

THE CHURCH
and the
REPRODUCTIVE LOSS
JOURNEY

REPRODUCTIVE
LOSS NETWORK™

CONNECTING FAITH,
GRIEF AND HOPE



Hello!

We are excited you have our magazine in your hands. Thank you for taking the time to explore our material. At **Reproductive Loss Network (RLN)**, our mission is to **bring a Biblical response to a grieving world through educating, equipping, and encouraging the helpers who support those touched by reproductive loss.** These losses are essentially associated with any experience of grief in a person's life related to their reproductive health, decisions, fertility, the outcomes of a pregnancy, or the creation or care of their family.

Reproductive loss is prevalent in our churches:

- **one out of four pregnancies ends in miscarriage** [1]
- **one in 175 pregnancies ends in stillbirth** [2]
- **one in six couples experiences infertility** [3]
- **one out of four women will make an abortion decision** [4]

Included in this category of loss is the grief associated with complex prenatal diagnoses, adoption, foster care reunifications, and the ripple effect it has on family and friends.

Grief surrounds us. Like nothing else, misguided, unprocessed grief affects spirituality with its accompanying heart-wrenching questions about God, self and faith.

We hope this material will give you a glimpse into what Reproductive Loss Network prays for every day. We pray for the many women, men, and families touched by reproductive loss. We pray for those who sit in church or counseling rooms and silently suffer. And we pray for the hurting on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

We hold fast to what we know to be true - God heals and comforts through His Word and His people. So, we encourage you and your church body to bring the Christ-centered hope to those touched by reproductive loss.

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1 - <https://www.winniepalmershospital.com/content-hub/pregnancy-loss-1-in-4>

2 - <https://www.cdc.gov/stillbirth/data-research/index.html>

3 - <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16083-infertility>

4 - <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2024-04-30/1-in-4-u-s-women-will-have-an-abortion-in-their-lifetime>

I was very pleased with the training, especially to see how Christ-centered it is. True healing isn't possible without Christ, and it's important to have a biblical framework for going through loss with others.

Julie, Hotline Volunteer

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THE NEED

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 2 Cor. 1:3,4

Pastors, biblical counselors, and church communities can play a crucial role in supporting individuals and couples dealing with reproductive loss. Unfortunately, despite its prevalence, the discussions surrounding reproductive loss are often overlooked. And often, those grieving feel alone and misunderstood.

Studies indicate that only about 3% of individuals seek support from religious figures, such as priests, pastors, or rabbis, for after-loss care. This raises the question: why do those grieving reproductive losses often find the church inhospitable to their situation?

Every church has people suffering from reproductive loss, and they need compassionate and Biblical counsel. RLN will be a priceless resource in this needed ministry area for your church.

Chris Ritter, Ministry Development Pastor and Biblical Counselor, Doxa Church in Rocklin, CA



Not talking about reproductive loss may stem from complex ethical concerns, lack of resources or from the pain of personal loss. These factors and others can leave church leaders unsure of how to help. But the good news is RLN strives to help churches meet the needs of those in their care through our training offerings and consultation packages.

OUR LANGUAGE

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver. Proverbs 25:11

It is common for the world to identify people by what they have experienced or lack. However, describing a person as post-abortive, infertile, or childless may bring unnecessary pain and hinder their healing. As such, many men and women experience multiple and varied losses, and wearing labels can feel hopeless. Instead, RLN encourages Biblical language when supporting others, helping them see their identity in the image of God, not in their particular sin or diagnosis. By promoting ministries to utilize the term "reproductive grief care," we encompass the many facets of hurt by all reproductive loss. We recognize that sin is in all of us, not only in the state of our bodies or what we have chosen.

PRE- MARITAL COUNSELING

And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth..."
Genesis 1:28

The topic of reproductive loss is challenging - one that may hold pain, grief, and unexpected hardship. Yet, discussions surrounding past loss and possible future challenges seem conspicuously absent from counseling rooms and the pews, especially before marriage.

