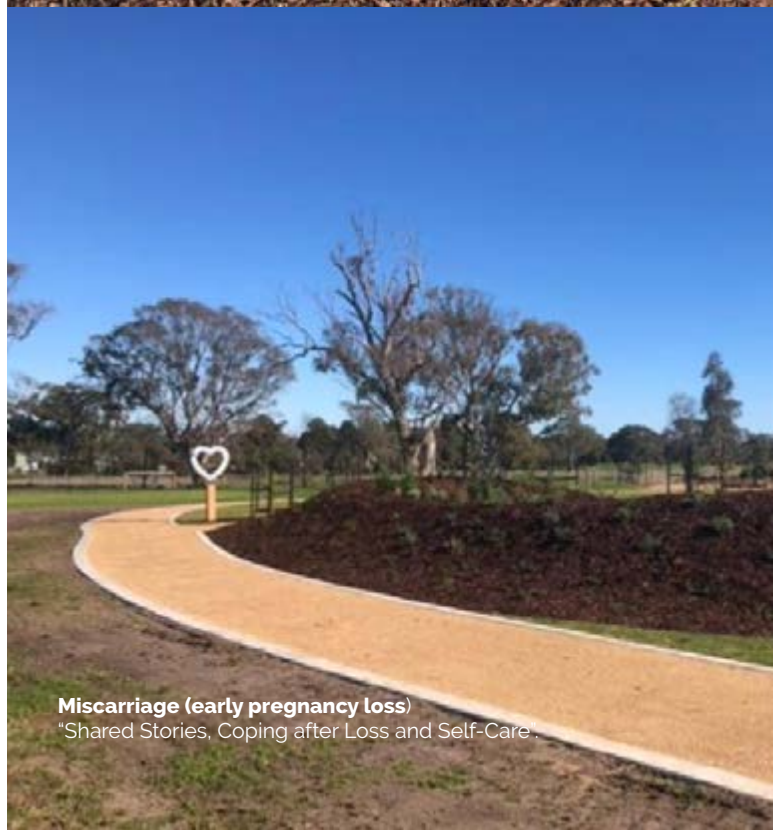
Memorial Garden for Early Pregnancy Loss

**Memorial Garden - Bunurong Memorial Park, Dandenong South.
Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust.**

After the loss of a baby through early pregnancy loss, there is usually no funeral, plaque or memorial area for people to visit, to remember their baby on anniversaries or special dates.

Members of the MISS Committee of Management approached Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (SMCT), and put forward a proposal to create Australia's first purpose built memorial garden, for anyone impacted by early pregnancy loss. The proposal included the installation of the "Forever in My Heart" sculpture, with the purpose being to improve local community participation. MISS also secured funding for seating in 2021, through a Stronger Communities Programme Federal funding grant.

The SMCT Trust Members approved the creation of an early pregnancy loss memorial garden for Bunurong Memorial Park and it is anticipated that this will be completed by May 2025.



Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)

"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care"



MISS Committee members, representatives from Red Nose Grief and Loss and researchers from Miscarriage Australia collaborated and worked with SMCT staff and designers, to provide input and feedback for the design of the memorial garden.

The "Forever In My Heart" sculpture was installed and signifies the entrance to the memorial garden. The pathway has been completed and works are progressing. This area will be an inclusive space where all of the community are welcome.

Consultation and community engagement has been undertaken by MISS and SMCT staff, seeking suggestions from the community for a name for the new memorial garden. Once this garden is completed and named, a date will be set for an official opening.

This memorial garden will provide anyone who is impacted by early pregnancy loss with a beautiful area to remember their baby, and a space for reflection and healing. Thank you to Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust for creating this beautiful memorial garden.

MISS Heart Sculpture

Image Credit: Melissa King



Susan's Story

My name is Susan and my miscarriage happened in 1967. I was 18 years old and newly married.

I was treated first by a GP and then sent to the Royal Women's Hospital.

Coping

There were tears of course, but I was consoled by my loving mother who confided in me that her first pregnancy was a miscarriage. This had never been spoken of to me before. When my dear mother-in-law also visited me in hospital, she also revealed the same thing had happened to her. I felt better with these revelations as both of these special women in my life went on to have four healthy children.

