



REMEMBERING OUR ANGEL BABIES AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be a time of joy, but the loss of a baby can make Christmas a time of sadness, stress and other mixed emotions. Naomi Marston, specialist baby loss counsellor for charity, Abigail's footsteps and her own private practice, Lifecare Counselling in Kent, tells us the best ways to remember our angel babies this Christmas.

Whether bereaved recently or many years ago, memories of Christmas past or how you had imagined they were going to be can easily resurface and bring sadness at this time of year.

It's important to know that what you are feeling is normal and understandable.

Christmas is deemed to be a happy time and therefore it's quite common to try to ignore any sad feelings, as we don't want to upset or bring down the mood of family and others around us.

Many parents experiencing their first Christmas without their baby may feel like hibernating, not wanting to be sociable or feel the pressure to 'put on a brave face'.

Hidden tears and secret pain is not uncommon. After all, does a 'perfect' Christmas include sadness and tears?

Babies have died, relationships have changed or even ended, family members have also been impacted trying to deal with their own feelings, which is tough for everyone.

It's unrealistic to expect Christmas to go by without some difficult emotions.



HOW TO OVERCOME IT:

PLAN A TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

Make space in your day to remember your baby. Perhaps light a candle, look at photos and reminisce. Raise a glass and celebrate the time you shared with your baby and the precious memories you had together. If that means you shed a tear, then so be it. It's far healthier and more respectful to acknowledge the sadness you feel not having them with you than trying to soldier on, ignoring the elephant in the room.

START NEW TRADITIONS

You may wish to change traditions altogether because it feels too difficult. Maybe consider starting some new ones.

Sometimes there are certain Christmas decorations which have meaning, such as the fairy on the tree or a special bauble that could be used as a way of remembering. Or if you have other children, they could make something special for their baby brother or sister, perhaps with a small ceremony around placing it.

...BUT I DON'T WANT TO UPSET THE CHILDREN

That's understandable, but let's look at this a little closer. What are we doing when we remember loved ones in this way?

Well, we demonstrate that it's okay to be sad and that it's okay to cry. They learn through experience that emotions are normal and that they pass.

They will learn compassion and empathy. They learn it's okay to talk about their baby sibling.

I've been a counsellor since 2007 and I've had numerous occasions where adult clients are still confused about the circumstances of a loved one's death. When it's a baby who is no longer with us, grief and loss take on another dimension.

DON'T MAKE IT TABOO TO TALK ABOUT YOUR BABY.

It's far healthier to let children see that sadness is normal and that dying doesn't mean you disappear from people's lives. Instead they learn they are remembered and loved and there's a place for them within the family. Allowing children to be involved with remembrance in this way will soon become a more positive and beneficial experience for you all.

After your Christmas remembrance, carry on with Christmas the best you can.

Sadness at Christmas is difficult, but normal. Acknowledge it and don't be frightened of it. As with all emotions, it will pass.

If you need some help managing your emotions, do not struggle on alone. I can offer you a free 15 minute, no obligation telephone call to answer any questions you may have about specialist baby loss counselling and to see if I could help you.

In addition, I may be able to offer parents living in Kent some free sessions through local baby loss charity, Abigail's Footsteps, who raise funds to provide a specialist counselling service to parents who have experienced stillbirth or neonatal loss. If you are interested in this, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

www.lifecarecounselling.com
naomi@lifecarecounselling.com

"It's unrealistic to expect Christmas to go by without some difficult emotions."