In pre-marriage counseling, the prevailing narrative when discussing family formation focuses on reproductive "success." The emphasis is on the joys of starting a family, the anticipation of children, and the blessings of parenthood. Rarely, if ever, do conversations delve into the pain and challenges that reproductive loss can bring. And rightly so, to some extent—the couple is looking forward to their exciting future.

Yet, just as a young couple discusses finances, intimacy, and communication, it is also important for them to consider the possibility that their future family might not match their childhood dreams.

The church serves as a sanctuary for emotional and spiritual care. However, reproductive loss is an area where more attention and resources are needed. By filling this gap and offering tailored biblical counseling for those experiencing such losses or possible difficulties in achieving pregnancy, the faith community can become an even more powerful source of support and comfort.

By introducing the topic of reproductive loss in premarital counseling, pastors, biblical counselors, and compassionate individuals can help navigate these sensitive topics with hope, approachability, and accessibility, making the church body a known integral part of the healing process (1 Cor. 12:12-27).

[Access *Journeying Through Reproductive Loss with Hope - Pre-marriage Course for Pastors and Couples* at learn.reproductivelossnetwork.org]

Grief and loss surround us, and most are unprepared for these seasons in life.



HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. Ephesians 3:14-15

There is much to celebrate as we witness God's glorious work through marriage and parenting. Even our culture extends its praise through holidays and special events. But not every occasion is celebratory for all.

Mother's and Father's Day remind many of what is lost or desired. On these days, many need deeper comfort. However, on these Sunday mornings, churches often take their focus from worshiping God and His works to elevating an identity of motherhood.

As believers, our fellowship is to glorify God through teaching, fellowship, communion, and prayer (Acts 2:42). At RLN, we teach and demonstrate our true identities are in Christ. In Him, he offers the living hope that our worth is far more than being a father, mother, or grandparent.

As you consider celebrating families and children on cultural holidays and events, please remain a place of refuge for those who grieve. And join us as we pray on these holidays for those hurting to choose worship over isolation.

These are days many need deeper comfort.



MARITAL COUNSELING

As a couple enters a marriage, they often want to bring their best into their relationship. For various reasons, there is a temptation to keep their past hidden, unknowingly planting a seed for future strife.

Statistics show the devastating impact on individuals who carry secret abortion experiences throughout their marriage. These secrets manifest destruction within the family, and Biblical application can break the silence and foster restoration.

Marital conflict also occurs when couples do not communicate through reproductive losses experienced together, such as a miscarriage, stillbirth, or infertility. Not understanding the individuality of grieving and the gender differences between them can cause resentment and withdrawal. These devastating losses significantly increase desires for separation and divorce.

Pastors and biblical counselors would do well to encourage conversations to discuss reproductive health and loss through a Biblical lens. While these discussions are challenging and possibly uncomfortable, our training can be of great support as we offer valuable tools and resources to enhance your care.

STORIES OF HOPE

At Reproductive Loss Network we often have the privilege of hearing how Christ uses the church community to help families during their seasons of grief. We share a few of the stories to encourage care ministries and helpers world-wide.

Rachel Green

And when God felt far away, and we were too consumed by our grief to make our own way, He used the body of Christ to carry us. They were His hands & feet, reaching into our lives and drawing us closer to Him. There wasn't much they could say to "make it better," but they brought us meals, paid for a house cleaner, watched our kids, and checked in on us frequently. They prayed for us and cried with us. Before Isaac was born, a group of women from our church threw a "Celebration of Life" party for me, and I was given a quilt for which they had each created their own unique square. After Isaac was born, those same women came to the hospital to "meet" him and to sit with us in our grief. I will cherish these simple acts of kindness and compassion for the rest of my life.

Kristin Lowther

Losing a child during pregnancy is a life-altering and devastating blow. Losing twins during pregnancy is unimaginable, and yet there I was...Even still, what I have realized is that by sharing with sisters in Christ and being heard and hearing others' grief, I get closer and closer to healing...Choosing to let someone know me, even in the dark and ugly pit of grief, brings me a measure of comfort. When I look around and see the face of the women who have supported me on this road, I feel known. Those people whom I've allowed into my grief space have acted like strategically placed planks of wood along the walls of my grief pit that have helped me take steps upward and out, and for that, I am grateful.

