

October is National Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month

WHY IS RAISING AWARENESS SO IMPORTANT?

Grief & Mental Health Support



1 in 4 women will experience a pregnancy or infant loss in their lifetime. Families can feel isolated in their grief due to the stigma associated with this type of loss. They may also develop depressive symptoms and posttraumatic stress that can effect their day to day life. Speaking about it, connecting to others who have been through similar loss, and sharing resources can continue to normalize the topic and promote healing.

[Postpartum Support International, CT Chapter](#)

[Star Legacy Foundation](#)

[CT 211](#)

Prevention



Consistent prenatal care and maintaining a healthy lifestyle are important to reducing risk of pregnancy and infant loss. The CDC advises that there is no safe time or amount of alcohol during pregnancy. Alcohol, as well as other substances, can lead to health complications for the developing baby. For some individuals, drinking alcohol or using substances during pregnancy is not a simple recreational choice, but a chronic health condition beyond willpower alone. It does not mean they do not love their baby. If you are struggling to stop or reduce your use you are not alone.

[DMHAS Women's REACH Program](#)

[CT DMHAS](#)

Patient Centered Care



Increased awareness and destigmatization improves the ability of health care providers to partner with the family during and after the pregnancy as any issues arise. Although these can be difficult conversations, providers should maintain open and safe lines of communication with parents to minimize the possibility of loss where applicable and to also provide best practice support to grieving families.

[Star Legacy Foundation, Resources for Health Professionals](#)

Research & Health Equity



Stillbirth occurs in families of all races, ethnicities, and income levels, and to women of all ages. However, the CDC reports that stillbirth occurs more often among those who are black. In [CT between 2007-2017](#) the stillbirth rate among black/African American women (8.6 per 1,000 live births) was twice the rate of those compared to white women (3.8 per 1,000 live births). Low socioeconomic status and education level are also a risk factors.

We must continue to address the racial health disparities that disproportionately impact our communities of color.





women experience a pregnancy or infant loss.

In addition to women, men and the LGBTQIA+ community also struggle with pregnancy and infant loss.

If you are personally effected...

What can loss look like?

- ectopic pregnancy
- miscarriage
- molar pregnancy
- neonatal death
- still birth
- sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- accidents or tragedies during pregnancy or after birth

Honoring your baby

You can do special things to remember your baby, even if didn't have a chance to see, touch or hold them.

- have a memorial service
- collect items such as blankets, a hospital bracelet, a sonogram, or foot print
- plant a tree or garden
- volunteer for a charity in your child's name

DON'T SAY

At least you know you can get pregnant.

Your baby is in a better place now. / You have an angel now.

Do you know why it happened?

Don't worry, you'll be ok.

At least it was early on.

Be thankful for the kids/things you do have.

Time will make it better.

I do not know how I would handle this if it happened to me.

Where can you go for help?

Loss can come with a variety of feelings, including sadness, anger, and confusion. These can impact both your physical and mental well being, so make sure you reach out for support.

- Your health care provider, partner/loved ones, grief counselor, or faith/spiritual leader
- CT Resources: [Postpartum Support International \(CT Chapter\)](#) or [CT 211](#)
- National Resources: [Star Legacy Foundation](#), [March of Dimes](#)

If you are supporting someone...

SAY

Know how much your baby was loved and will continue to be loved.

Please be gentle with yourself right now and grieve however you need to.

Do you need company while you recover? Maybe I can help you around the house or with running errands.

What can I practically do to support you right now?

I am not sure what to say or do, but I am here for you whenever and however you need me.

Say this, not that

It can be hard to know what to say to someone who lost their child. Here are some examples of supportive language.