

# Fetal Maternal Medicine/ Infertility Proposal for a Support Group at a Community Health Center Angelica Aleman Healthcare Studies

## Introduction

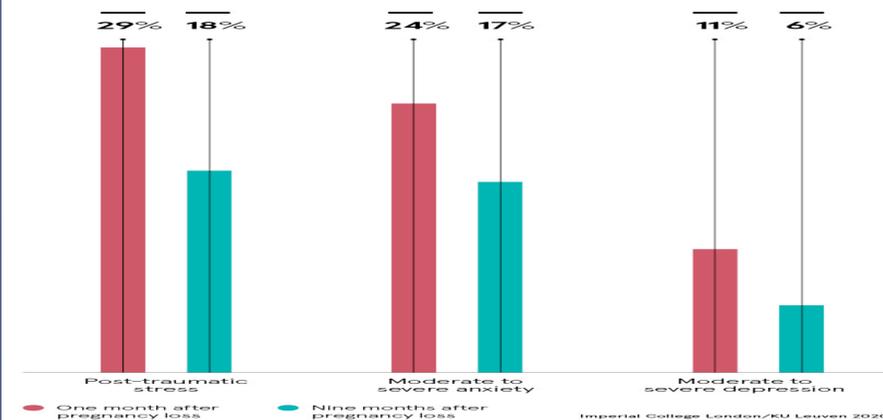
Have you or anyone you love ever experienced a miscarriage or infertility? Experiencing infertility or miscarriage can be traumatizing no matter how far along the person was in pregnancy. The experiences are different for everyone and not only affects the mother but also the partner and entire family. Miscarriages and infertility are such common issues that they have been pushed aside, not realizing the amount of stress and anxiety it causes. I have personally experienced both multiple losses and infertility and all I ever received was an “I’m sorry for your loss” and moved on. This caused me to question whether medical professionals are aware of what happens after a doctor’s visit. My internship project included the creation of a unique support group for women or couples who are on an infertility journey or have experienced miscarriages and are now in Maternal Fetal Medicine.

## Related Literature

- Raising awareness of the psychological impact of miscarriage appears imperative to assist the community to support women experiencing this loss, as well as reducing the secret and hidden nature of the experience. (Bellhouse, Temple-Smith, and Bilardi, 2018).
- “Miscarriage can be a lonely and isolating experience, and it is often hard to get answers to questions about possible causes. Doctors generally only undertake investigations after a third pregnancy loss and breaking the taboo of miscarriage is a challenge when people rarely get the support they feel they need.” (Brian, 2020)

### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF PREGNANCY LOSS

Survey of women who had experienced a miscarriage before 12 weeks of pregnancy or an ectopic pregnancy



## Pros & Cons of Support Group

### Pros:

- Helps overcome social phobias
- Creates a sense of belonging
- Discussing personal struggles with those who have similar problems allows an individual to sow seeds of wisdom and insight into the lives of others.
- Discussing problems in a group setting may make it easier for a person to discuss problems with friends and family members.
- Group interaction helps develop healthy social interaction skills.
- Group therapy sessions are generally less expensive than personal psychotherapy. Many support groups meet free of charge.
- Different perspectives from every member.

(Simmerman, et. al., n.d.)

### Cons:

- Therapy group activities may be uncomfortable for certain members.
- There is an inherent risk that members of the group may break confidentiality since they are not bound by a professional obligation to keep what is said during the session private.
- There is a greater fear of rejection when interacting with more than one individual at a time.

(Simmerman, et. al., n.d.)



## Acknowledgement

Kiame Mahaniah, MD, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Kristen Cotter, MD, MPH *Medical Director OB/GYN*  
OB/GYN Team



## How to get started

- Collect and share relevant supporting information/research about the success of support groups with the Medical Director of the OB/GYN department and propose this project.
- Communicate with staff and medical students to identify who would be willing and interested in participating in support group.
- Collect the names of the patients who are in the infertility and/or high risk pregnancy journey.
- Utilize medical students in the OB/GYN department to disseminate questionnaires to patients who come to the clinic or reach out by phone to identify interested patients.
- Review data collected from questionnaires to determine level of interest.
- Determine start date based on data collected.
- Report progress to CEO of LCHC and Medical Director of the OB/GYN department.
- Provide meeting details to patients by phone or mail to inform confirmed start date.
- Two weeks prior to initial start date perform a trial and error session with staff involved in support group.
- First session of support group!!
- Report progress to CEO and MD of OB/GYN department.

### BUDGET TO START SUPPORT GROUP

- Service is free for all!
- All done by volunteering, no health insurance involvement or special licensing required.
- Location and equipment provided by the health center.

### CONSLUSION & RESULTS

Data and results of trial and error group session will be determined by December 31, 2021.

### Refrences

- Bellhouse, C., Temple-Smith, M. J., & Bilardi, J. E. (2018, October 29). "it's just one of those things people don't seem to talk about..." women's experiences of social support following miscarriage: A qualitative study. BMC Women's Health. Retrieved November 23, 2021, from <https://bmcwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12905-018-0672-3>.
- Brian, K. (2020, July 15). *Breaking the taboo of miscarriage and its mental health impacts*. Raconteur. Retrieved November 25, 2021, from <https://www.raconteur.net/healthcare/fertility/breaking-taboo-miscarriage-ptsd/>.
- Creating and facilitation peer support groups - ppt download*. SlidePlayer. (n.d.). Retrieved November 23, 2021, from <https://slideplayer.com/slide/13895348/>.
- Simmerman, J., Millard, E., Upham, B., Weinstock, C. P., Lindberg, S., Splitter, J., Vogt, C., Rapaport, L., & Pugle, M. (n.d.). *Weighing the pros and cons of group therapy*. EverydayHealth.com. Retrieved November 23, 2021, from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/emotional-health/weighing-pros-cons-group-therapy/>.