



THE MISCARRIAGE ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND



Welcome everybody to our Spring 2021 Newsletter

The newsletter is a space where we can share our stories of loss and find comfort in the knowledge that we are not alone in our grief.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, it is really great that you want to share your stories.

Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell
Chairperson – The Miscarriage Association of Ireland



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www.facebook.com/miscarriage.ie



Registered Charity No. CHY9738 / 20024420

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Welcome

Welcome to the Miscarriage Association of Ireland's Spring Newsletter 2021. It has been just over a year since the first lockdown and we still find ourselves in unprecedented times. Like many organisations we have had to adapt to ensure that we can still provide as much support as possible.

The Association provides support group meetings via Zoom, on the 3rd Tuesday and from April 2021 the 3rd Thursday of the month at 8.30pm. To receive an invite to the meeting you can email info@miscarriage.ie with ZOOM in the subject bar and you will be sent the details on the day of the meeting. (Please do not request the details for the meeting via our social media pages as these are not constantly monitored). These meetings have provided many people with support over the last year. We hear the heartbreak that women have had to endure, receiving bad news alone and then having to convey it to their partner, who is also feeling the loss and feeling sorry that they cannot be there for them to show support. It can be frightening going through a miscarriage alone in hospital. It is so hard, even though the hospitals are doing their best to work within the Covid-19 restrictions. Alone and isolated are the words that we constantly hear. Remember you are not alone, the Miscarriage Association of Ireland are here to listen.

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland provides support to women and their families:

- Via our website www.miscarriage.ie Check the website for details and updates on the following supports:
 - Telephone helpline
 - Support group meetings
- Email- info@miscarriage.ie
- Service of remembrance which takes place on the 2nd Sunday of November annually
- Information book and leaflet - This is available to download on our website or order for free email: info@miscarriage.ie with Information Books in the subject bar
- Book of remembrance - where you can make an entry in memory of your baby. Send an email to info@miscarriage.ie with your Baby's Name, Dates to remember, Remembered by, Special Thoughts.

Deirdre Pierce-McDonnell
Chairperson – MAI.

News

The Miscarriage Association of Ireland



“Working together to provide support for women and their partners who have lost a baby through miscarriage.”

In March, the Miscarriage Association of Ireland were invited to provide an educational video detailing its services to the Saolta Group.

The Saolta Group hosted a study day which was held on the 4th March. Over 100 participants attended virtually. The study day was aimed at the Saolta Group but there were also some people from out with who requested access to the session.

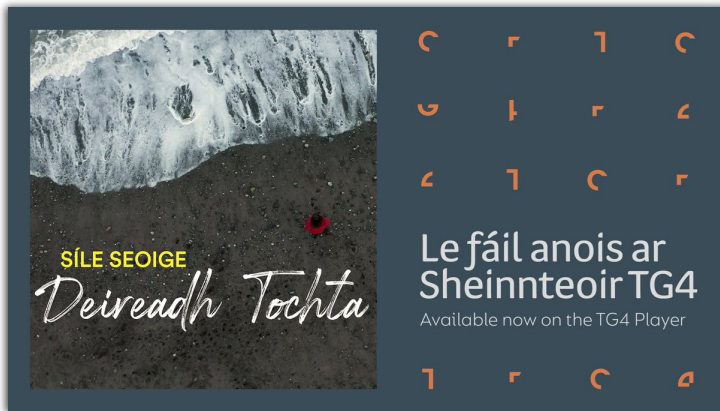
The Association's 10 minute educational video was played in between speakers and it provided information on the history of the Association, gave details of all of its services and most importantly explained the key considerations when looking after women and their partners who have lost a baby through miscarriage.

The feedback from the video was excellent so the committee has decided to roll the video out to all Maternity Unit departments in the country as part of its goal to increase the awareness of its valuable services.

*Dawn
Committee Member – MAI.*



Our memorial stone at Bohermore Cemetery Galway.



