

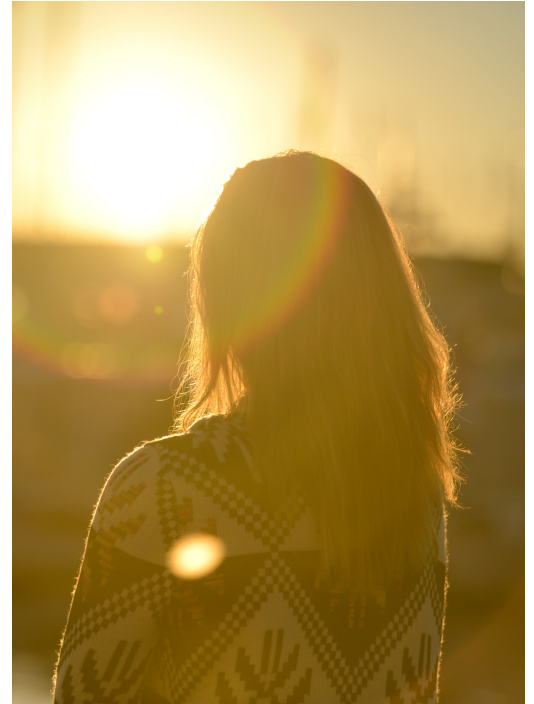
HOPE FOR HEALING

A Guide to Depression After Pregnancy and Infant Loss

Experiencing the loss of a pregnancy or an infant brings profound pain and unimaginable grief. The sadness you are feeling is a normal part of the grieving process, and may even include symptoms of depression.

Depression after a loss can affect any woman who has suffered a miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss no matter her age, race, income level, or culture. No matter how you are feeling right now, your depression will not last forever and it can be treated.

Talking about how you are feeling is the first step; getting help is the second.



Grief after a loss is common, but if you are experiencing persistent, intense feelings or any symptoms of depression for an extended period of time, please speak with your health care provider.

COMMON SIGNS OF DEPRESSION INCLUDE:

- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Eating more or less than normal
- Feeling irritable, angry, nervous, or exhausted
- Lack of interest in family or friends
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless
- Crying a lot
- Low energy or trouble concentrating
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others

Symptoms of depression will differ from person to person and may appear days, weeks, or even months after a loss.

Mourning your loss is an ongoing process. You may find it helpful to try some of the following strategies to help you cope with your grief:

Get plenty of rest and eat balanced meals.

Getting adequate amounts of sleep and eating well are essential for your physical and mental health.

Structure your time.

Create a plan for how you will spend your day. It's okay to temporarily lower your expectations of yourself.

Get some exercise.

Even an activity as simple as walking is beneficial to your mental health.

Share your feelings.

Talk about the loss of your child with your family, friends, or a health care provider. Many grieving parents may feel that they have to suffer in silence, but talking about your feelings can help promote healing.

Engage in activities which can help commemorate the memory of your child.

Activities such as religious or spiritual prayer or meditation, reading, journal writing, crafts, volunteering, gardening, etc. are all great ways to keep busy and create a space for your child's memory.



FIND SUPPORT

The Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey's Perinatal Mood Disorders Initiative provides an **Emotional Health Phone Support** program for women who have experienced a loss. Please call us to speak with a Perinatal Mental Health Coordinator who will connect you to mental health services and support groups.

Call (973) 268-2280 ext. 154 or visit partnershipmch.org/programs/ppd for more information

LEARN MORE

NJ Department of Health's **Speak up When You Are Down Hotline** is available 24/7 to link you to mental health resources in your community. **Call 1-800-328-3838.**

The **Star Legacy Foundation** provides information, education, and support to families who have experienced the loss of a child. **Visit starlegacyfoundation.org.**

Pockets of Light offers peer support for families who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss. **Visit pocketsoflight.org.**

Return to Zero: H.O.P.E. provides grief support, education, and awareness to both parents and providers. **Visit rtzhope.org.**



Funding for this program provided by the NJ Department of Health