



The Miscarriage Association

OF IRELAND

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Registered Charity Number CHY9738



SUMMER 2007

NEWSLETTER

Welcome

Hello everybody and welcome to our Summer Newsletter.

We can get so busy at times that we can forget the important things in life, like taking time to get in touch or just to say "Hi, I am thinking about you". Sometimes we might think we are alone, but I once read that "sticks in a bundle are unbreakable" (Kenyan proverb). While mentioning supporting each other, our AGM will be held shortly and perhaps this is an opportunity for you to reach out and become part of our special "bundle". We can be there for the sad times and celebrate the good times.

Miscarriage unfortunately is still very much a hidden grief... There are still so many unanswered questions.

There are so many unanswered "whys?" Perhaps some day we will get the answers, but in the meantime, life goes on. Some of you may be reading this Newsletter for the first time. It's difficult if you have recently had a miscarriage. The loss of a baby is huge! It can be difficult to face the next day. As we celebrate the lengthening days of summer, we are reminded that light follows darkness. Don't lose sight of hope.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and joyful summer.

Remember we are here if you need somebody to talk to.

**June O'Toole, Chairperson
Summer 2007**

AGM – 12 June 2007

The annual general meeting of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland will take place on 12 June 2007 at 8pm in Buswell's Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. All members are welcome to attend.

Christmas Cards/Greetings

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all your good wishes at Christmas. We would also like to thank all of you who supported the Miscarriage Association by purchasing our Christmas Cards.

Book Launch - Thursday 3rd May 2007 @ 8pm – Trax Café Bar, Balbriggan

Lorcan, my husband, and myself attended the Launch of Siobhan and David's book – "We Lost Our Baby" and were privileged to be in attendance on such a moving and sensitive occasion. Siobhan and David read from their book and this was very emotional for both themselves and everybody else who was there.

Congratulations to both Siobhan and David on this very special publication. It takes a special couple and courage to do what they have done. Everybody reading this newsletter, I'm sure in your own way, can relate to what Siobhan and David have to say in their book.

Hopefully it will bring awareness to a very hidden and sad experience – Miscarriage.

June O'Toole

Miscarriage Association of Ireland Committee

June O'Toole
Chairperson

Mary Lawson
Treasurer

Niamh Ryan
Secretary

Angela Grace
Committee Member

Irene Roche
Committee Member

Denise Shaw
Committee Member

Siobhan and David's story

Siobhán's recollections...

It started on a Sunday afternoon at 3pm. As long as I live, I'll never forget that moment. I was 12 weeks pregnant. I was about to leave my 7 month old son, Mitchell, with his grandparents, so I could swan off to the cinema with my husband, Dave, for a couple of hours. I went in to pee, as I had been doing every five minutes since the start of my pregnancy and that was when I saw it. It was only a small drop but I saw it, my eyes fixated on it. It was a drop of blood. I had often heard of women bleeding in their pregnancies and still having healthy babies. In fact, my mother had bled quite heavily when she was pregnant with me and I had turned out fine. Despite knowing this, I just felt in my heart that I was losing my baby. It was only a speck of blood and I could have easily missed but I didn't. I stared at it as my heart started to break.

Dave, the eternal optimist, assured me it was not a disaster waiting to happen. As he tried his best convince me the baby would be fine, I truly wanted to believe he was right but I felt a nagging deep inside that the worst was yet to come. I don't mean to sound pessimistic; I am a fairly optimistic person myself most of the time but something inside me told me it was the beginning of the end.

The next day the bleeding got heavier, so we went to our GP. He told us not to worry and made us an appointment for a scan that afternoon to check the baby's progress. That would tell us what was going on. We headed for the hospital. Expecting reassurance and support, we received neither. We were left to sit in a cold, bare, waiting area; tentatively, nervously awaiting news on the fate of our little baby. We waited for what seemed like hours before we were seen. Eventually I was called in to be seen by a nurse. She did a pregnancy test and it was positive, which meant I was still pregnant. There was some hope. Then she said, rather coldly, that I would have to wait for the doctor to come and do a scan. So, I went back outside and sat with Dave in the waiting area, again. We waited and waited.

Eventually the doctor came along. He called us into the room and proceeded to do the scan. He was so blasé about it. He hardly made any eye contact with us. He barely spoke to us. At first he could not find a heartbeat. He did not bat an eyelid, as we frantically searched the screen for signs of life. He asked if we would allow him to do an internal scan and we agreed immediately. Through this, he eventually found a small heartbeat. Our baby was alive. However, he said the baby was too small for 12 weeks and that it could be a sign of a possible miscarriage. He said to go home and come back if the bleeding got worse. That was that. There was no further explanation. Just go home and come back if it gets worse. We left, feeling totally deflated and worried sick.

