

Empowering Grieving Parents, One Conversation at a Time

- **Over 100,000 Australian couples are directly impacted by pregnancy or infant loss each year**
- **New data reveals two in five parents felt alone in their grief following a miscarriage, while one third of dads didn't know how to explain their loss to family, friends and work colleagues**
- **This Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day (15 October), Gidget Foundation Australia is urging Australians to learn how to support a loved one during this challenging time**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The birth of a child can be a joyous time, but every day in Australia, six babies are stillborn, two babies pass away during the neonatal period (28 days post birth)¹ and 285 pregnancies end in miscarriage². Each one of these statistics is a baby, with parents and family who feel this loss.

New data from Gidget Foundation Australia found that following a miscarriage, two in five (43%) Australian parents felt alone in their grief and two in five (40%) did not want to burden others while navigating their grief.

The data also highlighted the impact of stillbirth and infant loss on fathers, as two in five (42%) grieving fathers found people dismissive, or minimising their loss, compared to one in three (34%) mothers. One third (30%) of Australian dads also reported the most challenging part was not knowing how to explain their loss to family, friends, and work colleagues.

Despite a staggering 100,000 Australian couples directly impacted by pregnancy or infant loss every year², there is still taboo surrounding the topic. This **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day (15 October)** Gidget Foundation Australia is urging people to learn how to support a loved one during this challenging time with simple actions such as acknowledging and validating their loss, bringing homemade meals or sharing available support services with the grieving parents.

The loss of an unborn child or baby can result in significant and ongoing psychological distress for parents, with symptoms including sadness, guilt, and shock³. Mothers with a history of pregnancy loss before their first live birth are also 35% more likely to need psychiatric treatment within six months post-partum than those without a history of pregnancy loss.⁴ Encouragingly, early support and intervention has been associated with lower depression rates and improved future quality of life for grieving parents⁵.

Clinical Team Leader at Gidget Foundation Australia, Katie Peterson explains that if not addressed these complex feelings could lead to the development of perinatal depression and anxiety (PNDA) or potentially post-traumatic stress disorder.

"After experiencing a miscarriage or losing a baby, parents may have a number of complex feelings that can be hard to understand and process. Grieving parents will often admit that they are overwhelmed by how they feel and unsure of how long these feelings may last. And can struggle with connecting with family, friends, and others, as they think others don't understand what they are going through," Ms Peterson says.

"We want to break the stigma around pregnancy and infant loss so that parents don't suffer behind closed doors, or feel like they can't speak up because it makes others uncomfortable, which is why it is important that loved ones feel equipped to support them through this challenging time."

CEO of Gidget Foundation Australia, Arabella Gibson says that navigating pregnancy loss can be really challenging with intense emotional ups and downs.

"Pregnancy loss can be a sudden and distressing event for parents, and loved ones may not fully understand how much this loss affects those experiencing it. When someone passes away, families will usually talk about it and receive support throughout the different stages of grief. But miscarriages can happen unexpectedly. Parents may not have told anyone about their pregnancy, and as a result end up feeling alone throughout their journey," Ms Gibson says.

"At Gidget Foundation Australia, it is our unwavering commitment to assist parents during challenging phases in their lives. From our free, GP referred counselling services to our peer support network, we want all parents to know that they are never alone, and that support is available."

This **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day (15 October)**, Gidget Foundation Australia is encouraging Australians to start conversations with loved ones and get involved in the annual [Bun in the Oven](#) fundraiser running from October to end November. You can bake a difference for expectant and new parents by fundraising for Gidget Foundation Australia to continue providing life-saving supports for Australians in need. For more information and additional resources, head to www.gidgetfoundation.org.au/

About Gidget Foundation Australia

Gidget Foundation Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to support the emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents, to ensure they receive timely, appropriate and specialist care.

As the national leading provider of perinatal mental health services Gidget Foundation Australia offers free, GP referred specialist perinatal mental health psychological services, via face-to-face and telehealth; and invests in retention, engagement, and development of its 120+ clinicians through an innovative training, mentoring and supervision workforce development program.

About Gidget

Gidget was the nickname of a vibrant young mother who tragically took her own life while experiencing postnatal depression, a diagnosis she kept close to her heart.

Together her loving family and friends created Gidget Foundation Australia determined that what happened to *Gidget* would not happen to others.

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About the Citations

The survey by Gidget Foundation Australia was carried out on a sample of 508 expectant Australian parents and parents with children under 5 in April 2023. Methodology: The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that is independently conducted and verified PureProfile.

1. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mothers-babies/stillbirths-and-neonatal-deaths>
2. <https://miscarriageaustralia.com.au/>
3. <https://www.gidgetfoundation.org.au/grief-and-loss/bereavement>
4. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33672236/>
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35361132/>