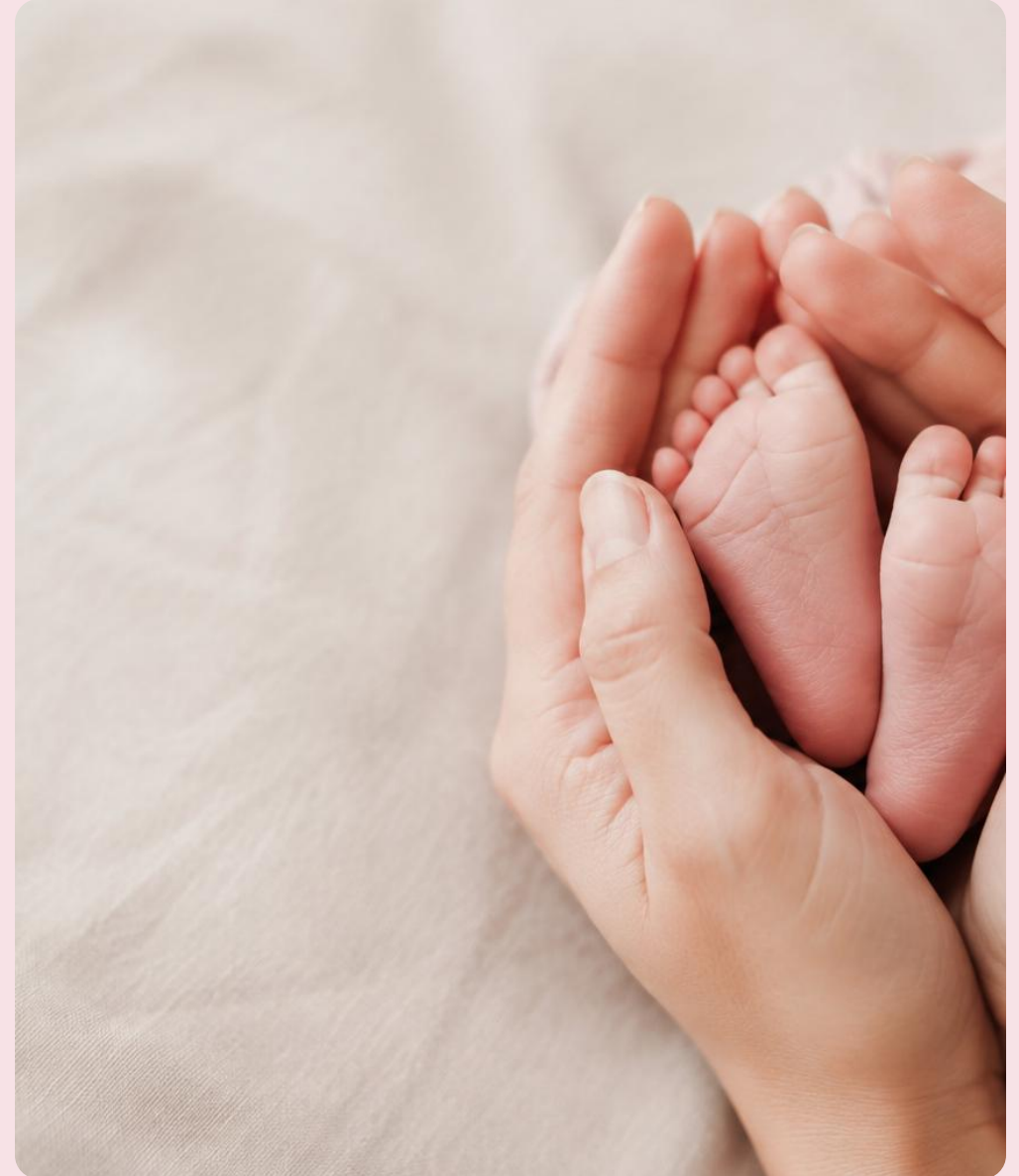


When Love Continues

Relational Narratives After Pregnancy and Infant Loss

90-minute narrative counselling workshop



A mother's story

Grief changes. Love continues.