Support Resources

There were no support services in existence in 1967 but I'm sure a MISS care package would have been gratefully received.

Self-Care

When I was in hospital, I asked my mum to bring me in a jig-saw-puzzle to help take my mind off things. She obliged without any questions. My husband's mother brought in beautiful hand-picked roses from her garden. I can still remember the comforting scent.

What has helped you the most:

The joy of becoming a mother in 1968 and then again in 1970 was the most fulfilling experience and my life became consumed with the pleasure of raising two healthy children.

Experience in the healthcare system

My hospital experience was that I was placed in a ward with women who had hysterectomies and similar surgery. They were kind to me. At my hospital check-up later on, there was extreme embarrassment when I was asked would I agree to help with the training of medical staff as this was a teaching hospital. I agreed, not really understanding what would be involved. I was examined internally by the doctor as he explained to the students surrounding me anatomy details I did not understand and then a student also performed a physical examination. It was a very traumatic experience for a shy 18 year-old.

Recommendations to improve health care outcomes

To improve healthcare outcomes for early pregnancy loss I would suggest a designated ward, room or area for these women so they would not be exposed to newborns and their families. It may be consoling to the patients and their dear ones to realise they may be experiencing similar feelings of loss and they are not alone. Well trained staff to specialise in this area would be desirable. Perhaps the availability of a psychologist who is trained to understand the unique feelings of miscarriage patients would be beneficial.

National Miscarriage Awareness Day/Bereaved Mother's Day

National Miscarriage Awareness Day is a reminder that there are many people going through the feelings of loss experienced with a miscarriage and to be supported at this time is so important. It can be a day to release pent-up emotions and recall special memories if this is helpful.



Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden

The Memorial Garden will be a special place where one is comfortable to mourn the loss of an expected baby. A welcoming area to find peace and acceptance of what has happened and reflect on the future surrounded by nature. A place to visit on a special anniversary. So pleased to know this will be available in the future.

Has anything positive come out of your experience?

The most positive thing that came out of my experience was learning that I was not alone. I had not known that other women in my family had miscarried until it also happened to me.

Advice to others

The main thing I would like to let others know who experience this loss is that there are support services available and many caring people who may be able to assist with getting through this time of loss.



[Back to Contents](#)



Image Credit:
Gryffyn M

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Care Package Bags

We care.

Miscarriage Information Support Service has been providing care package bags after early pregnancy loss for many years.

These can be posted anywhere within Australia.

Care package bags contain information, support resources and flyers to assist you, your partner and family, at the time of your loss.

Items in care package bags are organised, sourced and packed by MISS volunteers.



Image Credit:
Michael Held

Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

Information for Partners

Early pregnancy loss is a shared experience; however each person may respond and grieve differently after the loss of a baby.

As the partner, your role may be complex, as while you are grieving yourself, will still want to support your partner. This may be a stressful time as you may have additional responsibilities, and you both may be under pressure to work. The silence that surrounds pregnancy loss can also make this time extremely difficult, as often family and friends do not know what to say or how to respond.

Experiencing the strong emotions of grief and loss can also be very challenging for you, and as a shared experience with your partner. There may be times when you find it difficult to find the words and actions to support each other during this time. Remember that there are no right or wrong ways to respond.

It can help to acknowledge your partner's feelings, and to understand that everyone grieves differently.

There are a number of services available to support you during this time, and we encourage you to reach out for support.

Image Credit:
Lily Miller



Information for Family and Friends

The loss of a baby through early pregnancy loss can be a devastating time, and may be difficult for others to understand. Each person can react in different ways when faced with pregnancy loss.

It is important that anyone impacted by the loss of a baby is able to grieve in their own way. This is a time when family and friends can provide support by being there in a gentle, helpful and non-judgemental way.

We hope that this information will help you or the person that you are caring for, through this difficult time in the most compassionate and supportive way.



