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Helping Hands

Spring 2007

Do's and Don'ts

If someone you know miscarries

By Nancy Faulstich
HAND of Santa Cruz County

I'm a 41-year-old woman who has experienced three miscarriages, with no live births yet.

Miscarriages are surprisingly common. Currently, it is estimated that between 20 and 50 percent of all pregnancies end in miscarriage, including many before a woman even knows she's pregnant.

Yet, they remain largely invisible and many well-meaning people unwittingly say or do things that leave a woman feeling hurt, alone, and misunderstood precisely when she needs to feel supported and loved. It seems no one really understands how it feels to miscarry until going through it personally.

Therefore, with the hope of making a very difficult experience more bearable for some women, I'd like to offer my opinion of how to respond to someone who has miscarried or experienced stillbirth or neo-natal death, with the caveat that each person is unique so responses must always be individually considered.

DO acknowledge the loss as a death in the family. It is forefront in my mind, and if I know you know but you don't say anything, I may feel you don't care about me.

DON'T worry about making me feel sad – the sadness will be there right under the surface for quite a while and your caring and acknowledgement may actually help allow me to release it and thereby heal. This type of loss is especially difficult to heal from because we have no concrete experience with the deceased. We are mourning the unknown, the dream of a future, the potential of a human being.

DO listen. Ask ME how I am or what I need, ask what my experience has been like, and listen, listen, listen.

DO initiate contact with me through phone calls, emails, cards, visits, hugs. It may be hard for me to reach out. Keep in contact even after the initial stage of mourning has passed. Know it may take me months or years to recover.

Miscarriage *continued on page 3*

Feelings

*I feel like I've just existed
And now it's been a year
I don't know how I've lived and breathed
Without you being here.
I know you lived your lifetime
As short as that seems to me,
But the pain in my heart is still so great,
Yet I know your spirit is free.
At times I think I hear you
The thoughts come to my mind.
I struggle for the sound of your voice,
But your voice I cannot find.
Yet you come to me in many ways
So I know you did not die,
You want to tell me that you're close,
And to please stop asking Why.
Our lives on earth seem all too brief,
Or brief as it seems to me.
But where you are is forever,
GOD calls that Eternity!*

By Joy Curnutt,

In memory of Jason 11/26/74 - 4/11/99

Helping After Neonatal Death

Chapters:

HAND of the Peninsula
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064
(650) 579-0350 crisis line
(650) 367-6993 office
<http://www.HANDsupport.org>

HAND of Santa Cruz Co.
P.O. Box 3693
Redwood City, CA 94064
(650) 367-6993 office
(831) 438-4513

**HAND of Santa Clara,
Contra Costa, Alameda
Counties, Central Valley**
1-888-908-HAND

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Helping Hands

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Miscarriage

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DO hold out hope without promising me anything specific. The perspective that life can be full and wonderful with or without bearing a child is very useful.

DO offer to help me and my family as needed with childcare if applicable, meals, and so on.

DO understand if it's hard for me to be around other pregnant women, but don't let me shut babies out of my life permanently. It's not ultimately helpful for me to feel sorry for myself or victimized, and it IS possible to share in other women's joy.

Please DON'T feel you have to give me advice, recommendations, or tell me stories of all the women you know who have miscarried. I'm not ready to listen and I will likely end up feeling resentful.

DON'T tell me it was for the best, God's will, or meant to be – that doesn't help me heal.

DON'T promise me that I'll have another one. No one can foresee the future and there are no guarantees when it comes to birth. In any case, human beings are not replaceable.

Above all, DO be yourself, show you care, and allow and encourage the emotional healing process to take place, as difficult as it may be to witness. Time by itself does not heal all wounds, but slowly, over time, one CAN heal from any trauma, no matter how painful.

“Blighted ovum”

An offensive term

for an insulting condition

pregnancy

with

no

baby

body preparing for occupation and lactation

breasts and belly swelling

appetite increasing

hormones surging

breathless, exhausted

but all, in the end, an illusion

No new life

no minuscule embryo

only a mixture of blood and pain

no one to mourn

nothing but a dream to bury

Nancy Faulstich
HAND of Santa Cruz County

Support Meetings

Support meetings are informal gatherings where parents can receive and give support by sharing common experiences as we work through and resolve our losses. We cordially invite you to attend.

Meetings may start out with a topic of discussion, but everyone is free to bring up any questions or aspects of their losses which may concern them.

Attending your first meeting does take courage, but parents who attend find a comforting network of support, encouragement, friendship and understanding.

Nothing is required of you. There are no dues or fees. You need not speak one word. Even if you no longer need the meetings for yourself, come and share your experiences with someone who has recently suffered a loss.

HAND of the Peninsula

Support meetings are held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. Contact: Jill Ludwig (650) 367-6993.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: March 7 and 21
April 4 and 18

May 2 and 16
June 6 and 20
July 4 and 18

Location: Ellsworth Room at Mills Health Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo

HAND of Santa Cruz

Support meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Contact: Kristie Shulman (831) 438-4513.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: March 21
April 18
May 16
June 20
July 18

Location: Congregational Church of Soquel

Pregnancy Support Meeting

Parents who are pregnant again after a loss have special emotional and psychological needs.

Pregnancy Support Group meetings address the concerns of bereaved parents who have started or are thinking about starting another pregnancy. Fathers are especially encouraged to attend.

HAND of the Peninsula holds subsequent pregnancy support meetings on the second Wednesday of the month on an as needed basis. Please call the HAND office (650) 367-6993 if you plan to attend or need more information.

Time: 7:30-9:30 P.M.