Taylor LeProhon

I experienced what they call "a missed miscarriage." Our baby had passed away much earlier, but my body didn't stop acting pregnant. The physical pain that accompanies a miscarriage truly can't be described. It was a swirl of dark agony, loss, humiliation, and fear.

Although reeling emotionally and physically for longer than I can count in some ways – the biggest blessing during this time was people. My husband, family, and close friends. Our church family brought us meals, friends from far away sent flowers, and my sister sat on the couch silently watching TV with me. The sense of presence found with those closest to me helped me grieve.

HERE FOR YOU...

We deeply appreciate your interest and time in reading our resource, **The Church and the Reproductive Loss Journey**. We envision a community of helpers comprised of pastors and their churches, pregnancy care centers, biblical counselors, and ministry leaders equipped to provide care from a solid biblical foundation to those suffering reproductive loss.

Our flagship training is **Help to Hope**, a half-day workshop covering reproductive grief basics, biblical guidance to loss and healthy grieving, and practical application in offering hope. It's an excellent foundation for those new to helping or a welcomed refresher for more experienced helpers. Individuals and groups are welcome!

We also offer workshops of more focused concentrations, such as Abortion Pill Reversal-Outcome Support, Building a Reproductive Grief Care Team, Timeline of Care, Practicing Words of Comfort, and pre-marriage counseling. Many of these can be accessed through our on-demand learning portal. For those who prefer a custom approach, we can partner with existing care or certification programs to offer the missing piece of reproductive grief care.

It was such a wonderful encouragement to me being part of this workshop webinar. It confirmed things that have become a part of my own personal use in the counseling room and also built my faith that the Lord is at work.

Peta Howell, Coordinator, Pregnancy Counseling and Support Tasmania Inc.

ABOUT US

Tanya Flores is a certified counselor with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and co-founder of the Reproductive Loss Network. Tanya is the Director of Client Services & Education at her local medical pregnancy clinic, where she leads a team of Reproductive Grief Care Advocates. Outside of the clinic, she serves her church as a lead biblical counselor in their Soul Care program.

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Tricia Lewis, Ph.D. is co-founder and educator with Reproductive Loss Network. Tricia applies her expertise to offer in-depth biblical grief education to individuals and groups alike. She focuses on enhancing the support provided by helpers in many fields, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to offer compassionate and effective care to those experiencing reproductive loss.

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"We would love to connect with you and help you create a culture of care for those impacted by reproductive loss and grief. Let us know how we can come alongside you."








The church is God's tangible place of refuge. As such, church and small group leaders, ministry leads, and staff are often the first to hear of a congregant's spiritual or physical need for reproductive grief care.

Consider RLN as a partner to come alongside your church or ministry by offering Biblical education or consulting specializing in reproductive loss and support.

LET'S TALK

We'd love to meet you and pray how we can work together. Please scan our code to visit our website or send us an email. You may also subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter and follow us on social media. We hope to hear from you soon!

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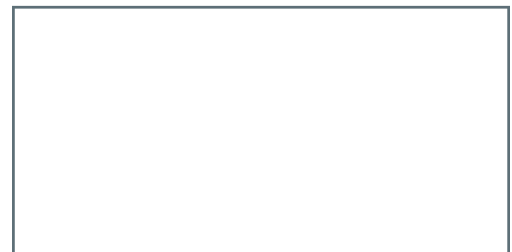


Scan with your smartphone to learn more about us, our trainings and online resources.

Wonderful course! I truly appreciated the heart and care of the instructors. Their commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture was refreshing. I wish all church leaders could hear the wisdom they have to share. You're on the right track. Keep doing what you're doing!

Cheryl Braden

Life Tribe & Legacy Incorporated



Reproductive Loss Network Partner