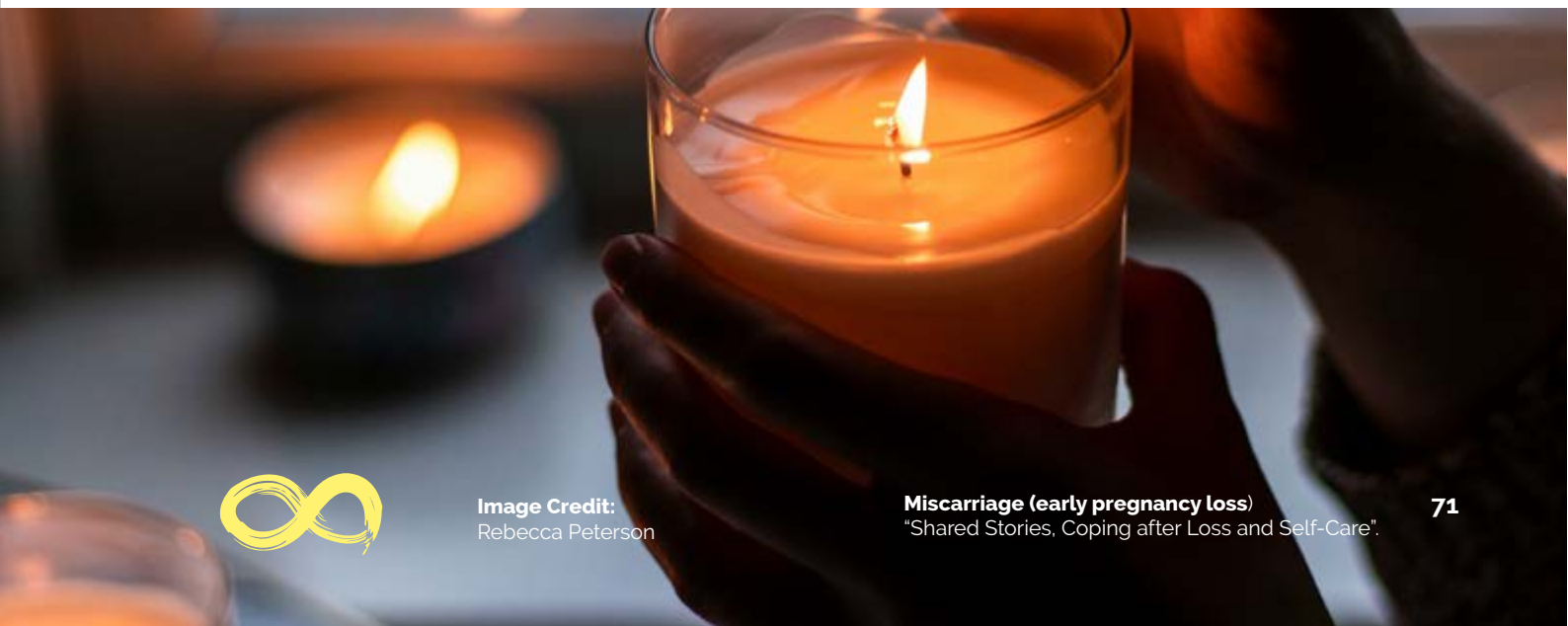
Image Credit:
Niki Clark



Miscarriage (early pregnancy loss)
"Shared Stories, Coping after Loss and Self-Care".

The following is a list of helpful things for family and friends to say or do:

- Say "I'm sorry"
- Say "I am here for you".
- Give them a hug.
- Let them know that you are there for them.
- Send them a message, email or card to acknowledge their loss.
- Be kind and caring.
- Acknowledge that this is a difficult time for them.
- Ask "How can I help you?".
- Listen to their responses to show that you care.
- Acknowledge their feelings of sadness and loss.
- Be sensitive and supportive.
- Allow them to be silent if they don't want to talk.
- Be non-judgemental with how they are responding.
- Let them know that they can tell you about their feelings or experience when they are ready.
- Let them be sad, upset or angry, and reassure them that how they are grieving is okay.
- Show them that you care in your own special way, as small gestures go a long way.
- Do something kind, like organise their favourite meal.
- If they have children, offer to help out.
- Show compassion and be present.
- Keep the focus on them.





