



MEN & GRIEF

Miscarriage | Stillbirth | Infant Death | Loss of a Multiple



Men may be expected to be strong...

...and protective of their partners and may not be given support for their own grief. Mothers may want their partners to express grief but their partners may feel that they have to be strong to make practical decisions. In addition, partners will naturally have different types of responses to grief based on their cultural, familial, religious and personal experiences. Much of the focus after a loss is on the mother's physical recovery, further complicating the impact on the dad.

Be mindful...

Of what is happening. Although you don't have much time to make decisions, try to slowly think them through. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Speak to a social worker. **DO WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR PARTNER.** Don't worry about others. It's worth repeating: do what you think is best for her and for you. There is no right way to handle this...only what is best for the two of you. If you disagree on how to handle something, take a break from the conversation. There are a lot of decisions to make and they come quickly but there is time for you to discuss and evaluate the options you have.

You are not alone...

Read this article to see how a National Championship Basket-ball staff (and current NBA coach) handled this as three top coaches went through a similar experience to yours. <http://www.the-postgame.com/features/201101/billy-donovans-secret-sorrow>

Some ideas to consider....

Email/tell a few key friends/co-workers/family and tell them to spread the word so you don't have to. Before you head home, think about having someone go to your house and remove reminders of the baby. It is one less thing for you to do. Tell family and friends ways they can help - running errands, bringing food, helping with mail, doing laundry. Know what your limits are. It's okay to say no to events, activities, etc. You get a pass. Be kind and gentle on yourself. These events can be very difficult emotionally and can be draining at a time when your internal resources are low.

Things that may help...

You may find it helpful to try things that are outside your comfort zone, such as support groups, therapy, etc.

- Be willing to try it, even if it's just for your partner's sake.
- Recognize that getting support from trained resources may provide important help through this time
- You don't have to share your feelings; just being present can help you feel less alone'
- Be patient. Healing takes time.
- Be there for your partner and also don't be afraid to let her be there for you. By showing your grief, you may help her feel less alone.
- You may need to find alternative ways to express your grief. For example, some fathers/partners may find it easier to express their grief through music, art or through writing.
- Consider how you may want to recognize your child's life. Some parents have a burial or memorial service. Others may have a day of remembrance, a ceremony at a beach or mountain, or a dedication of something special (a tree, a park bench etc). Still others have found it helpful to promote a random acts of kindness day in honor of their child. There is no right way to honor your child. You choose what is right for you.