Play the first 10 minutes

Content note: stillbirth and bereavement

 [TOUCH HERE TO PLAY VIDEO 1](#)

YOUR STORY • TALK ABOUT YOUR SON

My son is still part of my story.

A mother's story of love, loss
and continuing relationship.

Speak from the heart. Pause. Breathe.

Growing Around Grief

Life grows around love and loss.

2:37 animation by Sands

Then discuss: What stayed with her?

 [TOUCH HERE TO PLAY VIDEO 2](#)

Healing does not have to mean letting go

A common message

People may hear: 'move on', 'find closure', or 'try again'. Even when well meant, these words can make grief feel lonely or rushed.

A different invitation

Narrative practice can ask: What if the bond is not a problem to remove? What if love can be carried forward in a way that supports life?

The length of a life does not decide the depth of a bond

Miscarriage

A relationship may already include hopes, names, imagined futures, prayers and a sense of parenthood.

Stillbirth / in utero

Parents may grieve both the baby they knew during pregnancy and the future they expected to share.

Shortly after birth

Minutes, hours or days can hold a lifetime of touch, identity, memory and family connection.

When a loss is minimised, grief can feel even lonelier

'It was early.'

A short pregnancy can still hold identity, hope, attachment and imagined futures.

Parenthood unseen

Others may not recognise the person as a mother, father or parent — even when they do.

Pressure to move on

Silence, comparison or 'at least...' language can make the grieving person feel that their story is unwelcome.

CONTINUING BONDS

Continuing bonds are part of many parents' grief stories

Love

The relationship can remain emotionally important even when physical presence has ended.

Influence

Values, choices, rituals and relationships can continue to be shaped by the baby's life.

Identity

A baby may remain part of how a person understands themselves as a mother, father, parent or family.

Meaning

Remembering can hold sorrow and also tenderness, connection, courage or purpose.



Relational narratives ask: Who are we in relationship?

Beyond 'what happened?'

Narrative counselling listens for relationship, identity, values, hopes and the meanings people give to what happened.

A richer question

Instead of only asking, 'How did you lose your baby?' we can also ask, 'How has loving this baby shaped who you are?'

RE-MEMBERING

Re-membering keeps the baby in the story

Membership

Who has a meaningful place in the person's 'club of life'? The deceased can still be included.

Reciprocity

What did the baby bring into the parent's life — and what did the parent give to the baby through love, care and welcome?

Legacy

How does this relationship continue to influence the way the parent lives, loves, hopes or understands family?

Four gentle re-membling questions

1. What did baby bring?

'What did your baby bring into your life, even in the short time you had together?'

2. What did you give?

'What did your baby know of your love, care, protection or welcome?'

3. What did baby see?

'If your baby could speak about you as a parent, what might they say mattered about you?'

4. What continues?

'Where do you notice your baby's influence in your life or family today?'

RE-AUTHORING

Re-authoring makes the story bigger than the loss

Dominant story

‘Everything was taken.’
Pain may become the only visible storyline.

Look again

Find what remains.
Love, courage, parenthood, values, memory and connection may still be present.

Preferred story

‘Love still has a place.’
The loss remains real, but it no longer has to be the only author of identity.



Language can either make room for grief — or close it down

Try language like...

‘Tell me about your baby.’

‘I’m so sorry.’

‘What would you like me to know about them?’

‘Would you like me to use their name?’

Be careful with...

‘At least...’

‘Everything happens for a reason.’

‘You can try again.’

‘You need closure.’

These phrases can unintentionally minimise the relationship.

Follow the parent's meaning, not a fix

LISTEN

A fictional parent says: 'People act like my baby never existed.'

EXPLORE

'What would you like others to understand about your baby and your relationship?'

RE-AUTHOR

'What does your love for your baby say about the parent you are?'

PAIR ACTIVITY

Turn a fixing question into a relational one

Start with a common question

Choose one: 'How are you coping?' or 'Are you feeling better yet?' Notice what the question assumes.

