

GATHERING HOPE

*Providing Resources and Community
for Survivors of Miscarriage & Infant Loss*

Miscarriage & Infant Loss Facts

- Each year, an average of 25,000 babies are stillborn in the United States, approximately 70 stillbirths each day
- 1 in 100 women will experience an ectopic pregnancy
- 1 in 4 pregnancies will end in a miscarriage
- Of those who suffer these losses, as many as 40% of mothers will experience symptoms of PTSD, 1 in 4 will endure moderate to severe anxiety and 1 in 10 will experience moderate to severe depression
- Others report isolation, loneliness and trauma

What Do Researchers Say?

"It is...important that the wider public are aware that miscarriage is associated with significant psychological impacts regardless of the length of the pregnancy. Social networks play an important role in supporting women following this event and positive support experiences can play a role in buffering women's experiences of grief, loss and psychological distress following miscarriage. Many studies have reported that for most women, speaking to other women who have experienced miscarriage themselves was the most helpful support they received, as they often felt that these women understood their experience more fully."

Miller, E. J., Temple-Smith, M. J., & Bilardi, J. E. (2019). 'There was just no-one there to acknowledge that it happened to me as well': A qualitative study of male partner's experience of miscarriage. *PLoS one*, 14(5), e0217395.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0217395>

"Professionals who care for bereaved parents have a unique opportunity to offer support by validating their grief, facilitating rituals, providing mementos, and letting the bereaved tell their stories. While no intervention can bring back their beloved children, appropriate intervention can promote healing."

Capitulo K. L. (2005). Evidence for healing interventions with perinatal bereavement. *MCN. The American journal of maternal child nursing*, 30(6), 389-396. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005721-200511000-00007>

"...there are definite unique features of grief and mourning after a miscarriage. Lack of community support is one of them."

-Psychological Repercussions of Pregnancy Loss -Elisabeth Herz, MD

"As an obstetrician, unfortunately, I've had patients who struggle after loss, often experiencing depression and feelings of isolation, even if they are surrounded by loving family members and friends. However, when a woman meets another who has survived a similar loss, an immediate, unspeakable bond is formed forever....I've personally seen the impact it has made in some of my patients. I would strongly recommend this organization as a resource to any woman who has suffered the loss of their baby."

-Dr. April Mikes, D.O., F.A.C.O.G., former Gathering Hope Board Member and OBGYN in Parker County.



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How does Gathering Hope support Pregnancy Loss Survivors?

- **Annual support group:** Gatherings are held each October, during Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Month.
- **Quarterly Book Club:** Equipping bereaved mothers with books (and a community!) to assist in navigating life after a loss.
- **Monthly Video Series:** Encouraging women in their healing journey, while educating others who are unfamiliar with the issues surrounding miscarriage & infant loss.
- **Webinars:** Experts, such as Licensed Professional Counselors and Grief Recovery Methods Specialists, help women build a toolbox for life after loss.
- **Guest Writer Series:** Delivering email encouragement each month, empowering mothers to develop their own voice and find hope.
- **Counselors:** Connecting survivors to professionals, helping them to process grief in a healthy way. We have plans to expand relationships with even more counselors in 2021!
- **Wave of Light:** Taking part in the global WOL experience allows parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives and friends to collectively honor and celebrate the lives of babies.
- **Socials:** Socializing after experiencing a loss can be difficult. Quarterly socials offer a relaxed atmosphere to connect at another level, beyond the annual Gathering. In-person socials are held locally in the North Texas area and virtual events are attended by moms everywhere.
- **Facebook groups:** Newly bereaved mothers engage alongside others who are years into their healing process. The group actively serves as an outlet for mothers searching for an understanding community. We offer a second group for those who are pregnant again after the loss of a baby.

COMING SOON: The Timely Tender Tote answers the frequently asked question from compassionate loved ones: "What can I do to help my friend/wife/sister/daughter who has experienced a miscarriage or just delivered a stillborn baby?" As we launch, our goal is to first serve our local community, meaning that anyone who is within the Parker County/DFW area can purchase a Tote, pick it up at our office and then immediately gift it to a grieving mom. Furthermore, local counselors, OBGYN clinics or hospitals can purchase them to have on hand for clients experiencing stillbirth and pregnancy loss.

This gift makes a tender time in a mother's healing journey just a little bit easier. Based on the collective wisdom of miscarriage and infant loss survivors in the Gathering Hope community, the Timely Tender Tote gifts pregnancy loss survivors a few essential comfort items, practical tips & resources, and serves as a catalyst to connecting with a supportive community.



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Healing & Empowerment for Women

"I knew before Gathering Hope came into my life that there were other moms like me. Moms who had grieved and were still grieving. But when Gathering Hope showed up, I realized that I finally had a place to connect with those moms and be myself. Be completely raw, emotional, devastated, and hopeful all at once. I knew instantly that I could share my story of loss and hope with no judgement. I knew that in my world of grief, which often felt isolated and lonely, I was home. I was with women who could resonate with the cries of my heart and soul in a way no one else could. I have shared my story repeatedly with the women of Gathering Hope, both in person at the annual event or at social events and through the Facebook group. Each time I've told my story, another small piece of healing has surfaced. I've shared my stories and gained healing but also deep, lifelong friendships with many of the Gathering Hope moms. As much as I'm thankful for the opportunity to share my story with them, I'm beyond humbled that they would share their story with me. But that's Gathering Hope for you! It brings together moms of all walks of life, opens a door of connection to other moms, and shatters all the obstacles of being able to heal through sharing...Gathering Hope is powerful. It is beautiful and raw and, dare I say without sounding cliché, even life changing." -**Saleta L.**

"We found out we were having our (surprise) fourth child the day before Easter 2020 and were instantly so excited! Due to the pandemic, we were not able to get into the doctor until I was almost 12 weeks. Everything was perfect, I just needed to see a high risk doctor in Fort Worth since I had been taking a medication considered risky. I went to my high risk appointment at almost 14 weeks, and our visually perfect baby had no heartbeat. My OB was notified, but she had just had surgery herself, so I had to carry our baby another two weeks until I could have a D&C with another doctor. Those 2 weeks were the hardest two weeks of my life because I was stuck in my grief.

I found this group through my doctor's office. Knowing that there is a community of women who are going through the same thoughts and feelings as me, has really helped. I'm able to share with other women when my coworkers, family or spouse may not know how to respond or discuss what I'm feeling. I hope that eventually I can be a helping hand to other grieving mothers as well." -**Britany M.**

"Since joining with Gathering Hope, I've seen the impact they make every day for mommas like me, taking the taboo out of talking about our losses and strengthening each woman in our journey of healing. This group of wonderful ladies have made the biggest impact in my life. They have helped me realize that I am strong, and I can do something to help others, and know that my Emma's loss will not be forgotten, neither will my two miscarriages. Now I know that we have a community within this sucky sisterhood and we have each other's backs when things get bad. There are women who truly understand, who are there to lift you back up and be your strength when you feel you have none left."-**Ashley W.**



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