



Full Breasts, Empty Arms: Perinatal Loss & Lactation

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9th Annual BBFOK Summit
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DISCLOSURE

- ▣ In order to obtain nursing contact hours, you must attend the entire program and complete the evaluation form
- ▣ No conflicts of interest were identified for any member of the planning committee or any author of the program content
- ▣ OBRC obtains CNEs from the Oklahoma Nursing Association, an approved provider of nursing continuing professional development by the Midwest Multistate Division, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

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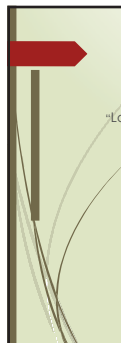


Perinatal Loss & Lactation Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session the attendee will be able to:

1. Discuss the prevalence and unique challenges of perinatal loss.
2. Describe the process of milk production after loss.
3. Identify effective communication techniques to use with parents who have experienced perinatal loss.
4. Review the process of milk donation following perinatal loss.
5. Identify techniques to discontinue milk production following perinatal loss.

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Perinatal Loss

"Losing a child means carrying an almost unbearable grief, experienced by many but talked about by few. In the pain of our loss, my husband and I discovered that in a room of 100 women, 10 to 20 of them will have suffered from miscarriage. Yet despite the staggering commonality of this pain, the conversation remains taboo, riddled with (unwarranted) shame, and perpetuating a cycle of solitary mourning."

Meghan, The Duchess of Sussex. *The Losses We Share*, *The New York Times*, November 25, 2020.

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What is Perinatal Loss?

- During Pregnancy:
 - Ectopic pregnancy
 - Molar pregnancy
 - Miscarriage
 - Medical Interruption
- Stillbirth
- Neonatal Death
- Child protection removal
- Surrogacy
- Adoption

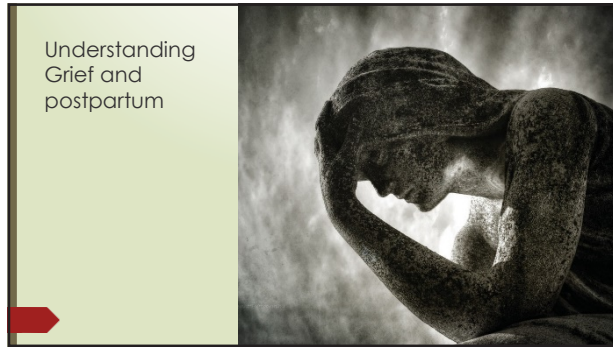
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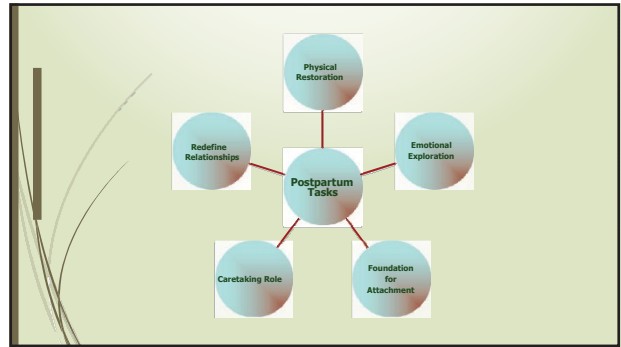
What is Perinatal Loss?

- Grief
- Mourning
- Bereavement

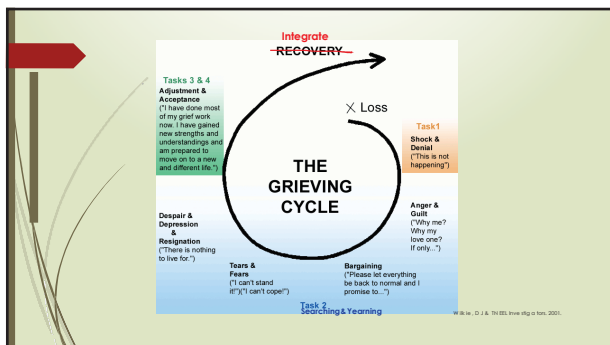
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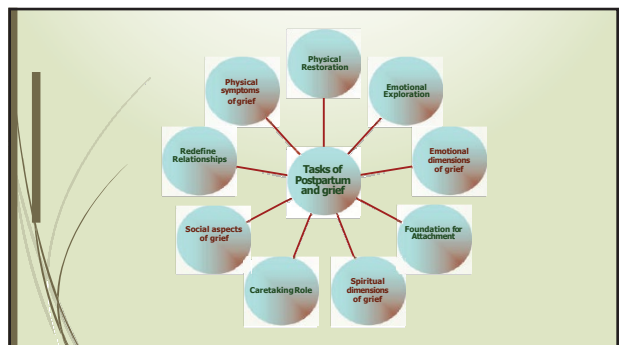
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- ### Process of Milk Production
- ▶ **Breasts:**
 - Serum hormones stimulate breast growth – usually gradual throughout pregnancy
 - Proliferation of ducts and lobules
 - **Lactogenesis I:** (1-6 weeks – day 2 postpartum)
 - **After 16 weeks of pregnancy lactation occurs**
 - **Lactogenesis II:** (postpartum day 3 – 8)
 - Triggered by rapid drop in progesterone levels
 - Onset of copious secretion of milk
 - Breast fullness and warmth
 - **Galactopoiesis/Lactogenesis III:** (postpartum day 9 – beginning of involution)
 - Maintenance of milk secretion
 - Controlled by supply-demand

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- ### 3 Types of Responses to Perinatal Death
- Avoidance
 - Insensitive or moralizing
 - Supportive

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Communication after early pregnancy loss

- "When did you learn you were pregnant?"
- "What plans have you made?"