Now make it relational

Try: 'What has helped you feel understood?' or 'What would honour your relationship with your baby today?' Then discuss what changed.

The whole family may carry a different relationship

Mother / birthing parent

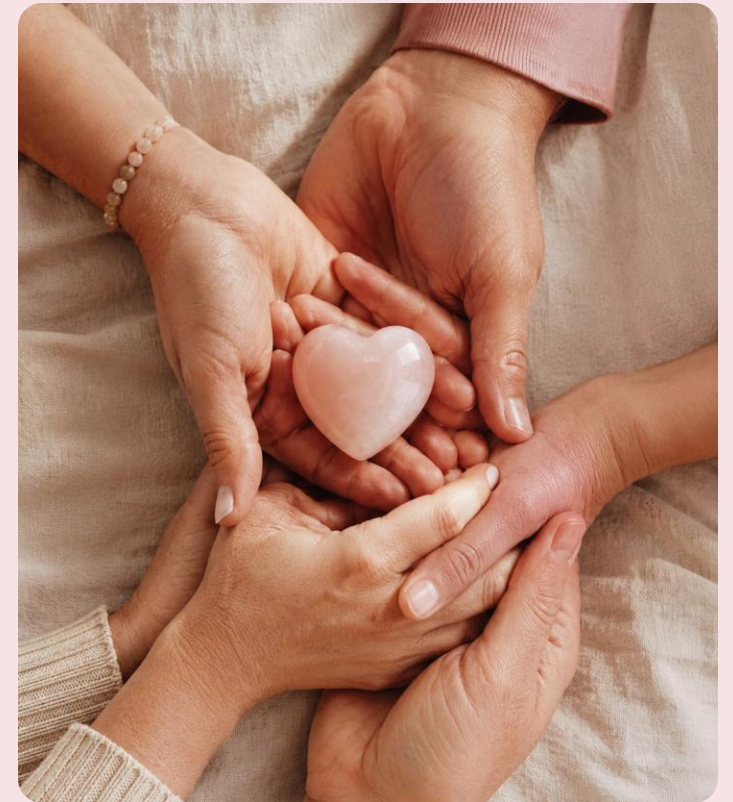
Grief may be emotional, relational and physical. Their body may also hold reminders of what happened.

Partner / father

Their grief may be less visible or overshadowed, yet their bond and loss can be profound.

Siblings & family

Children and relatives may need language, rituals and stories that let the baby remain part of the family.



Let faith be a resource — not a rule

Invite, don't impose

Ask: 'Has your faith been a comfort, a struggle, or perhaps both?' Make room for anger, questions and silence as well as hope.

Follow their theology

Prayer, scripture and spiritual rituals can support meaning when the person wants them. Avoid explaining why the loss happened.

Know when support needs to widen

Immediate safety

Thoughts or talk of suicide or self-harm need urgent safety support and qualified mental-health assessment.

Trauma symptoms

Ongoing nightmares, intrusive memories, avoidance or feeling constantly on edge may need trauma-informed clinical assessment.

Daily life is overwhelmed

If distress keeps seriously disrupting sleep, work, relationships or basic daily tasks, encourage qualified support.

Beyond your scope

Refer when needs exceed your competence. In South Africa, SADAG Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0800 567 567.

Before I respond, I can reflect on my own position

1. Whose meaning is leading?

Am I using the parent's words, or replacing them with my own beliefs?

2. Am I rushing?

Am I pushing hope, closure or meaning too quickly because the grief is hard to sit with?

3. What is this awakening in me?

What memories, fears, faith beliefs or personal losses are entering the room with me?

4. What support do I need?

Would supervision, consultation or referral help me stay safe, ethical and present?

TAKE-HOME WORDS

Honour. Listen. Continue.

Recognise the baby.
Follow the parent's meaning.
Let the relationship keep its place.

A GENTLE CLOSING

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.

Psalm 34:18

May grieving families feel seen,
heard and never rushed.

