

**Supporting NSW communities,
families and individuals
experiencing loss and grief.**

www.nalag.org.au



NALAG
National Association for
Loss and Grief (NSW) Inc

Babies less than 20 weeks

If a loss has occurred and baby is less than 20 weeks gestation a certificate of recognition of early pregnancy loss can be issued from Births, Deaths and Marriages. More information and an application form can be found at: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-for-recognition-of-early-pregnancy-loss> or scanning the QR code below.



The Royal Women's Hospital also has legal information available (such as the ability to take baby home for burial) which can be found at: <https://www.thewomens.org.au/health-information/pregnancy-and-birth/pregnancy-problems/when-a-baby-dies/legal-information> or scanning the QR code below.



**For more information
& referral, please contact:**

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info@nalag.org.au

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**PO Box 379
DUBBO NSW 2830**

NALAG BRANCHES:

MUDGEE

BELLINGEN/NAMBUCCA

HUNTER

GRIEF SUPPORT

GREATER SYDNEY

Death of a Baby

**Grief reactions associated
with stillbirth and the death
of a baby.**

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Grief reactions associated with stillbirth and the death of a newborn baby

Pregnant couples usually expect birth to be a joyful event not a sad one. In a normal situation no-one expects a baby to die. The death of a baby brings many intense feelings.

Parents often feel a strong desire to talk about their baby. Many want to be with others who have suffered and survived a similar loss. Many bereaved parents seek help from a support group from around 6 weeks or so after their baby's death. This is because until that time most bereaved parents feel at least some support from their family and friends. However after a few weeks most family and friends are able to get on with their lives and activities whereas the bereaved may feel they cannot get on with theirs.

In the months and years after a baby is stillborn the parents may still note when their baby may have been walking or should have been going to school. Christmas and family birthdays may also be painful reminders of what should have been. Parents may feel particularly sad during these times. Many will remember and think about their dead baby for the rest of their lives.

Many bereaved parents will go on to have another baby. Most will endure an anxious

pregnancy. It is common for bereaved parents to believe that the subsequent baby will die too either during pregnancy or infancy. The length of time between the death of their baby and the next pregnancy does not appear to affect the level of anxiety felt during the pregnancy. However if another pregnancy occurs within twelve months, then parents have to deal with an active grieving phase as well as anxiety caused by the next pregnancy. It is very common for family and friends of the bereaved to believe that all is well once a new baby is born but the bereaved parents will still grieve for the baby who died.

Men also suffer after the death of a baby. Both parents grieve but the way they act and feel is not usually the same. Many bereaved parents say their relationship changes after their baby dies. Some find their relationship strengthens as a result of the tragedy while others drift apart. Couples who say their relationship strengthened are usually the couples who freely talk to each other about how they are feeling.

Children also grieve for their baby sister or brother. Most seem to cope. It is common to include the baby's brother or sister when visiting the baby in hospital and going to the funeral. Children usually like to talk about their baby. It is often helpful to

encourage children to discuss their loss both at home and at school.

The baby's **grandparents** may also grieve for their grandchild. They often suffer because their child is suffering and grieve because their grandchild is dead. Sometimes relationships in a family become strained after a baby has died. It is helpful to talk through issues before they become problems.

Many bereaved parents feel they have been emotionally strengthened by the experience of losing a baby. Most find they understand more about themselves and what they really value. They know they can rely on themselves and their partner when times are tough. Some find new friendships and understanding amongst other bereaved parents.

Many no longer take what they have for granted and are more sensitive to their family and friends when they, in turn, grieve. Bereaved parents who are further down the track can often look back and say "I survived when I never thought I would".

Information provided has been adapted from: www.grieflink.asn.au

For more information on NALAG services, visit www.nalag.org.au