Ways to Remember

There is no right or wrong way to remember your baby/babies, but here are some suggestions:

- Apply for a Recognition of Early Pregnancy Loss Certificate in your State or Territory
- Do something special to remember your baby on your baby's due date or on the anniversary of your loss
- Plant some forget me not seedlings in a pot
- Talk to others about your experience
- Purchase a plaque/token at an Early Pregnancy Loss Memorial Garden
- Remember your baby by participating in "National Miscarriage Awareness Day" events on the first Sunday in May (events publicised on the MISS website)
- Wear yellow or a yellow ribbon or infinity pin on National Miscarriage Awareness Day in memory of your baby
- Participate in "International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day" events near you on 15th October each year, and lighting a candle at 7pm to represent your baby, to create a wave of light around the world (events publicised on the MISS website)

Image Credit:
Daphne Richard







Support Services and Health Information

Early Pregnancy Loss Support Services

Miscarriage Information Support Service

Miscarriage Information Support Service (MISS) is an inclusive community service providing information, support resources, awareness, education and support programs for anyone impacted by the loss of a baby through early pregnancy loss.

Website: www.miss.org.au
Email: info@miss.org.au

Red Nose Grief and Loss

P: 1300 308 307
Provide Free 24/7 Bereavement Support for families who have experienced miscarriage, unexpected loss during pregnancy, birth, infancy and early childhood.

Website: www.rednosegriefandloss.org.au

Bears of Hope

P: 1300 11 HOPE
Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support.
Providing support to both parents and their families who grieve the loss of their baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, medical termination, birth and infancy. Connect with our team of registered counsellors, all with lived experience at no cost via telehealth, chat or face to face appointments. Also offering support groups, meditation groups, workshops and support weekends (at no cost).

Website: www.bearsofhope.org.au
Email: support@bearsofhope.org.au

The Pink Elephants Support Network

The Pink Elephants Support Network provides peer support specific to early pregnancy loss, bereavement support services and emotional support resources.

Website: www.pinkelephants.org.au

Health Information Website

Miscarriage Australia

The Miscarriage Australia website offers comprehensive, evidence-based resources for those impacted by miscarriage. It includes information on understanding miscarriage, experiencing miscarriage, and where to find support. Designed by a collaborative group of researchers and clinicians, the website reflects their ongoing commitment to advocating for improved support for those affected by miscarriage.

Website: www.miscarriageaustralia.com.au

The organisations listed are not a comprehensive list of support services for early pregnancy loss. There may be other support services and health information services that you can access in your state or territory.





Thank you

The MISS Committee of Management would like to thank each person who shared their story for their bravery, honesty and openness.

We are so grateful to: Lynnel, Cryssie, Jazz and Phil, Alanna, Shelley, Talia, Peter, Melissa, Lisa, Jasmine, Catherine and Susan.

Thank you to [Frankston Community Fund](#), a Community Fund Account of Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, for the funding to produce this eBook.

Thank you to the [Miscarriage Information Support Service](#) Committee of Management: Peter, Susan, Lance, Melissa J and Vera, and to founding member Catherine and former committee member Tania, for your tireless work, contributions and advocacy work for MISS since its inception over 12 years ago.

Thank you to the many volunteers who continue to volunteer your time preparing resources, assisting at events and with programs, and providing your valuable time and support for MISS.

Thank you to graphic designer Debra Whitford for creating the MISS Infinity, Heart and Butterfly designs in-kind.

Thank you to graphic designer Tommy from [Tommy Creative](#) for your sponsorship of this eBook.

Thank you to the partners, family and friends who love, care for and support those impacted by miscarriage/early pregnancy loss. You are our rock in our time of greatest need.

It is hoped that the shared stories, coping strategies, self-care practices and information provided within this eBook, will assist anyone who has been impacted by early pregnancy loss.

Our babies are remembered with love, and remain forever in our heart.



Contact



Image Credit:
Paolo Nicoletto

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