

SELF CARE TIPS

Grief, trauma, and stress can affect your sleep, appetite, and desire to take care of yourself. But, this is one of the most important times to practice self-care.

Know that your grief may come and go over the years. It may be especially difficult at specific points across your life, such as in subsequent pregnancies, subsequent losses, fertility problems and menopause.



Healthy Habits

Rest as much as your body and mind need.

- Get as close to 8 hours of sleep as possible.
- Keep the bedroom cool and dark.
- A sound machine can be helpful.
- Limit caffeinated drinks, nicotine, and other stimulants, especially after 2PM.
- Abstain from alcohol too close to bedtime (or at all).

Grief and trauma can affect your appetite.

- Try not to skip meals.
- Drink plenty of water.



Nurture Yourself

Try some of these nurturing activities that can be done in less than 5 minutes:

- Stretch, take a walk
- Doodle
- Journal
- Pray
- Make a cup of tea
- Connect with a loved one

Wanting to numb by scrolling on your phone is normal. However, it will usually make you feel worse. Try- re-watching your favorite movies or tv shows instead.



Nature & Movement

Get some sunlight by sitting outside or by a window for a few minutes each day.

As soon as you are cleared by your medical provider, take walks and move your body.



Seek Support

Ask for what you need from loved ones so they know how to support you. For example, ask a friend or family member to run errands for you, watch a movie with you, or send you a text each day to check in.

Let close friends and family know how **you would like to hear from them** - whether it's a text, call, or visit.

Groups and therapy can also be very helpful.

*FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

Unite Support Groups and resources:

unitegriefsupport.org

Star Legacy Foundation support groups for grief and loss : starlegacyfoundation.org/support-groups/

Read stories from others who have terminated for medical reasons and find helpful resources:

endingawantedpregnancy.com

terminationsremembered.com

Time to Talk TFMR podcast

Facebook Group: Termination of Pregnancy for Medical Reasons

Postpartum Support Groups:

postpartum.net/get-help/psi-online-support-meetings/
(scroll down for TFMR group)

whole heart
REPRODUCTIVE MENTAL HEALTH



info@wholeheartpsych.com
perrishawborish@wholeheartpsych.com



(215) 840-3554



255 S. 17th St. Suite 1008
Philadelphia, PA 19103

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Complex Emotions & Grief

The feelings that come along with this are typically huge, overwhelming, and complicated. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Everything you are feeling is normal.

This type of loss can make you feel more alone and isolated than other kinds of loss. This is because others may minimize it. It can also be scary to share because you might worry about being judged.

When you have to choose between two hard things, the right decision for you may feel wrong.

Trust yourself that you made the best decision with the information you have.



You Deserve Care, Support, & Love

This is a loss like no other. It can make you feel more alone and isolated than other kinds of loss.

Common experiences include:

- Friends and family who minimize your loss because they don't know what to say or how to help.
- Blaming yourself for your loss.
- Being scared to share because you are worried about being judged.

You have done nothing wrong.

You deserve to be supported by loved ones, healthcare professionals, and your community. Seek out support from people in your life who can listen and care for you with empathy and without judgment.

Physical Recovery

Your physical recovery will depend on the way in which your termination took place. Physically, some women who have had a surgical termination heal quickly and can be physically well enough to return to their regular activities within a couple of days to a week after their procedure.

Recovery from labor and delivery will involve a slower process as the body returns to normal. The bleeding generally lasts longer, and your body will need at least a week, if not more, to recover physically from the birth.



When to Seek Professional Support

This type of loss can be unbearable. Some women experience traumatic grief or resort to unhealthy coping mechanisms.

You may want to seek support from a licensed therapist if you are having flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive thoughts. Therapists can also support you if you are feeling depressed or anxious.

Please seek immediate psychiatric attention if :

- You are using substances or self-injuring behaviors to escape painful reminders.
- You are having suicidal thoughts.



TIPS FOR FINDING SOLACE AND CARE

- Seek out people who can be patient and sit with you in your grief.
- Spend time with people who make you feel like you can be yourself and who are caring and compassionate. Reach out to safe, non-judgmental people with whom you can be honest. It takes courage to do this. It will help.
- If you do not have enough support from people in your life, then please reach out to a licensed mental health professional or consider joining a support group.
- It is ok to cancel plans that make you feel worse-like attending a baby shower. If you aren't comfortable sharing the reason, it is okay to make up an excuse. This does not make you selfish. It does not make you a bad family member or friend. YOU ARE in mourning. It is okay to say no when you need to.
- Know that being around a pregnant person or a baby can be very triggering. This is a normal reaction.
- If you named the baby and want people to refer to the baby by its name, please tell them and ask for that.
- Write your own list of what is nurturing to you and do those things as often as you can.

