



After Care Support Process

Purpose:

Ongoing support and follow up with bereaved families is essential for their well-being and healing. We know that the death of a baby/child is one of the hardest losses a parent will endure. It is the mission of Share to provide support and resources to a family during their loss and throughout their grief journey. Providing aftercare support will help lay a foundation for healthy grieving and an integration of the loss into their life. Research and studies on grief have produced models and stages of grieving that are consistent in the understanding that grief produces many common emotions and that the timeline for grieving is undefined.

Process:

Share follows the outline of follow-up support provided by Dr. Glen Davidson's grief framework. These recommendations are used as a guideline for aftercare support and represent the minimum required aftercare support. Share staff, group facilitators, and parent companions are encouraged to individualize each family's follow-up support.

Aftercare support for an early pregnancy loss:

- Within 1 week of initial contact or first meeting
- At 3 weeks to 4 months after the loss
- On the due date or anniversary date

Aftercare support for a stillbirth or newborn death:

- Within 1 week of initial contact or first meeting
- At 1 month
- At 4 months
- On the due date
- Between 6 and 10 months
- On the anniversary date

Aftercare support for pregnancy after loss:

- Within 1 week of attending first meeting
- On anniversary date or due date of the previous loss
- On birthday or due date of new baby

It is important to confirm with families the best way to contact them and explain the reason/purpose for follow up. In accordance with their preference, aftercare can consist of a phone call, e-mail message, text, or a card sent in the mail. Those wishing to meet privately with the facilitator or attend additional meetings are welcomed to do so. The privacy of families must always be upheld and respected. In addition to the outlined guidelines Share recommends contacting families:

- One week prior to each support group meeting
- The week of support group if attendance was anticipated but absent
- Invitations to memorial events
- During holiday seasons such as: Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas

These practice guidelines serve as an outline to the Share staff, group leaders and parent companions. The research and work of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Glen Davidson, William Worden, and Alan Wolfelt have all scientifically proven commonalities of grieving. The responses of shock, denial, yearning, disorientation, anger are normal. These are commonly seen before a family expresses acceptance or resolution to their grief. Above all the research and science are our family's voices. Their voices were a driving force in the start of Share and they continue to be a driving force to the mission of Share. Our parents have continued to voice the need for peer support; to share their stories, support one another, normalize their experience, recognize that they are not alone and be given the permission to continue to love and honor their babies.