The Importance of Peer Support - A Guide for Healthcare Professionals

footprints baby loss
twin triplet support

Peer Support Matters...
for families after the death of a twin, triplet, or more.

Multiple pregnancy loss is complex and can sometimes be misunderstood. Families may be grieving one baby while caring for another, coping with the death of all of their babies or facing difficult decisions during pregnancy. Alongside professional care, peer support offers understanding that comes from shared lived experience.

Well-managed peer support can begin before a baby's death, providing honest conversations that help families feel more prepared and may reduce the impact of trauma.

WHY PEER SUPPORT MATTERS:

- Provides validation and understanding from others with lived experience
- Complements clinical, psychological and bereavement support
- Reduces isolation and helps families feel less alone
- Offers hope through connection with others further along in their journey
- Offers continuity of support beyond hospital care and appointments

"It was my midwife who suggested peer support. Knowing there were other parents who truly understood made a huge difference."

WHY SIGNPOST:

- To introduce peer support early, even if families are not ready to engage immediately
- To provide trusted sources of support from specialist organisations
- Footprints Baby Loss and TAPS Support can provide safe, specialist peer support after multiple birth pregnancy loss

YOUR ROLE IN SIGNPOSTING

Families may never access specialist peer support unless a healthcare professional tells them it exists. A simple conversation can open the door to ongoing support when they need it most. Families can revisit the conversations as support needs often change over time.

"We recommend peer support as a vital component of bereavement care, helping families to feel understood, validated and less alone in their grief. Alongside this, we also signpost our twin and triplet loss families to perinatal mental health support and counselling."

Sam Collinge

"Early conversations with families in your care, can open up an opportunity to share information about peer support. Together with professional care including clinical, psychological and bereavement support, peer support provides a range of benefits including reducing isolation, providing an opportunity to connect with other families with lived experience and improving emotional wellbeing. Psychological safety is essential in providing safe perinatal care."

Donna Ockenden

"Peer support provides validation and acknowledgment from someone with real world lived experience that can't be replaced or replicated by health professionals, family or friends. Unique and impactful over the longer term"

Prof. Nicholas Embleton

Peer Support that we offer at Footprints Baby Loss:

- One-to-one matching to a befriender with a similar experience
- Small peer online support groups
- Carefully moderated online communities

Research shows that peer support can reduce feelings of isolation, increase emotional wellbeing and help bereaved parents feel understood.

If you'd like to know more about why peer support can make such a difference, our Position Paper: The Role of Peer Support in Multiple Pregnancy Complications and Loss, shares the evidence behind this carefully moderated support.

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