

# Healing Loss through Grief – Infertility, Miscarriage and Child Loss

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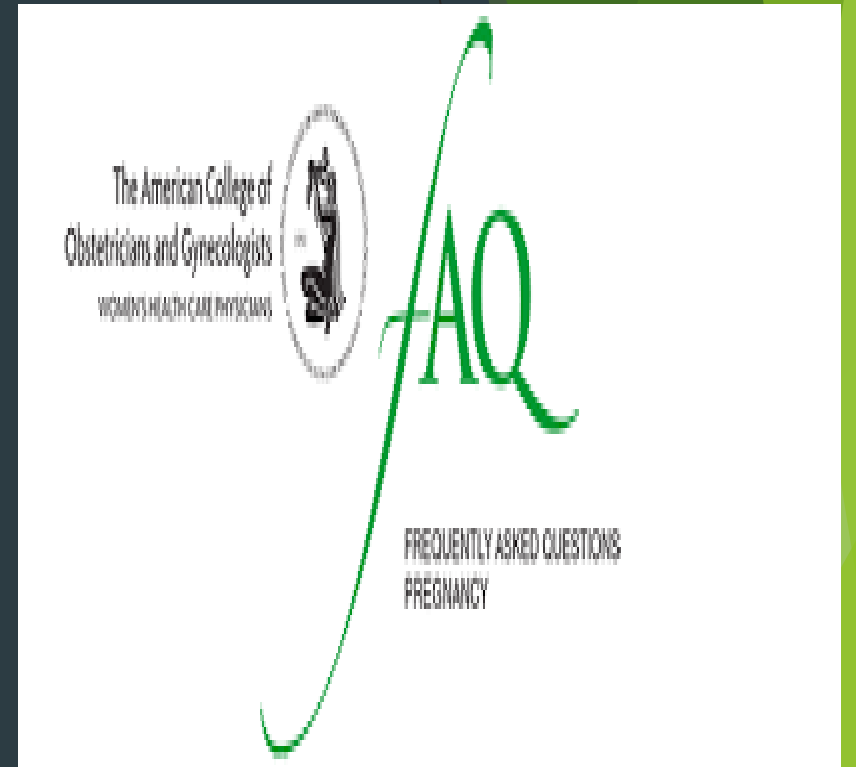


- ▶ Grief and Loss
- ▶ A disenfranchised loss
- ▶ An ambiguous loss
- ▶ Complicated grief
- ▶ How do you cope?
- ▶ The Choices that you make



# Where do you belong?

- ▶ 1 in 4 women are without children. Numbers are growing globally
- ▶ 10% are child-free – by choice
- ▶ 10% for medical reasons
- ▶ **80% by circumstance** – multiple miscarriages; failure to conceive; infertility due to illnesses, neonatal deaths, family trauma, genetic inheritances; failed surrogacies; failed adoptions; stillbirths; other losses



# Disenfranchised Loss - Miscarriage

- ▶ Grief that persons experience when a loss is not publicly mourned, or cannot be openly acknowledged by friends and family



# Unambiguous loss – Infertility - unseen, intangible

This loss occurs without closure or understanding.

It leaves a person searching for answers and delays the process of grieving.

It often results in complicated or unresolved grief



# Complicated grief – what is happening to me?



# Characteristics of Complicated grief

- ▶ Intense longing/pining for the loss
- ▶ Persistent, complex, painful emotions
- ▶ An inability to accept the loss
- ▶ Difficulty living without the loved one
- ▶ Lack of Trust in others
- ▶ Detachment
- ▶ Rumination over the loss



# The *Dark night of the soul* - Who can tell us how to grieve?

The abyss of despair –

Endless crying

Inconsolable

Silence

Numbness

Withdrawal





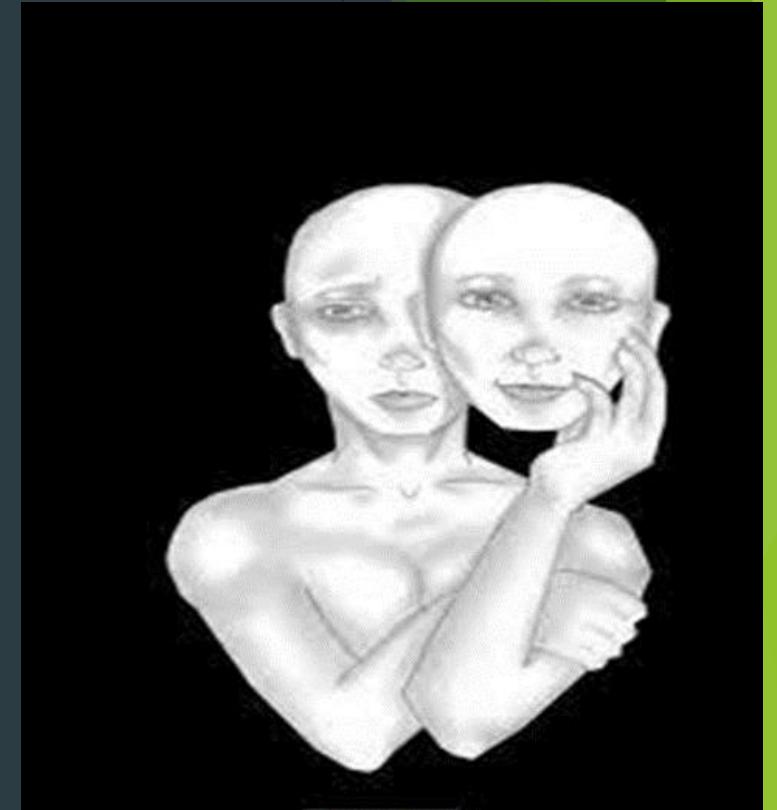
Silence

*and*

Masking



In our society, we  
hide the pain for fear  
of being ridiculed or  
misunderstood



# The 'othering' of our selves

I wonder how many of us stretch our faces with smiles wide enough to mask the pain we hide. I wonder how many of us go through the motions—attending church, giving service, nurturing our families, learning and doing—while inside we feel empty, broken, doubtful, and even guilty for the way we feel!

~ Toni Sorenson

[morefamousquotes.com](http://morefamousquotes.com)

## What people may say or think. Should you bother with this ?

You are young. You can try again!

Well, it was never really a birth...

You can always adopt. Why not?

If you really want children, you gotta try harder!



# Untouchable grief

The existential pain of loss – WHY ME, GOD?

Persons are uncomfortable with things that cannot be fixed – they don't quite know what to say or do

The unspoken messages that are communicated -

No bereavement leave to grieve – unrecognized

No maternity leave after a loss – no family friendly policies



# How have you coped with the Loss?

- ▶ Both men and women grieve – differently
- ▶ Have you acknowledged the loss?
- ▶ You **WILL** change after the loss
- ▶ Grief takes time
- ▶ You need other people – “grief share”
- ▶ Have a ‘safe place’ where you can reach out



# The healing power of grief – the *GIFT* of grief

- ▶ **Grief transforms loss into acceptance** – we grieve because we have loved
- ▶ Accepting life on its terms, not on ours
- ▶ Grief is the emotion that enables us to deal with devastating loss or irrevocable change
- ▶ Not awkward or self-indulgent
- ▶ Working through fear and pain and sadness – this is a natural part of coming to terms with loss



# Ways to help with grief

- ▶ Listen to others' stories – connect with others
- ▶ Understand what happened and **WHY** it happened – do not blame yourself! The more you know, the more in control of the situation you may feel
- ▶ Allow yourself to grieve the loss
- ▶ Talk to your partner about how each other feels when you are ready – how does the loss affect you both?

