

WHEN LOSS CHANGES INTIMACY: UNDERSTANDING COUPLES' SEXUAL WELL-BEING AFTER PREGNANCY LOSS

Pregnancy loss is a common yet challenging experience. We wanted to know how couples coped with changes in sexual well-being after a pregnancy loss.

Longitudinal Links Between Perinatal Grief and Sexual Well-Being for Couples After Pregnancy Loss

David B. Allsop¹, Kathleen Nesbitt-Daly², Katherine Pélouquin³, Heather Cockwell⁴, and Natalie O. Rosen^{2, 4}

¹ Department of Psychological Sciences, Northern Arizona University

² Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University

³ Département de Psychologie, Université de Montréal

⁴ Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Dalhousie University



Scroll to see what
we found!



Approximately 25% of women and gender-diverse individuals experience pregnancy loss. One key challenge is maintaining **sexual well-being** (i.e., **high** sexual frequency, satisfaction, function and **low** sexual distress) post loss. Research shows that sexual well-being is disrupted for **both** partners following pregnancy loss.

AND

...Research points to **perinatal grief** (i.e., grief after pregnancy loss) as a possible predictor for sexual well-being.



WE WANTED TO KNOW:

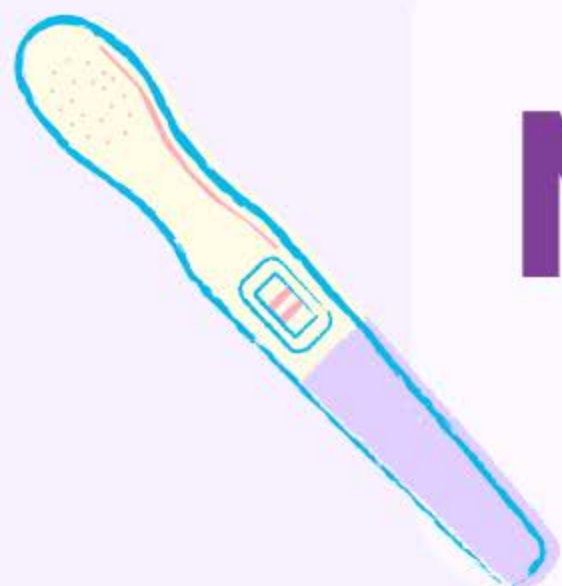
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Are fluctuations in perinatal grief associated with fluctuations in sexual well-being for both members of the couple?

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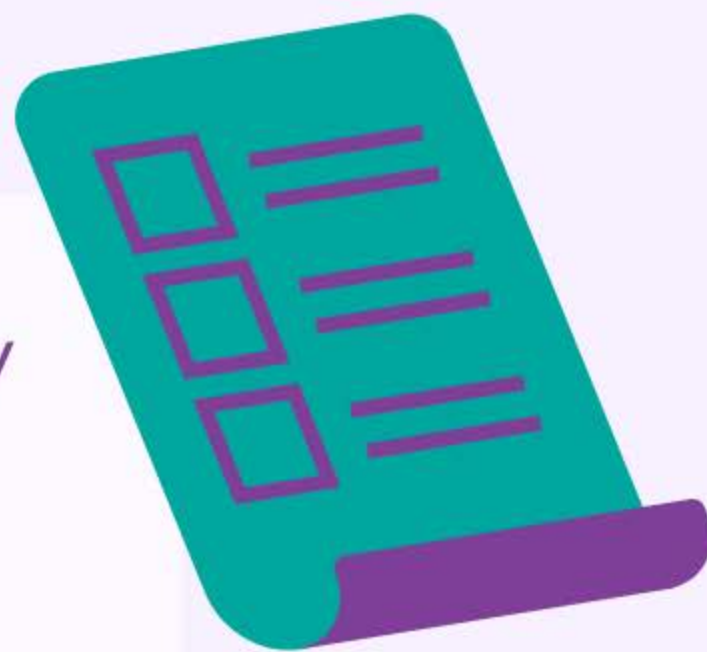
Do individuals with higher levels of perinatal grief, relative to others, also report lower levels of sexual well-being?





N = 109 couples who had experienced pregnancy loss in the past 4 months

Couples completed four monthly surveys assessing levels of perinatal grief and sexual well-being: sexual satisfaction, desire, sexual function, and distress.



WE FOUND THAT...

When either partner experienced **higher-than-usual perinatal grief**, both partners reported **lower sexual well-being**, including lower sexual satisfaction and desire, greater sexual function problems, and higher sexual distress.



...Individuals with the highest levels of perinatal grief had the **lowest sexual satisfaction** levels and the **highest sexual function difficulties and sexual distress**.

SO, WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

Grief plays an important factor in sexual well-being; **Perinatal grief** appears to be a **major risk factor** for difficulties in couples' relationships after pregnancy loss.

AND

Sexual well-being is **interconnected**, meaning that one partner's experiences can shape the other's.





Taken together, these results emphasize the need to **screen couples** for perinatal grief, connect couples with **grief support resources**, and the importance of **openly discussing** how sexual well-being may shift after pregnancy loss. Future research should focus on developing cognitive-behavioural couple therapy interventions for **couples navigating pregnancy loss**.



THIS IS A SUMMARY OF OUR PUBLISHED ARTICLE:

Allsop, D. A., Nesbitt-Daly, K., Cockwell, H., Péloquin, K., & Rosen, N. O. (2025). Love and loss: Perinatal grief and couples' sexual well-being after pregnancy loss. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 39, 627-38.
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