



Referral to Mental Health Resources

Purpose:

The mission of Share is to provide support to those touched by the death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or the first few months of life. Staff members and parent volunteers who provide peer support to families have been trained with the educational programs offered through the National Share office. They are not professional counselors. Ensuring individual safety is a priority in the provision of proper supportive resources and care. The physical and emotional reactions of grief and mourning after the loss of a baby are varied and individual. There is no timeline on grieving. It is imperative to have a variety of supportive resources available in caring for the grieving family. Understanding the following will help in the delivery and/or referral of the best supportive resources: an awareness of the limitations in available support or qualifications to meet an individual's needs, present complicating factors in grieving, and past mental health history. Listening and providing the proper supportive resources both validates the loss and provides a path towards healthy grieving.

Process:

1. A referral to a mental health professional is appropriate when:
 - An employee, volunteer, or support group facilitator feels unqualified or uncertain of the stability or mental state of an individual
 - A screening for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders is needed
 - An individual requests or voices the desire for private or professional counseling
 - An individual's needs are beyond the scope of the mission of Share
2. The recommendation of the need for a referral can be difficult to deliver and to receive. It is the professional responsibility of the caregiver to ensure the safety of the individual and to provide the appropriate resources to meet their needs.
3. It is important when making the recommendation for professional consultation to:
 - Validate the individual's loss
 - Acknowledge their pain
 - Explain their feelings of grief are normal
 - Clarify that you are still available to support them
4. Discuss that therapy is a step towards a positive change and healing. Discuss any fears or apprehensions towards seeking professional support.
5. If an individual was giving any indication of a threat to suicide or self-harm, calling 911 is appropriate. See Supporting a Parent Who May Be Suicidal for additional information.
6. A list of local therapists and/or counselors should be made available as well as resources for mental health hotlines.