

For many pregnancy is a time of joy. For others it will become a time of loss and sadness. Many couples are surprised by the grief they experience after a miscarriage and are unprepared for the intensity of their emotions. They also find that miscarriage is rarely acknowledged as a significant personal loss.

Although miscarriage affects one in five pregnancies worldwide - and the figure may be as high as one in two - it is a subject that is seldom discussed and is frequently misunderstood.



Sisters, Sue and Belinda miscarried three weeks apart. *"I had to keep my emotions very much inside. I felt there was nobody else who understood."*



Anna and Glen miscarried at six weeks. *"It was only six weeks. I mean it wasn't like I'd actually lost a baby or something..."*



Laurel and Grant miscarried at eighteen and a half weeks. *"When you lose a baby, you lose the dreams."*



Laura and Dean miscarried at fourteen weeks. *"As a child I used to someday think I would be a mother and wonder what my child would look like."*

This poignant documentary presents the stories of women and men from Canada, the United States and England and their healing journeys. The couples talk candidly about how miscarriage affected them, their families and their friends. They also share the individual ways in which they are coming to terms with their loss, completing the cycle of grieving and beginning to look ahead with renewed hope.

Unsung Lullabies was produced by No Time To Cry Productions Inc. with the participation of Telefilm Canada in association with the National Film Board of Canada (Pacific Centre), British Columbia Film, Knowledge Network and with the assistance of CFCEI 2, TVOntario and Saskatchewan Communications Network.

Produced and Directed by Cindy Leaney and Michelle Silver
Executive Producers Silver Media and Voyage Media Productions Inc.

47 minutes 40 seconds
Order Number 9195-085



Closed Captioned
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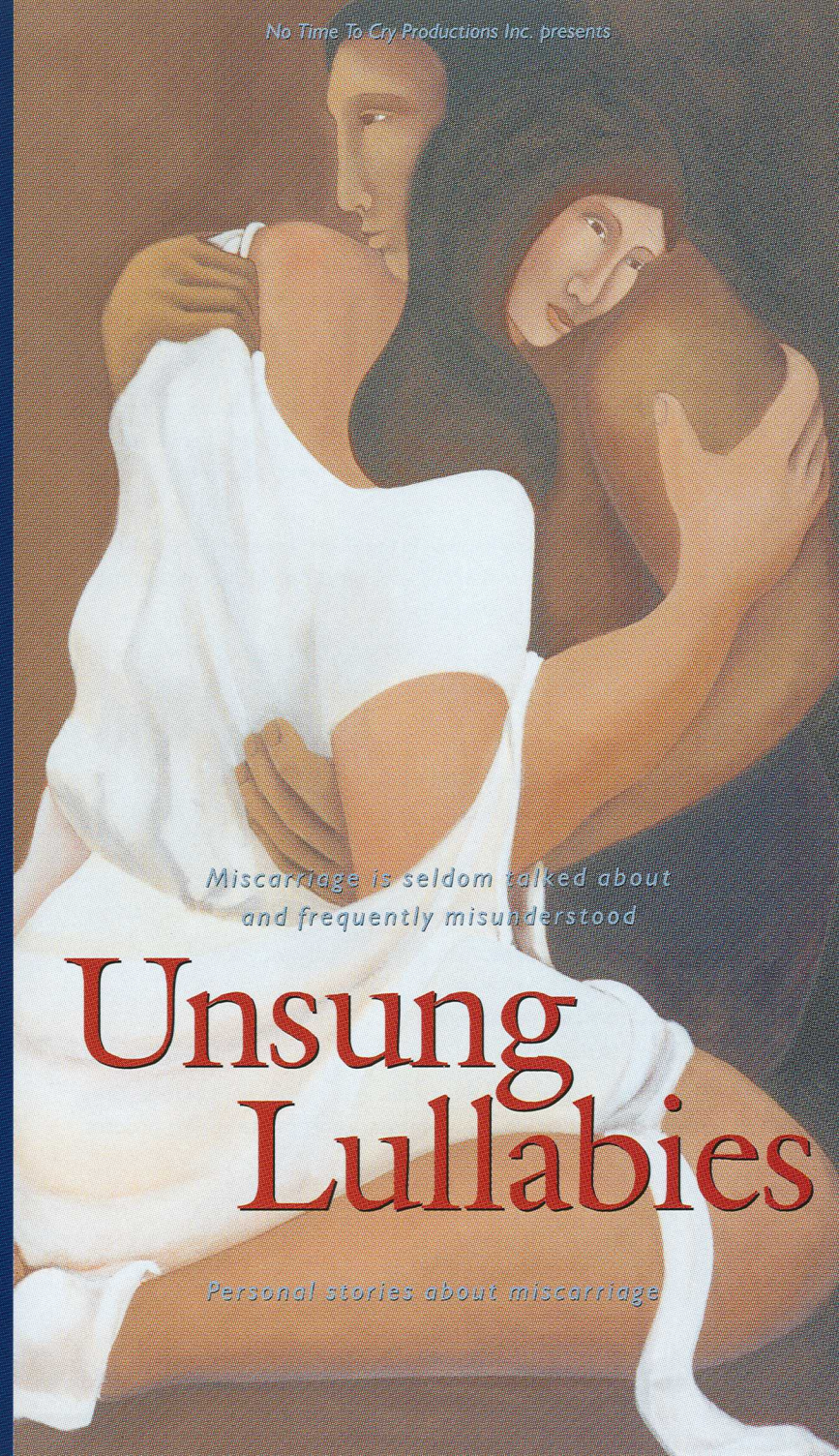
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Unsung Lullabies



