

uō ma aiga / mo uo ma Aiga

Nga hoa me nga whanau

For Friends/Family



Be There

The thought of supporting someone whose baby has died can be frightening. Not knowing what to say can prevent you visiting them during this heartbreaking time. A time when you may be most needed. Please remember that simply being there and offering to listen can mean a lot. If you're unsure what to say, be honest – "I don't know what to say" can actually say an awful lot. Don't be frightened of silence – you can simply sit by them and offer a hug.

Acknowledge Baby

It does not matter if the baby died in pregnancy or lived for a short time – an entire lifetime of hopes, dreams and wishes has also gone. Do not be afraid to talk about the baby and ask questions about him/her. It is important to use baby's name as this lets the parents know that you think the baby is special. You can ask to see photos and point out any special features. Asking about the birth may seem unnatural to you but many mothers love to tell their birth story – a mother of a baby who has died is no different. Do not try to hide your feelings of sadness – if you need to cry, allow this to happen naturally. This will only show how much you care.

Don't minimise the loss

Often, what may seem comforting to you can be extremely hurtful to parents whose baby has died. Things like "it was meant to be", "you are young, you can have another baby", "at least you have other children", "god needed an angel" etc, can say to a parent that this baby was not important. All though it may be true that another baby is possible, it is this baby that was loved and wanted. This baby was and is special and this baby will always be their child. No child can ever be replaced by another. (see below for more things not to say)

Offer Practical Support

Instead of saying "just ask if there is anything you would like me to do", you could offer to take a meal round on a particular day, or babysit (if they have other children). If you are particularly close to the family, you could offer to help with the housework/cooking etc.

Send a card/flowers

If you are unsure about what to write, simply say you are thinking of them. You could also send flowers for the funeral/memorial service. Flowers that can be dried are often a good choice as these can be kept in the baby's memory box.

Don't Forget Dad

Fathers can often be overlooked but we need to remember that their baby died too. Fathers often feel they need to be strong for their wife/partner and seldom feel free to grieve themselves. Let them open up to you if they need to – maybe offer to take them for a round of golf (or whatever they are interested in) and allow them to express their feelings.

Remember Special Dates

Many parents find certain days much harder than others. Their baby's Birthday, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas etc can all be painful reminders that their baby is not there. Always acknowledge the baby's birthday by sending a card. This will mean a lot to the parents. A phone call on other special days can show you care and are there to support them.

What Not To Say

"you are young, you can always have another baby"

"it was meant to be"

"god wouldn't give you anything you couldn't handle"

"at least you have other children"

"be grateful for your other children"

"these things happen for a reason"

"will you be trying again?"

"at least you didn't get attached"

"god has a plan – this was part of it"

"you'll get over it"

"there must have been something wrong"

"it's for the best"

Better To Say

I haven't had a chance to see all his pictures...I would love to see them when you are up for it."

I'm so sorry. It's just not fair. ~ There's no good reason this happened. You don't deserve this pain. I wish I could take it away from you. ~ It breaks my heart to see you suffering.

I am so sorry. I don't know what to say

I miss him too. I wish he was here with us. ~ What's your favorite memory of her? ~ What helps you feel closest to him when you miss him the most?

I'm thankful for you. ~ I'm thankful for your child. ~ I'm thankful for our friendship. ~ I'm thankful to witness your courage and bravery and strength.

I'll walk with you every step of the way

I am so sorry, no parent should ever lose their child

He was such a beautiful child

I am so sorry, I have no idea what you are going through right now