



Advice for midwives

Giving the gift of a teddy bear to a bereaved family:

This advice is written to reassure you that giving an Aching Arms bear to a bereaved family is wonderfully helpful and much appreciated. As you will be aware, it is a traumatic time when a mother and father leave hospital with empty arms after the death of their baby. By sensitively giving this gift you are ensuring support reaches a very vulnerable couple as soon as possible and you are recognising this significant loss.

Bereaved mothers have told us about their experience of leaving hospital:

“ Basically I signed the relevant release paperwork for me and my baby and left – with no one taking any notice of me at all. Anything would have helped – even a piece of paper or an indication of compassion from the nursing staff. I felt that by tomorrow, my baby would be there, alone and I would have been forgotten. ”

“ I was very grateful for the baby’s hospital tag, his foot and hand prints but I didn’t know who could help us when we got home and in the days and months to follow. ”

“ When I left hospital without my daughter my heart was broken and my arms were empty. Nothing could have fixed my heart at the point, but if I had had something to hold and cling to then the physical ache I felt so strongly in my arms as I clamped them tightly to my sides might have been less. As soon as I heard about the idea of giving grieving mums a bear to take home I knew that I would have been keen to take one to cuddle as I walked out of the hospital and to sob into in the dark days and nights that followed. Not to replace my baby - nothing ever could - but something to hold as I learnt to live with the empty space my baby left in my heart and in my life. ”

“ I think the bear for me would have showed me that someone else had been in the same boat and I think the information found on the website would have been very valuable. ”

“ I would have really appreciated being given a teddy as a sign that I wasn’t alone in my grief. ”

“ As my baby died at 14wks we didn’t get anything. No measurements, prints, nothing. ”

A few words you could say to the bereaved parents:

“ Before you leave I would like to give you this gift. It is from a charity set up by other mothers who have lost their baby. You will find a soft teddy bear dedicated to another baby lost too soon and information on where you can get help and support. ”

We would prefer you to personally hand the bear, in the bag (if provided), to the mother or father. If this is too difficult, please leave it on the side for them to take if they wish, but we would prefer you to show your support by actively giving the gift as it recognises the loss of their baby in a society that so often tells bereaved parents to ‘just have another baby’ to get over the pain.

If your hospital already gives other items, such as hand and foot prints and/or memory boxes, please ensure all gifts are given at the same time to avoid bombarding parents with things at different stages, shortly before they leave is a good time.

Contact us:

If you would like further advice or to give us some feedback on your experience of giving the bears please get in touch at:

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