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Support for couples who have had miscarriages



It is important for couples to seek emotional support from friends and family, say a doctor. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO



Amrita Kaur

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SINGAPORE – When Ms Vernessa Chuah was researching support groups to tide her through her miscarriages, she noticed that most of them were based in Western countries.

“Our help in Asia mainly involves medication, diagnosis, therapy or assessments. Many women are reluctant to seek professional support as they do not want a medical record. I wanted things to be different,” says the 38-year-old.

That was when she decided to take up courses to become a pregnancy and infant loss coach. Her aim was to help bereaved couples in South-east Asia cope with their grief.

In 2019, she set up Mindful Space in the Newton area to curate play-based activities on movement, wellness and the outdoors for families.

There, she also conducts one-to-one coaching sessions with men and women who have experienced pregnancy loss to work through their grief, fears and unpleasant emotions.

“I coach at the beach or parks, walking in the fresh air and listening to the sound of the waves. Being in a different environment shifts the energy and mood. When their bodies feel better, they can process their thoughts and emotions better,” says Ms Chuah.

Apart from Singapore, her clients hail from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

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Since 2021, she has also been leading a pregnancy and infant loss circle, a free support group that aims to help grieving couples process their loss and share their emotions in a safe space.

“We heal when we give our story a voice, and others heal by listening to our stories, knowing they are not alone,” says Ms Chuah.

Dr Liu Shuling, senior consultant at KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital’s (KKH) department of reproductive medicine, says women who have experienced three or more miscarriages can seek medical assessment at The Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Clinic at the hospital.

It provides comprehensive assessment, treatment recommendations and psychosocial counselling for couples who experience recurrent miscarriages and want to conceive.

Dr Lim Whui Whui, associate consultant at Singapore General Hospital’s department of obstetrics and gynaecology, says couples can also seek emotional support and advice from friends and family.

In addition, support groups such as Angel Hearts and Miscarriage, Stillbirth and Child Loss Support provide avenues for grieving couples to share their experiences with others who have gone through the same thing.

“It is important for them to surround themselves with empathetic people who can provide a listening ear,” says Dr Lim.

Helplines

Mental well-being

- Institute of Mental Health’s Mental Health Helpline: 6389-2222 (24 hours)
- Samaritans of Singapore: 1800-221-4444 (24 hours) /1-767 (24 hours)
- Singapore Association for Mental Health: 1800-283-7019
- Silver Ribbon Singapore: 6386-1928
- Tinkle Friend: 1800-274-4788
- Community Health Assessment Team 6493-6500/1

Counselling

- TOUCHline (Counselling): 1800-377-2252
- TOUCH Care Line (for seniors, caregivers): 6804-6555
- Care Corner Counselling Centre: 6353-1180

Online resources

- mindline.sg