



## MISCARRIAGE IMPACTS MEN TOO

You and your partner have experienced a miscarriage, but your feelings sometimes go unnoticed. You may find that most people direct their sympathy toward your partner rather than you. You may feel alone and isolated, especially if you believe you must stay strong and stoic for your partner and keep your feelings to yourself.

While you share your partner's sadness and grief of the pregnancy loss, you may grieve in different ways and intensities. You may not feel or be comfortable showing the same anguish as your partner. Their bodies undergo notable physical changes during pregnancy and miscarriage. While you have witnessed these changes, your attachment to the pregnancy may have differed. Or you may have felt highly invested in the pregnancy from the beginning and are now feeling deeply affected by the pregnancy loss.

*"There was no one there to acknowledge that it happened to me as well...one day, I saw myself as a Dad; the other day, I was not a Dad anymore".*

### HOW MIGHT YOU FEEL?

Everyone grieves differently. Some people lean more toward an intuitive grief style (expressing their emotions outwardly and actively seeking support). In contrast, others lean toward a more instrumental grief style (problem-solving or thinking more than feeling approach). Traditionally we have attributed a more instrumental style to men and a more intuitive style to women. But in fact, grief is a highly individualised experience, and how people cope with their grief is personal. From research, we also know that the types of support you need can depend on your grief style.

It can be difficult for you to feel concerned about your partner but possibly feel powerless, frustrated, and unsure of the best way to help. It might appear like there is never a good or comfortable time to discuss your feelings. While it is understandable you want to support your partner, it's also important to explore your feelings. The complexity of looking after yourself, getting the support you need, and being there for those that rely on you is not a trivial undertaking. It takes courage to ask for help when you need it. Your health and mental well-being are the most important things you can focus on, which benefits your partner and your family.

*"I didn't think that she was strong enough to look after herself with what I was. . . likely to dump on her."*

Talk with your partners, family or friends, or someone else you trust. If you want support outside the people you know, there are many Australian based support services that can help – we share these services in the Support Services section.

## COMMON FEELINGS AFTER A MISCARRIAGE

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Miscarriage is a unique form of loss. Families may mourn the absence of a baby that they didn't have the chance to get to know. Before the loss, parents often begin to contemplate the changes and responsibilities that lie ahead in caring for a new baby. Many parents start to invest their hopes and expectations in the pregnancy, which often begins well before conception.

We encourage you to embrace and be curious about your feelings rather than critical or judgemental. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Not everyone who experiences miscarriage will feel sad; some may feel relieved or confused. Most likely, you will have many different feelings simultaneously, and your emotions are likely to change over time as you go through the different stages of grief.

Here are some common emotions that you may feel after a miscarriage and some quotes from men we have interviewed during our research studies that you may relate to:



The emotions you may experience after a miscarriage can be very overwhelming. Please know that you are not alone and support services are available.

**If you are in a crisis situation, please call Lifeline (13 11 14), Beyond Blue (1300 224 636), or 000 immediately.**



## GRIEF AND SADNESS

Grief and sadness are shared emotions following a miscarriage. Sadness is a natural and expected feeling to experience. You are not only feeling sad about the loss of your baby, but also the loss of the future you imagined, and possibly feel sad that others are not providing you the support or reaction you expected.

*"I was pretty devastated, I started crying. I was pretty down for about a week... really, really sad. Really down. Really down on the world."*



## LONELINESS

If you didn't tell anyone about your pregnancy, you might feel alone in your pain and sadness. Although it can be challenging to be vulnerable and share these feelings, talking to someone about your loss may help with these feelings.

Partners, family, and friends may understand your feelings, or they may not. Partners often have different experiences and reactions, and open conversations can be worthwhile.

*"As a male we're probably ...just like ...I'll be fine. I'll brush myself off and I'll be alright ...but deep down you're not."*

## NUMBNESS/EMPTINESS

You may experience a period after the miscarriage where you feel emotionally and physically empty or numb. Some men feel a sense of disbelief that this has happened to them, and it may feel surreal to feel so distressed when there are limited memories to process. Allow yourself time to absorb what has happened, talk to others, and find ways to remember your baby.

NOTE: If you experience intense and prolonged feelings of disconnection, numbness, or dissociation which interfere with your functioning, you should speak with a mental health professional.

*"My role was just to be extremely focused... I had to switch off there's no baby any more. I've got to look after my wife... It was more an advocacy role ...and just trying to get help."*



## ANGER

Feelings of anger may arise because you do not feel in control of the situation or your body. Anger may arise from not knowing the reasons for the miscarriage or feeling dissatisfied with the medical treatment you received. Or you may be resentful that other people have not responded to you in the way you felt you needed. A miscarriage can feel unfair and unjust. Or anger can sometimes be a way of keeping feelings of sadness at bay.