In February myself and my husband, Padraig, took part in a documentary for TG4 looking at miscarriage and its impact on women, men and couples. In these Covid times it had to be adapted to stay within the guidelines, so we spoke with Síle Seoige, who herself has suffered miscarriages, via Zoom and discussed our own history of miscarriage.

My husband spoke in great detail of what it is like to be a father in this situation. He spoke about how very few people asked about him and how the focus is often on the women. We also spoke about the supports that are available through The Miscarriage Association of Ireland (telephone support and Zoom Support Meeting). I also spoke about how I became more involved with The Miscarriage Association of Ireland by starting a support group in Cork, with the help and support of the Miscarriage Association of Ireland, that pre-Coivid, met monthly for support meetings.

We spoke also about what is needed from wider society when it comes to supporting those who experience pregnancy loss and miscarriage, We spoke of the need for openness and more compassion from wider society. The need for people to be able to speak about their loss if they wish to and to be met with compassion, that a simple "I'm sorry for your loss, I'm here for you" can go such a long way. The Documentary aired on the 6th of April on TG4 at 9:30pm. It is through programmes such as this that awareness will be raised and discussions will be started around miscarriage, its impacts and what we can do to support those going through the loss of a baby.

Jennifer
Committee Member – MAI.



I recently took part in the four part series 'Turas Clainne' on TG4. The series highlighted different aspects of the journey to becoming a parent and in the episode I took part in, we discussed miscarriage. Miscarriage is still a taboo subject despite huge efforts in trying to bring the topic to the table. I had my first miscarriage in 2012. I was 27. None of my friends really had children at that stage, let alone had experienced miscarriage. I felt so isolated and alone. I never ever wanted anyone to feel that way. After attending the Miscarriage Association's support group a few times and feeling support from their members and a sense of belonging and understanding from the other people who attended, I knew I had to speak out. I wanted everyone to know that I'd lost my baby and that I was mourning. Unfortunately my mourning didn't stop there, I went on to have month after month of unsuccessfully trying to conceive and a further 3 more consecutive miscarriages. I felt broken in every sense of the word. Physically broken because my body wasn't able to do something it was designed to do. Emotionally broken from month after month of trying with no success or bleeding the life we had managed to create from me. Psychologically broken because I ran out of the will to keep going. I wanted my husband to leave me so as he could have the family he always wanted with someone else. My dreams of giving my daughter a sibling were shattered and it was because I didn't work. I reached saturation point and thankfully no matter how much I tried to push my husband away he stood by me, he kept reminding me he was on my team. Even if I thought that the way he was mourning didn't make it seem like he was.

Once we took that time to communicate we realised we'd exhausted this option. Enough was enough. Everyone would tell me "just relax", "it'll happen when you least expect it". It infuriated me at the time. Doctors and specialists told me I had "plenty of time" "you're so young" like as if going through more years of trying to miserably conceive and having countless miscarriages was ok because I was "young". Sure, I didn't have my biological clock ticking but I was aching and empty. I didn't believe that I was being a good enough Mother to my daughter or partner to my husband.

My story thankfully has a happy ending. In 2014, I gave birth to my rainbow baby. A little brother for my daughter. The four year age gap wasn't what I'd planned but seeing them together filled me up in a way I hadn't felt for years.

continued.....

Two years later and I gave birth to another little baby boy and as I type this I am currently 27 weeks pregnant with a little girl. This time the four year age gap was a choice. People ask me why I still talk about that time in my life. People wonder why I'd take part in radio shows or tv programmes and talk about something so personal. The reason is that I know now that I am not the only one who's felt this way. There are women going through this right now and it's the most lonely place in the world. Losing a baby you so desperately want at any stage of gestation is absolutely devastating. It's not something to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. It certainly doesn't mean you're broken or any less of a woman.

The reason I will never stop talking about my miscarriages is because I will never forget those feelings, I will never not mourn the babies I lost and I want anyone who's experienced miscarriage to feel like they can talk about it too. There is no "right" way to mourn except the way that feels right for you at that time. Hopefully by continuing to discuss issues like miscarriage publicly we can try to break the barriers of the taboo and make it a mainstream topic of conversation. That people will realise the lasting and devastating effects miscarriage and fertility struggles can have on families so as that they can choose kind words in their efforts to support each other.

