

Grieving in Silence: Life After a Miscarriage

By Aneece Alicea, MA, LMHC, Licensed Mental Health Counselor



Miscarriage is often referred to as the “silent grief.” Even though an estimated 15% of pregnancies end in a miscarriage, it is often overlooked and not openly discussed. Like cancer or divorce, just because an event is common does not make it any less painful. For many women and their partners, miscarriage is heartbreaking, confusing and discouraging. It is not uncommon for women and their partners to experience grief and a variety of painful emotions. Women may experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. Depending on the circumstances of the miscarriage, they might even experience trauma-like symptoms similar to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Factors such as multiple miscarriages, fertility issues, medical complications and having a more progressed pregnancy can make miscarriages even more difficult.

It is very important that after experiencing a miscarriage, the expectant mother and father shouldn't rush through their grief. If you have had the unfortunate experience of suffering a miscarriage, you should allow yourself to feel any sadness, anger, frustration and loss. These feelings might come and go and could be triggered by factors such as seeing a pregnant woman, hearing a baby cry or approaching significant dates such as the due date. The more the feelings are suppressed or denied, the longer the healing process can take.

Allow your support system to help and care for you. Rely on those who are understanding and loving to you and your partner. It may be helpful not to discuss the miscarriage or loss with those who are not as understanding or might minimize your loss. Some feel it is helpful to talk about their experience as much as possible to get their feelings out, while others only want to talk about their loss minimally or at the right time. Trust your gut to tell you who you can talk to, and when you need to talk.

In the days and weeks after a miscarriage, it is important to care for yourself. Do nice things for yourself, and maybe take a break from any obligations such as volunteering or other optional activities for a time to pro-

cess your feelings. Often there is a sense of guilt or responsibility for the miscarriage when in reality there is nothing that could have prevented it. Some women may even feel guilty if they are not dealing with intense grief, especially if the pregnancy came at a challenging moment in life. The most important thing is that you understand that whatever emotions you are feeling are ‘OK.’ It is not for anyone else to tell you what you ‘should’ be feeling.

It is important for a woman to receive care and support from her partner, however if the father grieves differently it can cause both of them to feel misunderstood and isolated. While this may be challenging, it's important to express your feelings to your partner so that your partner can be more supportive and can better understand what you are experiencing. Partners can easily feel shut out if there is little or no communication. Remember that fathers can also experience grief, guilt, sadness, fear and confusion. If you open up about your feelings, your partner may feel more safe to open up about his feelings as well. Grieving together can create a deeper bond and commitment than there was before. Knowing that you are in it together can

Ways to Support Someone Who Has Had a Miscarriage

- Listen if they want to talk about it.
- Do not force them to talk if they don't want to.
- Don't offer an explanation of the miscarriage such as the pregnancy not being in “God's timing.”
- Offer kind and consoling words or gestures such as “I'm thinking of you,” send a card, drop off a hot meal, or mow their lawn.
- Don't blame the mother for causing the miscarriage.
- Give the person time to heal.
- Be understanding, even if you do not understand.
- Remember that the mother and father are grieving and may possibly experience symptoms of trauma.

(Continued on page 2)

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Our Mission
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

Megan's Mosaic



Surviving the Summer

by Megan C. Fisher, MHS, CAADC
Addiction Therapist

For those of us in recovery, summer can be a tricky time of the year. Celebratory activities gear up quite a bit with the warmer weather. From barbecues to 4th of July, wanting a reward after mowing the lawn to surviving the neighbor's pool party, there are opportunities galore to forget how

sneaky the disease of addiction can be. This can apply to alcohol availability, sugary foods, and the wandering eye to a scantily clad individual – all types of addiction triggers.

feeling of deprivation. If you find yourself having an urge, try waiting just 30 minutes before acting on the urge. Most cravings are short-lived and will dissipate in less than 30 minutes if given a chance.

In order to protect our recovery and enjoy the season, we need to have a solid relapse prevention plan in place. First and foremost, carefully select those parties and occasions which you will attend. If you have a sponsor, accountability partner, or trusted friend, tell them about your plans and get an objective opinion about how dangerous the event might be for your recovery. If you decide to attend the event, always have a Plan B.

Finally, if all else fails, get out! There is no shame in making the healthy decision for you and leaving a slippery environment that could endanger all of your hard work and your relationship with God. I hope you find these tools helpful and have an enjoyable summer.

Grieving in...

(Continued from page 1)
strengthen your relationship even after normal life sets in.

Over time, you can find the ability to make peace with your miscarriage. It may be helpful to think of the loss as adding a baby in Heaven, redefining the anniversary of the miscarriage as something that feels comforting, or finding another way to memorialize the unborn baby. Some couples find comfort and closure in giving the unborn baby a name so they can focus more on the joyful time of the pregnancy instead of the heartbreaking miscarriage. Some women may convert the intended nursery to a room for their hobby or may donate unused baby items to a ministry or a friend.

Make sure you have your own transportation or someone driving who is willing to leave at your request. Let the host know as soon as you arrive that you may only be able to stay for a short while. This removes the pressure of feeling obligated to remain in an uncomfortable position and, if you find yourself having a ball, stay as long as you like!