VHS
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*Miscarriage is seldom talked about
and frequently misunderstood*

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Personal stories about miscarriage

Unsung Lullabies

Facts About Miscarriage

In North America, a miscarriage is a pregnancy loss that occurs before 20 weeks gestation. In Britain, miscarriage is a pregnancy loss prior to 24 weeks.

Statistics on the frequency of miscarriage vary widely. Medical records suggest that 15% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage. However, medical records only take into account pregnancies confirmed by a physician and pregnancy loss ending in hospitalization.

Advances in home pregnancy testing are making it possible for a woman to confirm a pregnancy within days of conception. This and the use of ultrasound are increasing our awareness of pregnancy loss within the first six weeks of gestation.

About 80% of all miscarriages happen in the first trimester (12 weeks) of pregnancy, many of these as a result of a chromosomal abnormality that prevents the fetus from developing properly.

Miscarriages that take place later, between the thirteenth and twentieth weeks of pregnancy, are often caused by abnormalities in the uterus or cervix.

Present-Day Myths About Miscarriage

Miscarriage is often not understood or taken seriously. Many people have mistaken ideas about it, such as:

- miscarrying in the first trimester is a trivial loss
- talking about the miscarriage will only upset the woman and her partner

Instead of sympathizing with the loss, people usually make well meaning but thoughtless comments, such as:

- you can always have more children
- it was probably for the best

Social attitudes such as these invalidate the very real feelings of loss. They can also hinder the grieving that is a necessary part of the healing process.



Executive Producers

Silver Media and
Voyage Media
Productions Inc.

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Laurel Perry



Michelle Silver and
Cindy Leaney wrote
Unsung Lullabies in
response to the lack of
information for women
and men grieving the
loss of a pregnancy
through miscarriage.
This documentary is
dedicated to everyone
who shared their stories
both on and off camera.

Silver Media and Voyage
Media Productions Inc.
are Canadian production
companies specializing in
documentaries for
international broadcast
and distribution.

SOCAN

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Questions Frequently Asked About Miscarriage

How common is miscarriage? Why do we know so little about it?

Why does my life feel out of control?

I don't understand what my partner is feeling. We seem to be in different places. What can we do to resolve this?

I'm uncomfortable explaining what has happened to other people.

What do I say?

How can we explain the miscarriage to our children?

People are always trying to say the right thing. Their comments often make me feel worse. What can I say that will make them understand?

What can we do to help us work through our grief?

I met a couple who planted a tree in memory of the baby they miscarried and a woman who kept a journal. Will this help? What other ways can we create our own memories?

Will I miscarry again?

When will I be ready to have another baby?

Discussion Starters for Health Care Professionals and Counsellors

How common is miscarriage and how does it affect those who experience it?

How can we create an environment that addresses the special needs of women and men following a miscarriage?

What guidelines for good practice will help ensure that women's and men's needs are met following pregnancy loss?

