footprints baby loss
twin triplet support

Support for you

after the loss of twins, triplets or more.

You've faced one of the hardest experiences imaginable - the loss of more than one baby, or the loss of one or more babies when others have survived. Every family's experience is different but please know you are not alone.

This leaflet is here to remind you that what you're feeling is valid, that there's no "right way" to grieve and that it's okay to take things one moment at a time.

It is important to recognise that men and women can often grieve differently to each other.

It's okay to just be getting through each moment:

- You've survived moments you thought you couldn't.
- You are finding ways to love and remember each of your babies.
- You are learning to live with both grief and love - even if it feels impossible some days.
- You are doing the best you can and that is enough.
- Whether all of your babies have died or you're caring for a surviving baby, you are still a parent to all of your children.

SAY THEIR NAMES

Encourage people to talk about your babies.

Even though they died, you may still want to share photos, stories or memories.

It's okay to want others to know them.

"I love when people say my twins' names - and always have."

"I now like to talk about both of my boys and don't like it when anyone refers to 'Charlie's birthday' for example and will correct them to 'Charlie and Oscar's birthday'. I have found that when people don't know what to say they often don't say anything so it's best to be honest and tell people how you want to talk about your babies."

CARING FOR YOURSELF

It's easy to put your own needs last. Try to give yourself permission to:

- Rest when you can - emotional healing takes energy.
- Ask for practical help (meals, childcare, errands).
- Spend time with people who listen without trying to fix things.
- Talk about each of your babies as much or as little as you need to.
- Do small things that bring comfort - light a candle, write their names or keep something special close.
- Takes as long as you need.
- To set boundaries with friends and family if you need to protect yourself for whatever reason.

If you have a surviving baby, it's okay to feel joy and sadness at the same time. You can love them deeply and still miss the other(s) beyond words.

"I wrote in a journal in the early days which really helped me to get thoughts out of my head and onto the page."

"Like most new mums I was bottom of the priority list for a long long time but I've always made time for an occasional soak in the bath. It gives me time to myself to relax and focus."

"I take time to visit Ramy's grave. We also have Ramy's Day each year and we look at his memory box with all his keepsakes in there."

"Be really kind and patient with yourself when you are grieving and doing self care. Also know that what happened wasn't your fault - I think guilt is a huge part of grief."

LONGER-TERM HELP AND SUPPORT

Grief doesn't end after a few months. For many parents, things can get harder later when life around you seems to "move on."

Keep letting yourself grieve and keep asking for or accepting support.

You will still need check-ins long after the funeral or first anniversaries. It feels important to know that people care and remember.

"The weight of grief doesn't get less but we get better at carrying it."

UNDERSTAND THAT GRIEF IS ONGOING - A NEW NORMAL

You will always think of your babies - and that's okay.

Some moments will bring the pain rushing back.

Grief changes over time but it doesn't disappear, it becomes part of who you are.

"My grief has changed. It was raw and so visceral all of the time in the beginning. Now it feels more positive and I am proud that I gave birth to twins and proud to talk about both of them."

"I have found that the hard days are still just as hard but there are fewer of them as time passes. I find it easier to talk about as time has passed though and talking helps so much."

WHEN TO SEEK EXTRA HELP

You might need extra support if you:

- Feel constantly overwhelmed or unable to function.
- Struggle to eat, sleep or connect with others.
- Feel unsafe with your thoughts.

If you are in crisis, please reach out to:

- **Samaritans, Tel.** 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- Your **GP** or local **crisis team.**
- A&E or call 999 (in an emergency).

SUPPORT AND PEER CONNECTION

Peer support offers understanding and comfort from others who have experienced the loss of twins or triplets.

Connecting with others through peer support can help you feel less isolated in your grief. It can offer a space to talk about your babies, your feelings and the love you hold for them.

"Meeting others who had also lost twins or triplets was a lifeline for me."

"It was the first time I felt truly understood."

"Being part of a community online, having had a befriender and speaking to others who have gone through twin loss. Peer support has been the one thing by far which has helped me, and continues to help me."

You might find help through:

- Footprints Baby Loss - specialist bespoke twin and triplet support.
- Many other fantastic baby loss charities or your local hospice bereavement team.

"There is genuine care and compassion from people who understand what I've been through as they have had lived experience."

GETTING SUPPORT FROM FOOTPRINTS BABY LOSS

We're here for you - whether your babies died during pregnancy, at birth or after, and whether you're grieving one or more babies.

"It helped to know that I could love all my babies, even the ones who aren't here. Footprints helped me see that I'm still their mum."

"Talking to others with similar lived experience through Footprints has been the most helpful thing as I know I can speak without fear of judgment to people who just understand."

We offer:

- Befriending and online support groups - peer and group support from others who understand twin and triplet loss.
- Private online community - safe spaces to talk, share memories and honour each of your babies.
- Resources and website -guidance for families, friends, workplaces and professionals.

"There is such a feeling of community in a situation which feels so unique and lonely. I have sought help from other organisations dealing with baby loss or bereavement and none of it ever seems to quite 'fit'. With Footprints I've found my community."

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support@footprintsbabyloss.org
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You're not alone. You're part of a community that understands.

REMEMBERING AND FUNDRAISING

Many parents find purpose in fundraising or raising awareness in memory of their babies.

"For me, it brought focus and healing after the funeral. It gave me permission to talk about my babies, keep their memory alive, and help others in their name."