The next day the bleeding was worse so we went back. He said we were probably losing the baby. Just like that. He never said sorry or explained anything to us, he just blurted it out like that "it probably just has not happened yet". He was talking about our baby and he referred to him or her as if it was nothing of importance. We were so upset by the news that we were probably losing our baby but the way he delivered it - without compassion or understanding - made it so much worse to hear. It was shocking to think someone could be so passive when speaking about a baby – our baby – who was clinging on to life at that stage.

We left there, stunned at the news our baby may not make it into this world and shocked at the cold treatment we had received. We decided to go to another hospital to see if we could get some answers and maybe some empathy and support. After all, how much worse could it be at another hospital? Initially it was better at the next hospital. The doctor we saw was very understanding and she said all hope was not lost. She said the baby might still be alright. She booked us in for a scan the following morning and this would tell us how the baby was progressing. We kept thinking about that little heartbeat. There had to be some hope.

We went home but unfortunately all hope was lost that night when I went in to labour. I knew it was labour pains I was feeling and I knew I was losing our baby. We rushed to the hospital and they took me straight into the ER as I was bleeding very heavily. I was totally distressed and in a great deal of pain. Then the unthinkable happened. They told Dave that he had to wait outside. He was not allowed to be with me. I was in labour, going through horrendous pain and in tears at the thought of what was happening to my baby and they made him wait outside. I begged them to let him in but they said no – it was against hospital policy to allow partners into the ER unless a baby was being born. It was so cruel; I had to go through 3 hours of labour by myself, with nobody to hold my hand. He had to sit outside alone, wondering what was happening to his wife and baby. It is an awful policy. I have since complained about it but no one has ever replied to my complaint.

After a few hours, I was told I had suffered a complete miscarriage and I was to be admitted for the night. I was wheeled out of the ER and when I looked at my husband I realised no one had actually told him I had lost the baby. I had to confirm it to him. That was so awful. Even though he had asked the staff about me, no one had actually told him what had happened. No one had given him an update.

No one had considered him. He was losing his baby too but no one gave him a moment's consideration.

The next day I went home, feeling empty. It was horrible. My family tried to comfort me but I could not be comforted. I did not want to talk about it because I did not want to deal with it. My mam and Dave were crying but I did not shed one tear. I bottled it all up inside.

Over the weeks that followed, I did not cry. I did not talk about it. I ignored the ache that was burning deep inside me and I carried on as if nothing had happened. My husband was crying a lot and that did nothing but annoy me. Perhaps I was upset that he was able to cry about it when I felt I could not. I don't why but the more he grieved the angrier I became. I am usually a very open and emotional person but I could not deal with this. The pain was too awful, so I buried it inside, hoping I would never have to deal with it.

A month went by and still, I was not crying or talking about it. Dave urged me to go for counselling to talk about what had happened. I reluctantly agreed. I went to see the hospital counsellor. By talking to her I started to open the door to the grieving process. In the months that followed, I saw the counsellor a few times. She urged me to keep a diary of how I felt every day, which I did. I found this a very therapeutic exercise. I had finally started to grieve for the baby we had lost. Once I started crying, it seemed I could not stop. It felt good to let it all out. I realised it had to come out at some point and it was a great relief to me when I finally let go and allowed myself to grieve.

As I was dealing with the loss now, I went looking for books about miscarriage, Surprisingly, I found only one book. It was very statistical and did not really help me. I wanted to know how other women and men felt when this happened to them. Did they struggle to communicate with one another as Dave and I had? Did it put a strain on their relationships with family and friends like it did with us? How did they get through it? How did they cope? There were no books like this. I was disappointed as I left the book stores but what could I do? It was around this time that Dave asked me if he could read my diary. I said yes and after he had finished it, he said I should turn it into a book. He thought the honesty in my writing would help other couples who were coming to terms with their own loss. I said I would write my story in an attempt to help others if he would co-write it with me, for all the Dads who have lost their babies too.

And so we wrote our story. It is our recollection of events from one of the saddest times in our lives. It tells of the sadness we felt, the anger that could have consumed us, the communication problems we encountered with each other and our families and friends but ultimately how we overcame all those problems and learned how to smile again.

Our hearts were broken and although they have almost mended, there will always be a little crack. That little crack is the sadness we carry over the baby we lost. That little crack will always be there, as it keeps us close to our baby. He or she may not have made it all the way into this world but we know we have our very own guardian angel looking over us now, keeping us safe from harm.