Suggested Resources

Talk to your doctor, community health nurse or local hospital (perinatal bereavement unit or early pregnancy assessment unit) to find out about support services and resources in your area or contact the following resource groups:

CANADA

Empty Cradle/Pen Parents of Canada

PO Box 52548,
1102-2929 Barnet Highway,
Coquitlam, BC. V3B 7J4
Tel: (604) 469-1272

Pen Parents of Canada is a national resource putting grieving parents in touch with one another through letter writing and newsletter submissions. Empty Cradle is a support group for anyone experiencing pregnancy or infant loss.

Compassionate Friends (National Office)

685 William Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB. R3E 0Z2
Tel: (204) 787-2460

Compassionate Friends is an organization made up of parents who have suffered the loss of a child. Compassionate Friends is open to any bereaved parent regardless of their child's age or circumstances. The organization is now established in 20 countries with a network of more than 800 chapters.

Bereaved Families of Ontario

Ste. 294-214 Merton Street,
Toronto, ON. M4S 1A6
Tel: (416) 440-0290

Grace Women's Health Centre Resolve Through Sharing Program

1402-8th Avenue, N.W.,
Calgary, AB. T2N 1B9
Tel: (403) 284-1141

Early pregnancy loss program, counsellors, support groups and print materials.

CLSC

Le Meandre
193 Notre Dame
Le Gardeur, PQ. J5Z 3C4
Tel: (514) 654-9012

Grace Maternity Hospital

5980 University Avenue,
Halifax, NS. B3H 4N1
Tel: (902) 420-6735

Individuals within the Department of Social Work will refer individuals to established bereavement groups and resources available within the maritime provinces.

UNITED STATES

National SHARE

St. Joseph's Health Centre
300 First Capital Drive,
St. Charles, MO. 63301
Tel: (314) 947-5000

Offers national support for parents who experience miscarriage, stillbirth, and newborn death; distributes a newsletter and booklet to aid in starting a support group and publishes lists of support groups nationwide.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Miscarriage Association c/of Clayton Hospital

Northgate, Wakefield, West Yorkshire,
United Kingdom. WF1 3JS
Tel: 0924 200 799

Providing literature, telephone support and support group services worldwide for those experiencing miscarriage.

RECOMMENDED PRINT RESOURCES

*Empty Arms. Coping with Miscarriage,
Stillbirth and Infant Death*
Sherokee Ilse; Wintergreen Press.

Miscarriage
Ann Oakley, Ann McPherson and Helen
Roberts; Penguin Books.

Miscarriage: A Shattered Dream
Sherokee Ilse and Linda Hammer Burns;
Wintergreen Press.

Miscarriage: Women's Experiences and Needs
Christine Moulder; Pandora, Harper Collins.

Miscarriage: Women Sharing from The Heart
Marie Allen, Ph.D. and Shelley Marks; John
Wiley and Sons, Inc.. NY.

Publications available from the Miscarriage Association include (see above address):
The Hidden Grief. Coping With a Miscarriage
We Are Sorry That You Have Had a Miscarriage
Causes, Tests and Treatment
Preparing for Your Next Baby
What Every Best Friend Should Know
Miscarriage. The Guidelines for Good Practice

About The Program

Unsung Lullabies can be viewed in its full length or in three parts, with discussions to follow:

Part One-Miscarriage Affects Everyone Differently

(00:00-12:24)

Individuals describe their miscarriage, the physical experience and initial reactions to the loss of a pregnancy.

Part Two-Coping With a Miscarriage

(12:25-30:49)

Men and women often cope with pregnancy loss in different ways in the weeks and months following a miscarriage.

Part Three-Moving Forward

(30:50-48:00)

Some couples are able to talk about the loss, deal with it on their own and move forward in their lives. Others will need some support dealing with the loss, fears about intimacy and questions about subsequent pregnancy.

This documentary will be helpful for:

- individuals who have experienced a miscarriage and are looking for information on the topic
- friends and family of those who have experienced a miscarriage to help them understand what has happened and how they can help
- health care professionals developing perinatal bereavement programs
- social workers and other professionals dealing with miscarriage, pregnancy loss, infertility and adoption
- pregnancy loss support groups
- medical schools, counselling and nursing programs