As the person who did not go through the miscarriage physically, you may feel that your family, friends, and/or medical professionals do not acknowledge that you experienced a miscarriage too. This can also bring feelings of anger.

## JEALOUSY

Many people describe feeling jealous of people who have children or have fallen pregnant. It is painful to see others with a baby, and, understandably, you feel this way. Criticising yourself and feeling ashamed about these feelings doesn't help and certainly doesn't take them away. These feelings are transient and don't make you a terrible person. Speaking with others who have experienced a miscarriage may be helpful. It can also be beneficial to avoid events that might trigger your sadness until you feel ready.



## CONFUSED

A miscarriage can be a very confusing experience. It can occur suddenly and out of the blue. There may be little explanation for why it happened, and you may experience a whole range of intense, complicated emotions as a result.

In our study, we found that when men take on the role as a supporter for their partners, they are often left not knowing how to feel or how to deal with their own emotions. You may feel that expressing your emotions will be too much to put onto your partner, but this doesn't mean that you can't find support through other people or services.

*"At the time I didn't feel comfortable, even bringing up anything I was thinking just for that worry that she was already under enough strain as it was."*

## SHOCK

You may experience shock as a miscarriage is not the outcome that you imagined when you found out you were pregnant. Shock and disbelief are common feelings, and it often takes time to absorb that you have had a miscarriage.

## FAILURE OR LACK OF CONTROL

You may feel like you have failed yourself, your partner, or your family. Or perhaps you feel like your body has failed you or have no control over your body or situation, which can arouse anger and anxiety. It is essential to know that it is highly unlikely that you have done anything to cause your miscarriage. Trusting your body again can take time.

## GUILT

It is common to feel guilty or blame yourself for a miscarriage, fearing you did something "wrong." It is rarely the case that you have done something to cause a miscarriage. In distressing situations, where we have no control over outcomes, we are inclined to look for explanations about why terrible, unforeseen things happen. In the absence of proof, it is understandable why we might want to blame ourselves, even though there may be no evidence that you caused this or were at fault in any way.

## FEAR/ANXIETY/WORRY

Worry or anxiety is a common emotion following a miscarriage. The intensity and duration of anxiety are likely to change over time. The experience of the miscarriage itself may be very frightening, depending upon the circumstances. Necessary medical procedures may be painful, and you may not feel like you can control the situation. The absence of control can make you feel anxious.

Uneasy thoughts tend to take the form of “what if...” or “I should...”. Many people fear having another miscarriage and worry about what this means about their body and their health. You may also feel nervous about telling others about the miscarriage. If you feel unable to switch off feelings of anxiety or worry, and you or others around you are concerned about you, consider seeking a referral to a psychologist or mental health professional who can assist you.

*“...scared. scared of her situation, of what could happen ...we would be running out. might be... another embryo and we only have so many that we can.”*

## RELIEF

You may feel relieved after a miscarriage. Perhaps your baby was diagnosed with a medical condition, or your partner was unwell during pregnancy (e.g., Morning sickness or hyperemesis gravidarum). You may also feel relieved if the pregnancy was unplanned or if your circumstances would have made caring for a baby a challenge. There are many valid reasons people may feel relief following a miscarriage and feeling this way doesn't make you a bad person. You can feel relief simultaneously as feeling a range of other complicated emotions about the pregnancy loss.

You may also feel guilty because you feel relieved after losing a pregnancy. This feeling might coincide as you are feeling sad or anxious. It is normal to have a range of complex emotions at any one time. There is probably a good reason why part of you feels relieved, which is OK. Relief doesn't discount feelings of sadness or make you a terrible person. Uncertainty (or ambivalence) about the pregnancy is a normal part of all pregnancies, even the most wanted pregnancy.



### WHEN SHOULD YOU SEEK MENTAL HEALTH CARE?

If you think that the intensity of your feelings is troublesome to manage alone, you might consider seeking professional mental health support. You can now access Medicare rebates to speak to a psychologist who has high-level training and who is required to keep the details of what you tell them confidential.

## MALE SPECIFIC SUPPORT

**Red Nose Grief and Support**  
See their Men's Grief library



**BearDs of Hope**  
Peer support group for men



**Men's Line**  
Support anywhere, anytime



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please call Lifeline (13 11 14),  
Beyond Blue (1300 224 636),  
or 000 immediately.

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Visit our website by scanning the QR code below or visit [miscarriageaustralia.com.au](https://miscarriageaustralia.com.au)

You can also find more information from your GP or the website of the hospital or clinic you will be attending



## WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?

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Miscarriage Australia strives to provide current and evidence-based information to everyone. In developing the website, we engaged an expert advisory committee to review the information to ensure our resources are evidence based and reflect current best-practice. The information provided in this factsheet is designed to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between a patient/user and their existing health care professional(s).