Speakers Available

Need a speaker for your next group or church function? New Leaf therapists are available to address groups of any size and age on a variety of topics such as addictions, depression, grief, stress and many others. Call our office for more information.

If you are experiencing continued grief due to a miscarriage, it may be helpful to talk to your doctor or seek counseling. Your physician or counselor can also help support you through the healing process. There is no need to grieve in silence. ■

If someone offers you something you know you can't have, such as a drink or a trigger food, saying "no thank you" truly is enough. Most people will not question your decision. Another tactic is to say something along the lines of, "I'd love a drink and an iced tea would hit the spot!" A positive answer can help avoid the

Special Gifts

Contributions to New Leaf Resources can be made in memory or in honor of a loved one or friend. Thank you to the following donors:

In Honor of
Thelma Venema's Birthday
Mary Herman
Alexis Saed

At the End of Her Rope, Client Learns Coping Skills

A client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her hope, help and healing.

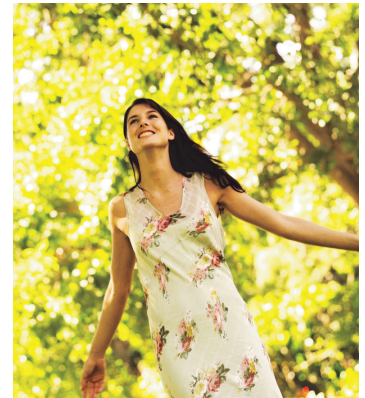
"I was feeling depressed and was at the end of my rope. There was a point where I didn't want to be alive. I knew that I needed help before things went down a bad path.

Since going to New Leaf, I have become a different person. I have realized that life will have struggles and we have to find ways to cope with those struggles. I don't have to hold all the anger and sadness inside. I can talk to my counselor and tell her what I'm feeling and we can talk about solutions. I don't keep things bottled up inside

anymore. I try to talk about it so I can gain understanding of why I am feeling that way.

If you are feeling depressed or you need someone to talk to, don't try to keep everything bottled up inside. If you are hurting, you need to talk to someone about that hurt."

- **"Megan," age 21**
in therapy for
Depression



"If you are hurting, you need to talk to someone about that hurt."
- **"Megan,"**
a client

What's "New" at New Leaf Resources

We are excited to welcome three new members to our ministry staff. Associate Marriage & Family Therapist **Evie DavyRomano**, Family Therapist **Darla McKim** and Accounts Clerk **Krystle Blue**.

Originally from Georgia, Evie is a graduate of the Purdue University Calumet Marriage & Family Therapy Program and enjoys working with clients on issues such as parenting, emotional and behavioral problems and addiction. Evie resides in Lansing with her husband, Carl, and baby girl, Piper.

Licensed Social Worker Darla McKim will be seeing clients in the growing Wheatfield office. With a background in social service, Darla specializes in the areas of child separation and attachment issues, adoption, self-esteem, behavioral management and life transi-

tions. Together with her husband Matt and three children, Darla lives in DeMotte.

Krystle joined the staff this past spring and brings both administrative and social service experience to the position. A resident of Homewood, Krystle is mom to 3-year-old Layla.

With heavy hearts, we say good-bye to Marriage & Family Therapist and Office Manager **Leah Travis**. Leah and her husband Justin are relocating to North Carolina to be closer to family. They are expecting a baby in the fall and we wish them well.

Recent college graduate and Accounts Manager **Shannon Heim** will be taking over the office management responsibilities.

Congratulations to Board Member **Michael Reagan** and his wife, Aimee, on the birth of a baby girl, Addi-

son, and to Accounts Clerk **Kaitlyn Dykstra** and husband, Steve, on their new addition, Noah.

Office Opening Near DeMotte



(From left) Curt Albertson, of the Hamstra Group and Sam Wireman of Von Excavating joined New Leaf Resources Board President Rev. Joel Sheeres, Executive Director Terry Top, Family Therapist Donna Southard, Board Member Liz Dorn and volunteer Donna Hamstra to announce plans to build an 1,845 square foot office near DeMotte. "We have outgrown our current space in Wheatfield and are ready to have a permanent home near Demotte," Top said. "We've had tremendous support from the community to expand our services." The office should open in the Fall of 2014.

Save a tree

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Page 4

Summer 2014

Hundreds "Light the Path" for Clients



The "Attitude Guy" inspired and encouraged New Leaf's guests at the annual Celebration Banquet.

Friends and supporters recently gathered at the **Center for Visual & Performing Arts** to celebrate God's blessings, be renewed with a motivating message of hope and positivity and to light the path for those suffering in darkness. After enjoying a delicious meal, speaker **Sam Glenn**, "The Attitude Guy," gave a humorous yet inspiring talk on the topic of attitude.

Thank you to our major sponsors for underwriting the cost of the event:

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Jim & Joyce Lagestee, Terry & Linda VanderAa & Anonymous Donor

"Healing" Sponsors

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We also thank all those who attended and who supported our fundraising efforts for the **Marty Doot Client Assistance Program**. To date, more than \$22,000 has been raised to help those who cannot fully afford the cost of counseling. Donations are still being accepted online through our website, www.newleafresources.org or by mailing your check to: New Leaf Resources, 2325 - 177th St., Lansing, IL 60438.

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New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling and consultation services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God's grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.