Dave's recollections:

When we lost our baby it was definitely the most confusing time of my life, as a "Man" I felt that I was just supposed to get on with it, look after my wife and pass on messages from well wishers. This was not a time to feel sorry for myself; this is something that affects the women and aren't we lucky that we don't have to go through it?

It seems to me that a lot of the books on pregnancy, birth, babies and parenthood are either written by doctors or mothers. The loss of our baby affected me profoundly and I wanted to co-write the book with Siobhán for any Dads who have been unfortunate to experience the loss of a baby. It's heartbreaking for us too. We shed tears as well and we should not be afraid to talk about that, or to show our feelings about it. We have come a long way from the days when men were not "real men" if they cried and it's o.k. for us to feel the loss and most importantly, to be able to talk about our loss. It was my baby too and I also have a right to grieve.

Our book, "We lost our baby, One Couples Story of Miscarriage and its Aftermath" is available from 26th April 2007. We hope it helps you to realise that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that one day you will be able to smile again. It may seem unlikely at the lowest points, when you feel sad and helpless but you will find out that if you communicate with your partner, family and friends, if you can talk about your feelings, then you can get through it this difficult time and eventually, you can look forward to your future.

Siobhán & Dave.

Support Group Meetings

Miscarriage Association of Ireland – Dublin
Meeting Our Support meetings continue on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August) in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. The next meeting is Thursday, 7 June at 8pm. You are very welcome to attend, if you have been affected by loss through miscarriage. Please come along, you might also be in a position to offer advice as to how we could improve on the support we offer.

Good news for the Cork area.....

A group of women in the Cork area have started a support group meeting for those affected by miscarriage. Each meeting aims to support those who attend, in an understanding and relaxed atmosphere. Two trained counsellors are facilitating the group. All those who have been affected by loss through miscarriage are very welcome to attend. The meetings are Free of Charge.

Their initial meetings are being held at Bru Columbanus (beside Wilton shopping centre & St Josephs SMA Church).

These meetings will take place on
Wednesday 30th May, 8.30pm - 10.00pm
Wednesday 4th July, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

For further information please contact Elaine at 087 2866818.

PUBLICITY

Tuesday 1 May - committee member Irene Roche spoke on the subject of miscarriage on Near FM 90.3 radio, Dublin North East

As part of their book launch Siobhan O'Neill White and David White spoke on their experience of miscarriage. This has been a great way to raise awareness of miscarriage and has provided much needed publicity for the Miscarriage Association as well.

Tuesday 24th April: Siobhán and David appeared on TV3's, Ireland AM

Tuesday 24th April: Kerry Today, Radio Kerry 96.2 FM in Tralee. Siobhán and David interviewed by Deirdre Walsh.

Tuesday 1st May: Siobhán and David were interviewed on the Ray D'Arcy show, Today FM radio.

Third anniversary of Baby Dunlea, lost 29th May 2004. You are forever on our minds. We miss you dearly and love you every day.

...All our love, Mammy, Daddy and Baby sister Elizabeth Dunlea.

Membership Renewal

Just a little reminder - your membership may be due for renewal. Our annual membership is €15. We would also ask members not to send cash in the post – cheque or postal orders please.

We need your help!

As you can imagine, there is a great need for support following the loss of a Baby through miscarriage. We do the best we can but would love to be in a position to do more. With your help, maybe this is possible. If you feel you might be in a position to help, we would love to hear from you. Nobody is asked to take on more than they can handle. Every bit of support, no matter how small makes a huge difference.

You can contact us online or by telephone or by letter.

If you are interested in fundraising for our Association, we would welcome your ideas.

Opinion Page

Articles are welcome for our Opinion Page. This page is used for people to state their opinions regarding miscarriage. This could mean:

- Treatment in hospital
- Aftercare
- Infertility problems
- Future pregnancies
- News that you wish to share with us about your miscarriage

Note

Our newsletter is circulated to members, hospitals and other interested parties and is available on the internet.

The opinions in this newsletter are those of the contributors and are not necessarily those of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland.

Closing Date for Next Newsletter

Please let us have your stories, poetry, articles, coming events, sad farewells, welcome babies, anniversaries and anything you feel will help those who read our newsletter. Please mark all envelopes "Newsletter". Please include name address and a contact phone number. Your name does not have to be included in the article if you wish to remain anonymous.

Closing date for entries for next newsletter is 12 September 2007

JUST A NOTE: Sometimes, for whatever reason it is not always possible to publish or acknowledge everybody's correspondence. This does not mean it is not important so please keep forwarding your items of news for sharing.