
Taking Care of Yourself

Taking care of yourself is important. This experience may be overwhelming for the whole family and at times you may feel alone. Here are some suggestions for taking care of yourself:

Sleep: Give yourself plenty of time to rest. Grief is emotionally and physically draining.

Exercise: Take walks or exercise frequently. Physical activity can reduce stress and may give you time to gather your thoughts.

Talk with others: Consider seeking out others, through support groups, church groups, family or friends.

Cry, cry, and cry: Tears are very healing. You don't have to cry in front of others, however, sometimes in the deepest of grief it helps to cry with another person present.

Honor your feelings: Embrace your emotions. They may range from anger to sorrow to hope; everyone reacts differently.

Don't expect to "get over it:" You will begin to experience happy times again in your life, but you probably will never "get over it." It is a gentle and gradual acceptance that happens over many years.

When To Call

If you have experienced the death of a baby during pregnancy, after birth or up to one year of age, whatever the cause, please call us. We will arrange to visit you as soon as possible.

All services are free of charge and include:

Home Visits
Emotional Support and Information
Resources and Referrals
Maternal Interview

For more information call:

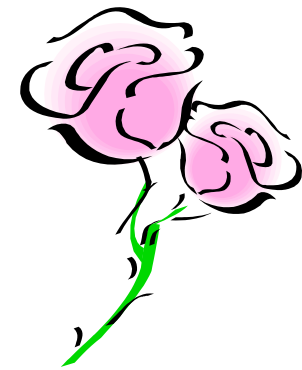
**Yolanda Thompson,
FIMR Case Manager at
(925) 313-6283**

**Or call (925) 313-6254 and
ask for the FIMR Program**

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Contra Costa Fetal Infant Mortality Review Program



*Family Support Following
a Pregnancy Loss or Death
of an Infant*

*Family, Maternal and Child Health Programs
Contra Costa Health Services*



To Parents and Families:

If you recently experienced the loss of a baby during pregnancy or in early infancy, the Contra Costa FIMR Program extends our deepest sympathy. There simply are not words to express the depth of sorrow after such a loss.

The FIMR Program provides support to parents and families whose lives had been affected by the tragic death of a child or loss of a pregnancy. We can provide:

- Support needed for emotional, physical, spiritual and social healing,
- Referrals to resources needed immediately after a death, and
- Information and emotional support to help deal with grief and other emotions following the death of a baby.

The FIMR Program also attempts to learn more about the causes and factors related to these early deaths. This information helps local agencies improve or develop better services to address the needs of women, infants and families.

We interview mothers and families who have recently experienced the loss of a baby during pregnancy or early infancy and are open to sharing their story.

As a parent, only you can tell us your story and what your experiences with medical and social service providers were like.

These stories help us examine existing services for infants, pregnant women, and families and understand what services families need and how successful they are at getting them.

Parents who have participated in an interview often say that it was a positive experience. It honors their baby's short life as well as the memory of their precious child.

When Your Baby Dies...

Whether your loss occurred during pregnancy or after birth, you may go through a variety of experiences, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Your emotions may be unpredictable and unstable. You may dwell on questions such as "What if..." and "If only..." You may also feel:

- Numbness
- Denial
- Confusion
- Anger or irritability
- Deep sadness
- Self-criticism and guilt
- Anxiety or loneliness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Physical sensations - tightness in the throat or chest, shortness of breath, a lack of energy, body aches or heart palpitations.

"Grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction, that must be taken. The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored indefinitely. It is inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied."

- Safe Passages, Molly Fumia