Find out where they are to help them discover what they need

If you hear "baby":

- view as 'parents'
- offer choices to see, name, etc.
- tangible mementos

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Discussing Lactation after Loss

- Open, non-judgmental communication and anticipatory guidance
- Must be presented outside of the context of other physiological changes
- Include written material that allows the mother/family to process the information for decision-making

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Printed Information

- Acknowledgement of human milk and lactation after fetal/infant death
- Breast changes commonly associated with milk production
- Advice on alleviation of symptoms: discomfort, engorgement, leakage, infection
- Description of full range of suppression options
- Description of sustained expression options
- Description of milk donation option
- Recognition that additional bereavement or lactation support may be necessary.

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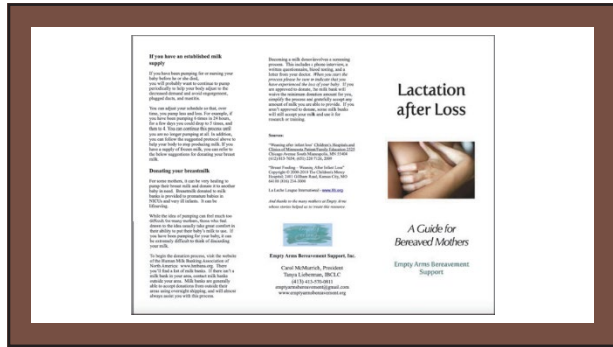
Printed Information

- Oklahoma Mothers Milk Bank www.okmilkbank.org
- Lactation After Loss, from www.emptyarmsbereavement.org
- Write your own - contact Cheryl Coleman for example

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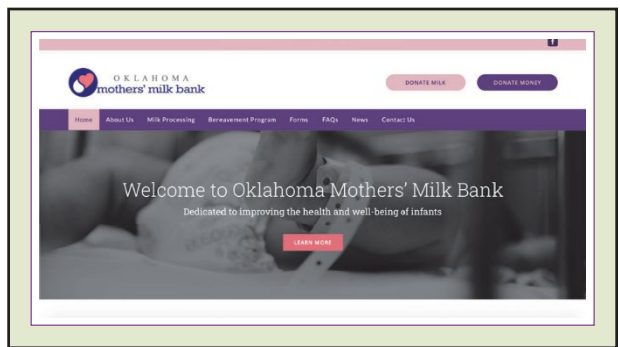
Milk Suppression Options

- Apply cold to reduce the swelling and to provide comfort.
- Do not apply heat.
- Lying on your back may help the excess fluid in your breasts to be reabsorbed by your body.
- Cabbage leaves may be applied to the breasts to reduce swelling.
- You may hand express milk or do a short period of breast pumping just to relieve pressure if your breasts get very hard.
- Wearing a sports bra may provide slight pressure and help reduce milk production.
- Medication? Dostinex (cabergoline)

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Milk Expression Options

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How do I donate my milk?

Donating your milk to the Oklahoma Mothers' Milk Bank is a safe way to share your milk with sick and premature infants. Some grieving mothers find this to be a special way to honor their baby after a loss.

If you have your milk stored in a breast, you may be able to donate it to the milk bank. The steps are simple:

When you have been approved as a donor, you can start dropping off your stored milk. We have drop-off sites around the state. You can choose to be a donor for as long as you like.

1. Call for a phone screening or apply online at okmilkbank.org.
2. Fill out and return your medical history forms.
3. Have your blood drawn. All costs will be covered by the milk bank.

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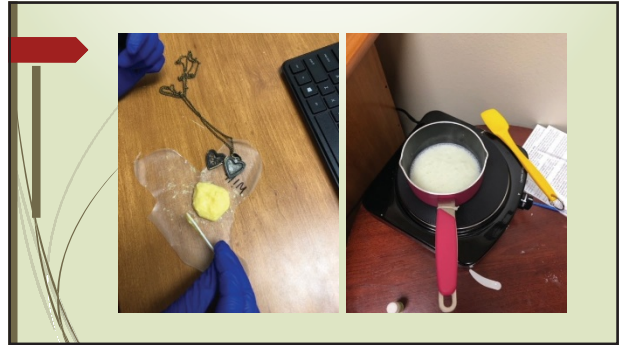
Informal Milk Sharing

- Eats on Feets - www.eatsonfeets.org
- Human Milk 4 Human Babies - www.hm4hb.net under repairs
hm4hb Oklahoma Facebook page
- Milk shared with friends and/or relatives

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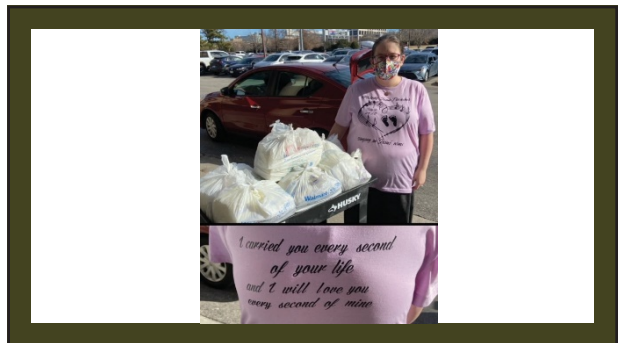
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When I found out last December we were expecting our third child. I never thought I would be in this position. On July 9, 2020 our 3rd child, a little girl, was stillborn at 36.6 weeks. We named her Melody Jean. She was 6lbs 3oz and every bit as beautiful as her siblings.

In my heart, as shattered as I was and still am, I knew that I wanted to give her milk to fragile babies so they could have a chance to thrive. At the same time, it allows me to still have a physical connection to my daughter. I am not sure how long I will donate, but I am so thankful to have found this way to give in her name. I know others "get it" and I don't feel so alone.

#MelodysMilk

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Thank you!

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