

Point of Care Guidelines for Supporting Ethnic Minority, Refugee & Migrant Parents After Pregnancy Loss or Stillbirth

This document guides clinical staff to ensure culturally safe, trauma-informed, and respectful care for ethnic minority, refugee, and migrant parents experiencing pregnancy loss at any gestation. It has been co-produced with families with lived experience to reflect their voices, values, and needs.

Initial Contact & Acknowledgment of Loss

- Use clear, compassionate language: *"I'm so sorry for your loss. We're here to support you."*
 - ◊ **Tip:** Avoid medical jargon and ensure language is culturally appropriate.
- Respect different grief responses—some families may be more private, others may grieve openly with extended family.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Ask if they would like someone contacted to provide support (family, community elder, or spiritual advisor).

Providing Culturally Safe & Trauma-Informed Care

- Acknowledge cultural, religious, and spiritual beliefs around pregnancy, loss, and mourning.
- Avoid assumptions or stereotypes and be open to learning about each family's perspective.
- Be aware of potential past trauma (e.g., war, displacement, discrimination) and how this may affect trust in healthcare.
- Offer private spaces for reflection or religious observances.

Engaging Cultural & Community Support

- Ask if they would like to involve a cultural or faith leader, community elder, or support worker.
- Be mindful of gender preferences in care.
- Recognise the role of extended family or community in decisions.
- Offer referrals to local cultural groups or settlement services if families are newly arrived.

Respecting Decision-Making & Family Involvement

- Ask, *"Who would you like to be involved in these conversations?"*
- Respect choices to involve community or religious leaders while ensuring the birthing parent's voice is heard.
- Clearly explain any medical procedures and confirm understanding.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Use interpreters if language barriers are present.

Respecting Cultural & Religious Practices

- Ask if there are any traditions they wish to follow for handling the baby or mourning.
- Respect if parents do not wish to see or hold the baby.
- Accommodate religious or cultural practices, such as washing or blessing the baby.
- Provide time and space for prayer, reflection, or cultural rituals.

Discussing Medical Procedures with Sensitivity

- Discuss autopsy or other procedures with cultural sensitivity.
- Offer alternatives (e.g., placenta testing, genetic testing) if autopsy is declined.
- Explain next steps, timelines, and how results will be shared.



Funeral, Burial & Decision Support

- Support immediate burial needs if required by cultural or religious tradition.
- Assist with arrangements if baby needs to be transported for burial.
- Provide information about financial assistance for funeral costs.
 - ◊ **Resource:** Handouts with Centrelink info and funeral services.
- Respect naming customs and offer space to record the baby's name and story

Handover to Support Services

- With consent, refer families to:
 - ◊ Red Nose Bereavement Services
 - ◊ Cultural or faith-based grief support
 - ◊ Multicultural or refugee mental health services
 - ◊ Community or settlement services
- Provide contact names, follow-up timing, and communication methods.
- Share key contacts in accessible formats:
 - ◊ **Red Nose 24/7 Grief & Loss Support Line:** 1300 308 307
 - ◊ **Cultural support services:** Print, SMS, or digital links

Final Considerations for Culturally Safe Care

- Approach every interaction with respect and cultural humility.
- Acknowledge their grief without imposing Western norms.
- Support expression of loss in a way that aligns with their values.
- Ensure continued access to support.
- Always ask permission before sharing any personal or health information.

By following these guidelines, clinical staff can deliver culturally safe, trauma-informed, and respectful care to ethnic minority, refugee, and migrant parents navigating pregnancy loss.

