

YOUR EMOTIONS



Parents of NICU/SCBU babies can often feel a sense of guilt, loss and have a lot of strong emotional feelings surrounding the birth of their baby. Perhaps the delivery wasn't as planned, you didn't get to term or there was no celebration at the birth. For whatever reason, it isn't what was expected and you're now having to experience neonatal care. It's important to know you're not alone on your journey.



Feelings you may experience:



- ✓ Loss at not being pregnant any more
- ✓ Loss or guilt you and your baby didn't get to full term
- ✓ Loss and regret at not having the birth you had planned
- ✓ Trauma and distress at what you went through during labour and delivery
- ✓ Loss of the birth related celebrations
- ✓ Loss of not getting that first hold straight after birth
- ✓ Guilt that your baby has a congenital abnormality or problems resulting from labour and delivery
- ✓ "Why my baby?" or "What did I do wrong?"

These are all normal feelings. Your obstetrician, GP or midwife may be able to give you some indication as to why your baby came early or needed special care after birth. Talking about your concerns with your partner, friend, midwife, GP can sometimes help you put the birth and having a baby in the unit into perspective.

Seeking help

When you get home with your baby this can also be an emotional time, do not under estimate the journey you have been on as this can have an enormous emotional and physical toll on you and your partner. It is important to recognise you have been through a traumatic time and that as your baby gets stronger you might start to feel the full impact of what you have been through.

It can sometimes feel like a lonely experience as parents of premature or sick babies can find it difficult to share experiences with other parents of full term children as their development is so different.

Some areas have special support groups which meet weekly/monthly and can be an invaluable tool for preventing mums and dads from becoming too isolated. The Neonatal Trust can tell you if there is one in your area. There are also many online support groups which you can join via Facebook which have other parents on similar journeys.

There may be a range of emotions present during the first few months and both men and women can be affected. If you are continually overwhelmed, anxious or tearful be sure to seek professional help so you can then enjoy your baby.

Depression.org.nz
0800 111 757

Healthline.govt.nz
0800 611 116

Mothershelpers.co.nz
0800 002 717