

What is Share?

The mission of Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc. is to serve those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life.

The primary purpose is to provide support toward positive resolution of grief experienced at the time of/or following the death of a baby. This support encompasses emotional, physical, spiritual and social healing, as well as sustaining the family unit.

The secondary purpose of Share is to provide information, education and resources on the needs and rights of bereaved parents and siblings. The objective is to aid those in the community, including family, friends, employers, members of the congregation, caregivers and others in their supportive role.

History of Share

Share began in the fall of 1977, at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Illinois. Within four months, the first support group met. Since that time, Share has become international, with over 100 chapters.

Now located near the campus of St. Joseph Health Center in St. Charles, Missouri, the National Share Office serves as a resource center for bereaved parents, friends, family members, group leaders and caregivers.

How can Share help?

Parents who experience the death of a baby often seek to validate their feelings – is what they feel normal and legitimate, or have they responded in an inappropriate manner? They often have many difficult decisions to make without previous experiences to guide them.

Often, the grief and loss felt by parents when a baby dies during the pregnancy or in the first few months of life is not understood and/or accepted by society. Even friends and family members sometimes have difficulty understanding the depth of emotion and grief bereaved parents may be experiencing. Parents are often expected to just pick up the pieces and move on.

Others, who have not seen or touched the baby, do not understand that a very real member of the family has died. Often the grief and loss felt by the parents is not understood. The baby is quickly forgotten by others, leaving the parents alone in their grief. The subsequent isolation may create difficulties in the expression of feelings, which can unnecessarily prolong the time of grieving.

Share, through mutual-help groups, provides a strong, supportive atmosphere where members can share their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Parents learn that the deeply felt, long-lasting feelings are normal. They gain a sense of wholeness when they realize that their pain and grief is not unique, but rather is something which nearly all bereaved parents feel.

Did you know?

...each year there are 900,000 early pregnancy losses, over 26,000 stillbirths and approximately 19,000 neonatal deaths in the United States

...Share provides support not only during the bereavement period, but also through subsequent pregnancies

...doctors, nurses, clergy and community resources look to Share for outreach

...Share was a participant at the National Institute of Health, which determined the need for research on the causes of stillbirth

...members of the media, researchers and authors look to Share for current information and statistics, as well as for professional guidance

...Share is a consultant for the National Perinatal Bereavement Conference

...Share has been a consultant on video productions for bereaved parents and professionals

The National Share Office offers:

Programs for Bereaved Families

- help in finding the nearest support group
- moderated internet message boards and chat rooms for bereaved parents, grandparents, fathers and families
- online bimonthly newsletter, *Sharing*, which provides support, information and resources at no cost
- telephone support for bereaved families, friends and others seeking information and understanding of the needs of the bereaved
- annual memorial events

Programs for Bereaved Families and Caregivers

- national listing of support groups
- extensive manual on planning farewell rituals following the death of a baby
- interactive website
- leadership training workshops
- support and information through electronic or postal service correspondence
- videos on perinatal loss
- comprehensive bereavement resource catalog
- clearinghouse for publications dealing with perinatal bereavement
- information and guidance on how to start and maintain a Share support group
- information and guidance on how to plan a Share Walk for Remembrance and Hope

Your nearest Share Group is:

Contact:

The empty cradling arms of the Share logo represents the emptiness faced by families when a baby dies through pregnancy loss, stillbirth or in the first few months of life. The heart above the hands shows the love and understanding that bereaved family members receive from the support of Share.

Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc. provides a circle of compassion that surrounds bereaved family members and caregivers as they face the tragic death of a baby.

We are grateful to Elizabeth Leach and Richard Paul Evans for their efforts, time and talents that have resulted in Share's logo.



*touching lives...
healing hearts...
giving hope...*

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