

Has someone you work with gone through a miscarriage?

How can you best support them when they come back to work?

As an employer, manager, or colleague, some simple actions on your part can make a big difference in the lives of parents who are grieving following a miscarriage.

Words and actions that can help

- Acknowledging what the person is going through.
- Expressing your condolences.
- Asking them what they need and how you can help.
- Offering your support and availability if they need it.
- Making a small thoughtful gesture: flowers, text message, card, telephone call.
- Referring them to resources that can help:
 - Employee Assistance Program
 - Info Social at 811
 - Web page *Finding a resource in health and social services*
 - Ordre des psychologues du Québec

I wish someone had taken the initiative to call me and say, "Look, you're coming back to work, do you want us to tell the team you've had a miscarriage? How do you want us to handle your return?"

I didn't need to have someone hold my hand, I didn't need anyone to ask me what I was going through either, but just to be told, "Listen, I'm aware of what you're going through and I'm here." That was all I needed.

Words and actions to avoid

- Acting as if nothing happened.
- Excluding the person from social activities or group gatherings without checking with them.
- Minimizing their experience and the duration of their grieving.
- Comparing their experience with that of other parents.
- Starting sentences with "At least" (e.g., *At least you already have another child*).

About miscarriage

- **It's common.** One in five pregnancies ends in miscarriage. This means some colleagues or employees have already experienced one, or will in the future.
- **It is a bereavement.** Parents may experience anxiety, sadness, anger, and other emotions that are sometimes invisible to those around them.
- **Grieving is non linear and often difficult.** Going back to work does not mean the grieving has ended. Some symptoms can persist for weeks, months, or even years after the loss.
- **It also affects their professional life.** Parents who go through a miscarriage are likely to have higher absenteeism rates and problems functioning at work (e.g., difficulty concentrating, lack of energy and motivation).

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