Tara

Committee Member – MAI.


**THE MISCARRIAGE ASSOCIATION
OF IRELAND**

**We need your support to
continue to "reachout"**

Run, Walk or Cycle 5K on our behalf

**Take part in the
#5K4MISCARRIAGE
Challenge**

**Ask your friends & family
to sponsor you
- to do so they can:**



Text **REACHOUT** to **50300**
to donate **€4**

Text costs €4. The Miscarriage Association of Ireland will receive a minimum of €3.60.
Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. Helpline: 076 680 5278



On the 25th of March 2021, New Zealand made an announcement regarding paid leave following a miscarriage. A massive step forward in the movement to ensure acknowledgment of such loss. The legislation was approved in the NZ parliament unanimously and provides three days of paid leave for couples who lose a baby at any stage in pregnancy. Up until now leave was only approved for babies lost after 20 weeks. The legislation covers miscarriage through adoption and surrogacy. Ginny Andersen from Jacinta Arden's NZ Labour party said about the Bill "I hope that this bill will go some way in allowing women to feel more comfortable about talking about miscarriage and that they feel comfortable reaching out for support and for help in what is a huge physical and emotional loss".

It is understood that in Australia unpaid leave is provided for a miscarriage only after 12 weeks, in Britain couples who lose their baby after 24 weeks are eligible for paid leave and in America, employers are not required to provide any leave to anyone who suffers a miscarriage.

Here in Ireland, on the 2nd of March, Ivana Bacik and the Labour Party published a Bill to "Provide for reproductive health-related leave". This Bill aims to provide leave for miscarriage as well as other reproductive health issues. When announcing the Bill Ivana said "For far too long women have had to remain silent in their workplace about the grief". She stated that the Bill would "provide an entitlement to reproductive leave of up to 20 days for women who suffer an early miscarriage, and up to 10 days leave for employees to receive treatments like IVF."

The Miscarriage Association welcomes these discussions and hopes to be embracing changes of this sort in the future.

Kirsty
Committee Member – MAI.

*Poems / Stories***My Little Angel**

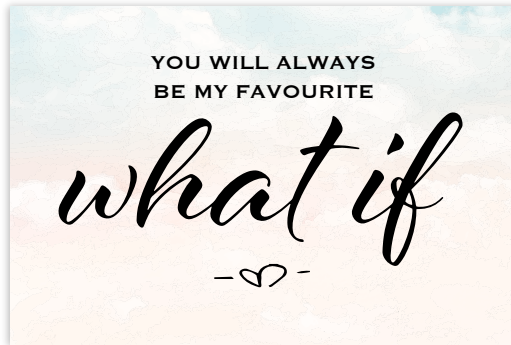
*Where do I begin?
 Hope for 2021 you brought
 Then just like that my world crumbled.
 I felt you as I did your siblings very early on
 Felt you fight to become more than you could:
 Breast tenderness, hunger pains, cramps and aches;
 My body longing to hold you and keep you,
 My heart growing to love you more each day.
 Excitement and planning and hope,
 But now nothing:
 Now my wishes for your future are gone
 Quicker than they appeared.
 Deep pains - as my womb twisted and turned
 Trying to hold you and keep you
 But not able to.
 I'm sorry it could not.
 Fly high my Angel 15/1/21*



Sent in by ANON.



*Please feel free to send your own stories and poems into our email info@miscarriage.ie
 to have them included in our next newsletter, any wishes to remain anonymous
 will be respected.*



To My Little Peanut

Peanut wherever you're gone, just know Mammy and Daddy love you.

Today I was told your leaving, a statement I was not prepared for, alone in the hospital and like that you were up and left. I waited so long for the day I could tell everyone you were coming.

Stupid Mammy to let herself get so happy.

Now your Daddy rubs my belly, oh how I wish it was to feel you kick but no! now it's to comfort mammy and the emptiness she feels.

