

Handling Difficult Questions Following Baby Loss

Suggested Replies and Preparing for Difficult Conversations

Returning to work after baby loss can mean facing questions that you weren't expecting. Sometimes people may ask because they care, but their questions can still feel difficult, intrusive, or upsetting.

You **do not have to answer questions you don't want to answer**. Preparing some responses in advance can help you feel a little more confident if a difficult conversation happens.

Practising Your Responses

It can be helpful to practice some of the responses before returning to work.

You could:

- Practice saying them out loud in the mirror.
- Practice with your partner, friend, family member, or someone you trust.
- Write down your own responses in words that feel natural to you.
- Think about questions you might be asked and decide beforehand how much you would like to share.
- Choose a short response you can use when you don't have the energy to explain.

- Practice saying, **"I'd rather not talk about that right now."**
- Remember that you can change your response depending on how you feel that day.

You don't have to rehearse every possible conversation. The aim is simply to have a few words ready so that you don't have to think of them when you are already feeling emotional.

Questions You Might Be Asked

Before returning to work, you may find it helpful to think about the questions you might receive.

For example:

"What happened?"

"How are you doing?"

"Are you feeling better now?"

"Do you want to talk about it?"

"What was your baby's name?"

"How far along were you?"

"Will you try again?"

"Are you going to have another baby?"

"Do you need anything?"

You can decide in advance which questions you would be comfortable answering and which you would rather not discuss.

Suggested Replies

If someone asks: "What happened?"

"Thank you for asking, but I'm not ready to talk about it."

Or:

"It's been a very difficult time, but I'd rather not talk about the details."

If someone asks for details

"I appreciate that you're asking because you care, but I don't feel comfortable talking about the details."

Or:

"I'd rather keep that private but thank you for understanding."

If someone asks: "Are you feeling better now?"

"I'm taking things one day at a time. I'm managing, but I'm still grieving."

Or:

"I'm getting through each day, but this isn't something I've simply got over."

If someone says: "At least you can try again."

"I know you mean that kindly, but that's difficult for me to hear. I'd rather not talk about future pregnancies."

If someone says: "Everything happens for a reason."

"I know you're trying to comfort me, but that's not something I find helpful to hear."

If someone asks about your baby

"Thank you for asking. I may want to talk about my baby sometimes but I may also have days when I don't feel able to."

Or:

"It means a lot that you're comfortable acknowledging my baby. I'll let you know if I want to talk."

If you become upset

"I'm just having a difficult moment. I need a little time."

Or:

"I'm feeling overwhelmed. I'm going to take a few minutes, and I'll come back when I'm ready."

If you want to change the subject

What I could say instead:

Create Your "Go-To" Response

It can be useful to have one simple response that you can use whenever you don't know what to say.

For example:

"I'm finding things difficult at the moment and I'm not really ready to talk about it. I hope you understand."

Or create your own in the space provided below:

Remember

You are **not responsible for making other people feel comfortable** about your loss!

You can talk about your baby.

You can choose not to talk.

You can answer some questions and not others.

You can change your mind.

You can ask for space.

You can end a conversation.

You can say, "**I don't know what to say.**"

There is no perfect response. **The words you choose should be words that feel comfortable and safe for you.**