

Point of Care Guidelines for Supporting Young Mums After Pregnancy Loss or Stillbirth

This document guides clinical staff to ensure trauma-informed, respectful, and age-appropriate care for young mums (under 20) experiencing pregnancy loss at any gestation. It has been co-produced with young mothers with lived experience to reflect their voices, values, and needs.

Initial Contact & Acknowledgment of Loss

- Use clear, compassionate language: *"I'm so sorry you're going through this. We're here to support you."*
 - ◊ **Tip:** Avoid judgmental language or assumptions about age or circumstances.
- Ask what support they would like and who they trust to be involved.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Include chosen support people while centring the young mum's voice.

Providing Age-Appropriate & Trauma-Informed Care

- Use plain, age-appropriate language and explain processes step by step.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Check understanding gently and often.
- Acknowledge that all feelings numbness, anger, sadness are valid.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Let them know there is no "right way" to grieve.
- Provide reassurance and emotional validation without minimising their experience.

Respecting Decision-Making & Family Involvement

- Ask, *"Would you like to make decisions yourself, or have someone help?"*
 - ◊ **Tip:** Avoid assuming a parent or guardian should lead decision-making.
- Clearly explain their rights around medical, funeral, and memory-making choices.
- Encourage independent decision-making, while offering support if they want it.

Providing Accessible Information

- Prioritise verbal conversations, supplemented with written or digital resources.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Provide links to youth-friendly or confidential support resources.
- Avoid complex medical terms and explain what to expect next.

Grief Support & Coping Styles

- Young mums may grieve in many different ways. Respect emotional range and coping preferences.
- Offer options like memory boxes, handprints, and keepsakes but never pressure.
- Ask if they would like to follow personal, cultural, or faith-based traditions.

Funeral, Burial & Support for Decisions

- Explain available options for burial, cremation, and saying goodbye.
 - ◊ **Tip:** Be clear about their rights in making these decisions.
- Share information about financial support for funerals if needed.
- Support their choices whether they prefer a formal ceremony or private reflection.



Handover to Support Services

- With consent, coordinate referrals to:
 - ◊ Red Nose Bereavement Support
 - ◊ Youth-specific grief or counselling services
 - ◊ Local health clinics or school-based health teams
- Provide contact names, times for follow-up, and how the young mum will be contacted.
- Share key contacts in youth-accessible formats:
 - ◊ **Red Nose 24/7 Grief & Loss Support Line:**
1300 308 307
 - ◊ **Youth-specific services:** Print, SMS, or digital resource links

Final Considerations for Young Mum-Friendly Care

- Meet each young mum with empathy and respect.
- Validate their grief and identity as a parent, regardless of age.
- Avoid minimising language or treating them like children.
- Ensure they know how to access support, now and in the future.
- Always ask permission before sharing personal or health information.

By following these guidelines, clinical staff can provide trauma-informed, youth-centred, and respectful care for young mums experiencing pregnancy loss.