How I long to have you back, to read those tests again. I never felt true happiness until that day had come. Now Mammy sits here in quietness wondering what she could have changed. As tears roll down my face thinking of the days ahead.

I'm filled with so much sadness thinking of why you went away?

I long to have you back so I could feel our bond again. I still keep asking why us?

Why like this mammy had so many plans for us.

I had your future planned out in just a moments thought!

Now I have this constant heartache that I never think I'll fill....

For the day you left me you split my heart in two....

I Love you my sweet baby and one day you might return

Just please know your Mammy loved you so much more than you will ever know.

Love Mammy xxx

18/01/2021

15:30

RIP

My Angel

Xxx

Sent in by Rachael

Even Though

Even though I never met you
Or never knew your smile
And I didn't get to hear you cry
I only felt you for a while

Even though my belly stayed the same
Seeing you one time was all I got
The little mark they pointed out
I knew I loved you lots and lots

Even though I'll never know your face
Nor your gender too
Sometimes I think of silly things
Like all the car singing we'd do

Even though these things don't matter
Eye colour, hair, freckled skin
I still dream of how you'd grow
Would you have my nose or your daddy's chin?

Even though I'll have to wonder
Who you'd be and what you'd do
I know you'd make me so proud
No matter what you'd shine on through

Even though I can't hold your hand
Or wipe away your tears
I can't tell you "kiss it better"
When you fall and scrape your knees

Even though I can't sing to you
To keep your bad dreams at bay
I couldn't rock you in my arms
To settle you back to sleep that day

Even though nobody understands
And nobody can ever see
How losing you left me lost
I can't even say he or she

Even though I tried my best
I thought the whole time through
Stayed awake through the nights
To try and keep hold of you

Even though the pain is dark
Sometimes more than I can bare
I know you'd hate to see this
Just know it's because I care

Even though the days pass by
And all too quickly too
You may think sometimes you leave my mind
Please know you never do

Even though you'll grow with wings
And I won't buy you your first shoes
I know you'll learn to fly
And stick around by leaving clues

Even though I never met you
Or never knew your smile
Please know I'm still your momma
And you, forever are my child

Sent in by Zara



Zoom Meetings

Our Zoom Support meetings which we run on the third Tuesday of each month have been getting very positive feedback from those that are attending. (From April 2020 we will be holding a zoom support on the third Thursday of the month also). The meetings provide a safe space and give people a chance to speak about their loss and their own individual journeys with others who truly understand. Those who join us are met with compassion, understanding and warmth.

There is great comfort to be gotten from sharing our experience but there is no obligation on those attending to share. Many people will come to listen to others and this can help in knowing they are not alone, many of these people will then come back and share their own experience at another meeting. If you do not want to turn on your camera but just listen in, that is ok. We have seen a lot of partners attending the Zoom meetings also and they are always welcomed. We ask that anyone that would like to join us emails Zoom to info@miscarriage.ie and we then email on the link and password on the day of the meeting. The meeting normally lasts between an hour and an hour and a half to allow those who want to share the time to do so.

Jennifer
Committee Member – MAI.



Phonelines

The Miscarriage Association also operate phonelines. These lines are in operation Monday to Friday, 10am until 12 noon and 8pm until 10pm.

Those on the phones are volunteers with MAI and have personal experience in miscarriage, while this is not a counselling service, the volunteers can provide support to those who wish to avail it. Please note that if your call isn't answered we can only provide a call back service if you leave a voice message giving us permission to call you back. This is in line with current GDPR guidelines. The numbers to call vary on a monthly basis depending on which volunteer is taking a turn. The current numbers are to be found on the Association's website www.miscarriage.ie

Access to our online shop is through our website



Gifts and Mementos

- Our logo - the family tree with the fallen leaf representing the baby lost through miscarriage - available as a pin
- Information Book
- Baby Remembrance Blessings
- Bookmarks
- MAI Teddy Bears & Candles
- Cards



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We are part funded by Tulsa

