

Miscarriage: How Others Might React was adapted from materials prepared by Jody Earle, Luba Djurdjinovic and the Educational Materials Advisory Committee of the *Ferre Institute*. The *Ferre Institute* is a non-profit organization dedicated to education about infertility.

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MISCARRIAGE

How Others Might  
React



**Most people aren't comfortable discussing loss or death. People who care a great deal about you often will react to your loss in a way that frustrates and disappoints you. They may not think of your loss as a death. They may not seem sympathetic about your sadness. There aren't many get well cards for pregnancy loss. When dealing with others, you will only waste energy if you expect them to give more than they are able to give.**

**Some people might react with silence or avoidance.** They may not even have known that you were pregnant. They may feel that they are intruding or are not well enough informed to talk with you about your loss. They probably feel certain that they'll say the wrong thing, and unfortunately that often is true. It doesn't occur to them that sending a "thinking of you" note, an "I'm sorry" card, a hug or small gift is appropriate and much better than remaining silent about your loss.

**You will hear all about people who have endured and survived worse things.** You will also hear comments like "Hurry and get pregnant again so you'll forget," or "It's for the best." Some people will try to figure out what you did wrong so that they can blame something on your loss. Incidentally, a surprising number of people will share their own loss experience with you. Be patient with them.

Action-oriented people will bring casseroles, shop for groceries, find books you should read, and take you out for lunch or shopping. You probably will

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appreciate this attention. It is easier to have someone with you the first few times you go out in public or the first day you go back to work. You will need to find the right balance with these helpers. You will need enough time to be alone as well as time to be alone with your partner.

**Your medical caregivers may treat your loss as routine and appear not to be very concerned until you have had more than one loss.** You know one loss is too many! You have to remind yourself that you chose your medical caregivers to give you good physical care. Good emotional care may not be found at the same place as good physical care. If you don't expect it from your medical caregivers, then you won't be so upset when you don't receive it from them. Be a wise medical consumer; ask questions, take notes, make a list of questions and concerns and bring an extra listener. Learn to be careful, assertive and honest about your needs without being aggressive. For instance, you may have to request a follow-up visit with your doctor.

**You and your partner's coping styles will probably be different.** It will seem like you're on a seesaw. The woman often wants to review and mull over the loss and the male partner is more action-oriented and wants to get on with life. That doesn't mean he is not grieving. Partners don't always work through problems at the same pace or with the same solution. Often the woman is the consolee and her partner is the consoler. Neither partner should be the sole provider of support for the other.

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Although you will probably lean on one another at this time, each of you will need to find additional sources of support. Remind yourselves that you love each other. Take time together to be happy, to be sad, to talk, and to hug, and to hug some more.

**If you have other children in the family, they may blame themselves for your loss.** Listen to their concerns and explain the truth at their level. They will need reassurance and probably some extra security, so that they won't be frightened about their own mortality. Allow them to be sad and also to see you sad.

### Summary

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- Action-oriented people will bring casseroles, shop for groceries, etc.
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