Dates: March 14
April 11
May 9
June 13
July 11

Location: Ellsworth Room at Mills Health Center, 100 S. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo

HAND of Santa Cruz

HAND of Santa Cruz County's subsequent pregnancy meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. Please call (831) 438-4513 for more information.

Births

Rebecca Lily Reddy

Nov. 28, 2006, to Dave and Lori Reddy and big sisters Hannah and Abby

Julia Rose Erskine

Jan. 9, 2007, to Shoneen and John Erskine and big brother Adam

Maxwell Cian Kanar

Jan. 26, 2007, to Zan LaHara and Bryn Kanar

Donations

Paula and Joe Osorio, in memory of Alexis Marlene Osorio

Stephen Buchner, MD
Barbara Kirsch, PhD
Peter and Judith Mason Benson
Sharon and John Rayner

Diana and Howard Bujtor, in memory of Peanuts

Carla Altizer and Rod Pasion, in memory of Zachary Pasion

Elham and Farzad Heydari, in memory of Neema and Ideen Heydari

Kristi and Robert Zuniga, in memory of Mariana Teresa Zuniga

Rachel Kindt and Gregory Marcus, in memory of their twins

Tracey and Daniel Palmer, in memory of Ella Rose Palmer

Patricia Leeper and Craig Ball, in memory of Abigail Leeper Ball and William Leeper Ball

Hillary Walsh
Joanna and Steve Beaty
Emily and John Corpos
Todd Lund

Diana Duff, in memory of Devin Steadman

Michelle Stosiek, in memory of Johanna's 18th birthday

Nina and Art Squillante, in memory of Leonardo Charles Squillante

Parnaz Abidi and Kasra Baigi, in memory of their daughter

Linda and Scott Harrison, in memory of Miles George Harrison

Michele and Mark Hollar, in

memory of William Adam Hollar

Lisa and Christopher Kirby, in memory of William Kirby

Phyllis Van Hagen, in memory of Spyder West-Ostwald and Sarah Louise Cook-Mills

Teri and John Hastings, in memory of Lauren Hastings

Laurie McLucas and William Crook, in honor of Celia Hartnett

Kathleen and Victor Parrette, in memory of Malorie Anne Parrette

Rebecca and John Fanous, in memory of Jasmine Christine Fanous

Jill Nelson, Joseph Twicken, Irene and Maia Lustgarten, in memory of Talia Elise Nelson Twicken on her 8th birthday

Mary and William Schorr, and Katie Schorr, in memory of Daniel Patrick Schorr

Celia and Donald Hartnett, in honor of Catherine and Gary Hoff

Deepti and Piyush Jain, in memory of their son, Amol, who is missed by Mom, Dad, and his big sister

Kimberly and Steven Genereux, in memory of Jack Duncan Genereux

Colleen and Dwight Balough, in memory of their third miscarriage

Melinda and Eric Ruchames, in memory of Zachary Clark Ruchames's 20th birthday

Char and George R Rocha, Jr., in memory of Taylor Ann Rocha

Marty Ryhanych and Anthony Mueller, in memory of Troy Mueller

Jacqueline Willson, in memory of Mary Kate Holsinger

Wanda Lee and Kenneth Allen, in memory of David Lee Allen, loved and remembered for 15 years

Lori Williamson, in memory of Shelby Williamson

Twila Forbes, in memory of Cosmo Forbes

Jeannette and Arnold Ricard, in memory of A. Jeannette Ricard

Gina and Daniel Guidi, in memory of Natalie

Suzanne Gallie and Mark Mitchell, in memory of Kyra Moree Mitchell

Wendy Hopfenberg and Michael Occhiolini
Rebecca and Andrew Logan
Margarita and Andres Mera
Christina Conklin and Richard McCluney

Anna Heffron, in memory of Amy Kucserka

In memory of
Jake Eldon Wilcox:
Sharon Bassett and James Rollins, Rolly Slatt, Melinda and Daniel Friedeberg, Gavin Jones, Barbara Pitkin and Brent Sockness, Lauren Alexandria Rhue, Lesley and Mark Ruzon, Ross Shachter, Alyson and Donovan Yisrael, Kathryn A. Fitzgerald, Joan Gallagher, Joan Marie and Edward Gallagher, Kathleen Moran, Gisselle M. Gaitan, Teresa La Fromboise, Julie and Michael Tomz, Ellen and Arcadio Morales, Jr., Catholic Community at Stanford, Leah Hall, Thomas Limanek, Indhika Jayaratnam, Lauris Jensen, Andrea Wolf, Anonymous

An effortless way to support grieving families

Imagine raising hundreds of dollars a year to benefit HAND of the Peninsula without doing anything other than shop as usual.

eScrip is a fundraising program that allows participating merchants to contribute a percentage of your grocery loyalty card, credit card, and debit/ATM card purchases to HAND of the Peninsula.

There is no cost at all to you. Simply register any or all of your cards for use in the program, and specify HAND of the Peninsula (eScrip ID 141808774) as your organization of choice. Then, participating merchants will automatically transfer a percentage of your purchases to HAND each and every month. Since eScrip was introduced in 1999 by Electronic

Scrip Inc., ESI has distributed over \$120 million to schools and non-profit organizations such as ours.

Complete information on the eScrip program is available at www.escrip.com. Registration may be completed at the same site. Questions about HAND's participation in the eScrip program may be directed to info@HANDsupport.org or (650) 367-6993.

We urge all of our families, relatives and friends to participate in this great and effortless fundraising program. Remember to keep your eScrip registration current anytime your registered card numbers change or you change cards. eScrip contributions to HAND on behalf of our participating families have ranged up to \$350 per family per year!