You might also find comfort in:

- Lighting a candle or planting something in their memory.
- Sharing photos, or marking birthdays and anniversaries.
- Creating a scrapbook or keepsake.
- Creating a memory box or photo book.
- Writing letters to each baby or writing in a journal.
- Including them in family traditions - birthdays, holidays, or in simple everyday moments.
- Releasing bubbles or flowers on special dates.

You can choose what feels right for you - there's no wrong way to remember.

“Charlie and I say goodnight to Oscar every night and Charlie has a purple butterfly soft toy he takes to bed every night. I write both of them a birthday and Christmas card each year and we visit a special spot in our local park on the anniversary of Oscar’s passing each year and any other time that we want to feel close to him.”

MIXED FEELINGS ARE NORMAL

You may feel deep sadness, anger, guilt or confusion. You might also feel relief that one baby survived or guilt about that relief.

You might find yourself switching between heartbreak and gratitude - sometimes in the same moment.

All of these emotions can coexist. You don’t have to choose just one way to feel.

Grief after multiple loss is complex - it’s okay if your feelings don’t make sense, even to you.

“I had such mixed emotions and heartbreakingly I was happy and relieved I still had one baby alive, and I hoped my pregnancy would be smoother now. I had therapy from the NICU after my surviving son was born.”

“Having a surviving twin means constant mixed feelings and that continues for many years.”

"Sometimes I just felt so sad that both of my twin boys had died and other times I was just so angry."

"The emotion that I struggled most with was jealousy - seeing other people's twins or hearing other people announce their pregnancy."

TWINS, TRIPLETS AND SIBLINGS

The joy of one baby's survival can sit beside the despair of losing another.

Both emotions are real and deserve space.

Future pregnancies may feel fragile or frightening.

Watching siblings grow can also highlight what's missing - sometimes not immediately but months or years later.

"I find it very sad that happy times with our survivor are always tinged with sadness and loss and will need to find ways to navigate this as he gets older and more aware of the circumstances."

"I wanted my surviving twin to grow up feeling it is ok to talk about his brother."

You don't have to pretend it's easy. It's okay to love, to miss, and to wish things were different - all at once.

“I was so pleased when my daughter arrived safely but I still missed my twin boys so much.”

“I didn't know that such extreme joy and sadness could be felt at the same time until I was holding my much longed for surviving twin whilst mourning the loss of his brother.”

POPPY AND ARTHUR’S STORY

In 2024, my partner and I decided to start trying for a baby and we were delighted to see those two lines on a positive test a few months later. At an early reassurance scan, we discovered that there were not one but two babies wriggling about on the screen - we were amazed and so excited.

We felt lucky that our twins were non-identical, with their own sacs and placentas, meaning they were the lowest risk. The 12 week scan came and went, with everything looking perfect. Then the 20 week scan, which again showed nothing but two healthy babies and that we were expecting a girl and a boy. I couldn’t believe how blessed we were.

At 21w 3d, everything suddenly changed. I woke up to discover that I was leaking fluid. A trip to triage confirmed that I had a leak in the hind waters around one of the twins and I was in fact 5cm dilated with bulging, ruptured membranes in preterm labour. I will never forget the doctor who broke the news that our babies would be born soon and that they would not survive.

I was admitted to hospital where I spent a week on bedrest, with the hope that by some miracle my labour would not advance and we could keep the babies safe for as long as possible.

Unfortunately, a week later I began having more intense contractions and over the course of 72 hours Poppy and Arthur were born. They were both born alive and lived for around 3 hours each. We were able to hold them during this time, and seeing how small but how perfectly formed they were as we watched them pass away broke our hearts.

When you first see those two lines on a pregnancy test, you never imagine that you would be leaving the hospital without your baby. What ordinarily marks the start of a new beginning, for us was the beginning of the end of our lives as we knew them. Our world was shattered beyond repair as we came to terms with the reality of planning a funeral for our twins, choosing music, flowers, and the order of service. I had only imagined sitting in baby classes, not in a funeral home making these heart wrenching decisions.

Our family and friends were incredibly supportive but we found that there was a lot of awkwardness too. People cared but they really did not know what to say. Sometimes people unintentionally said things that hurt, such as “everything happens for a reason” or “you can always try again”. Losing our babies began to feel extremely isolating. I never knew what to say or how much to share, for fear of how others might respond.

Finding the Footprints community felt like a huge relief. Here was a group of parents who knew our pain, who didn’t require us to explain how we felt, because they understood. Sharon and Suzie were so kind, calm and supportive. The online Facebook group felt like an incredibly safe space to share how we were feeling and a reminder that we weren’t alone in our grief.

Recently, we discovered that we are pregnant again. I have been able to seek comfort from the Pregnancy After Loss group. Finding a group of women who share the anxieties around being pregnant following a traumatic loss has been invaluable. I am eternally grateful to Footprints for everything that they do. Next year my partner plans to take part in the Snowdon climb in memory of our beautiful twins.

"I took one day at a time. We were still in NICU with our surviving twin, and although this distraction helped, I made sure Ramy wasn't forgotten. The purple butterfly was a huge comfort to us during our hospital stay."

Thank you to our Footprints families that have shared their thoughts and helped with this booklet.

A FINAL THOUGHT

You are not alone in this.

You are a parent to all of your babies - those who are here and those who are not.

You will always think about your babies.

They will always be part of you, and of your family.

Grief and love live side by side now.

Be gentle with yourself. You are doing the best you can.

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