Shattering the Silence on Miscarriage & Pregnancy Loss

Dr. Lisa Hanasono
Associate Professor & ICS Fellow
School of Media & Communication
Bowling Green State University
LisaKH@bgsu.edu

Text ICSBGSU to 22828 to join our mailing list!

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207 BTSU
Overview

1. My Story
2. Barriers and Boundaries
3. Breaking the Silence
The More You Know...

- Trigger Warnings
- Disclaimers
- Facilitation Style
My Story
My Story

1. Why are miscarriage and pregnancy lost STILL taboo topics?

2. How can we break the silence on miscarriage and pregnancy loss?
Defining Pregnancy Loss

- Miscarriage
- Stillbirth
- Terminated Pregnancies
- Neonatal Infant Loss
Defining Miscarriage

- “Pregnancy loss under 20 weeks”
  (American Pregnancy Association, 2018, para.1)
- “The spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before the 20\textsuperscript{th} week (of gestation)”
  (Mayo Clinic, 2016, para.1)
- “The medical term for a miscarriage is a spontaneous abortion”
  (Web MD, 2015, para.1)
Defining Miscarriage

1 in 4 is not just a statistic. It’s me.

Many Forms:
- Threatened
- Inevitable/Incomplete
- Complete
- Missed/Silent
- Recurrent
- Blighted Ovum
- Ectopic Pregnancy
- Molar Pregnancy

(American Pregnancy Association, 2018)
Barriers and Boundaries
Barriers and Boundaries

Overview:

1. Cultural Taboos
2. Media (Mis)Representations
3. The M-Word: An Interview Study
4. Expecting More: A Content Analysis
Barriers and Boundaries

1. Cultural Taboos

- “Ambiguous Loss”
- Navigating a Minefield of Taboo Topics
- Lacking Cultural Scripts
- Lacking Communicative Scripts
Barriers and Boundaries

2. Media (Mis)Representations

[Your Turn]
Barriers and Boundaries

2. Media (Mis)Representations

“I’m having a miscarriage.”
3. The M-Word: An Interview Study

Purpose • Participants • Procedure • Analyses
3. The M-Word: The Attributional Paradox

“One of the primary functions of the woman is supposed to be being a mother, so you've failed because you couldn't carry the baby, you know? And you start to wonder, ‘Well, what if I can't have children, you know? Or, did I do something wrong that caused it?’

And most of the things I read assured you that generally the reason was a genetic defect, and it wasn't because you went horseback riding, or rode your bicycle, or lifted the garage door, anything like that. That it was almost impossible to cause a miscarriage, 'cause you hear these old wives' tales where people would say, ‘You shouldn't even lift your arms up like this, because you could raise the cord and choke the baby.’”  

-Rosamund
3. The M-Word: The Attributional Paradox

“You start thinking about what you could have done to prevent it. Or if you had done something to even cause it ... It's trying to make sense of why it happened... I remember those thoughts crossing my mind at the time. Then I realized well, you know, sometimes these things just happen for no reason, no cause.”

-Miyako
3. The M-Word: The Attributional Paradox

“Because I've waited so long to have a child, I felt so bad for my partner, because I felt like I failed him.” -Annika

“...and then I just remember sitting in my office, and I was like well, I really felt relieved. But then I felt guilty that I felt relieved, and then I kept thinking: Did I pickle the fetus?” -Lea

“I’m exercising too hard,” because I still exercise I had to. I was in the military. I wasn’t considered a high risk pregnancy, they didn’t tell me to stay home and stay off my feet nothing. Not even the third time.” -Olivia
3. The M-Word: The Attributional Paradox

“My mom was the only person who was like, ‘It’s probably because you had an eating disorder.’” -Hope

“I was so stressed out is the reason why...I miscarried.” -Taylor
3. The M-Word: The Disclosure Paradox

“We waited until 12 weeks or whatever, and I see how that is important, how that protects [people].

But [my partner] had an interesting observation. Because we did wait to tell people that we were pregnant ... you know, when I miscarried, that there were very few people we could tell. Because it was, first we have to be like, ‘And I was pregnant.’ And ...You know, so in some ways, the silence that leads up to it makes it harder to reach out for support. So there's a little bit of a catch 22.”

-Rosalyn
3. The M-Word: The Disclosure Paradox

“"I ended up telling a few friends after I had thought about it. I don't even remember how the hell it came up, and the weird thing is because I couldn't talk about it for so long, then it felt weird to be like, ‘Oh, hey mom, you know I was pregnant and then I felt really awful about it?’ So I didn't talk to them about it.”

-Lea
3. The M-Word: The Support Paradox

- “My husband would just say ‘Oh, well, you weren't really pregnant, right?’” - Rosamund
- “... and some people who were like, ‘Well, you shouldn't have gotten pregnant in the first place. You kinda deserve that one.’” - Maggie
- “This fourth one, my mother who was going through chemotherapy at the time says to me, ‘Well, obviously you just weren't supposed to be a mother and I don't think you would've been a good mother because if you would've been a good mother you would've adopted or found some other way if you really wanted a baby.’” - Tanisha
3. The M-Word: The Support Paradox

“[My mom] would say ‘Okay, well at least you're not going to have to deal with raising a child while going through your first year of college, and at least this and at least that.’ I know she's trying to be as helpful as she could, but that's not really what I wanted to hear. I would've much rather struggled with raising a child than have lost one.”  -Maggie

“But, you know, he was not a great guy, and that’s probably a good thing that you don’t have a child with him, you know...”  -Andrea
3. The M-Word: The Support Paradox

- “I've talked about it briefly in conversation, and it's just like a couple seconds, I mention it, and they say, ‘That sucks,’ and then move on.”

- “He was not part of that conversation, just because it wasn't that he shut me out, but it was like, ‘It happens. Okay, move on.’ I couldn't move on as quickly as he ... I'm pretty good at working things out, but that had such a huge impact on me both physically and mentally, and emotionally. It took time.”  -Autumn
4. Expecting More

Purpose • Texts • Analyses • Group Discussion
4. Expecting More

- How is miscarriage (mis)represented?
- To what extent is miscarriage marginalized?
- Recommendations?
Barriers and Boundaries

4. Expecting More

- Representations
- Marginalization
- Recommendations
Breaking the Silence

Video Clip: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFFfeJFLxPQ
Overview:

1. Tackling Taboos
2. Better Media Representations
3. In Theory and In Praxis
4. Share Your Story
5. Social Support
1. Tackling Taboos

- Cultural and Institutional Recommendations
- Creating Communicative Scripts
- Embracing New Ways to Cope and Remember
2. Better Media Representations

Video #2

Beyoncé: Miscarriage ‘One Of The Hardest Things I’ve Been Through’ (VIDEO)
3. In Theory & In Praxis

- Communicating Pregnancy Loss (e.g., Bute & Brann, 2015)
- Voicing experiences (e.g., Gerber-Espstein et al., 2008)
- Social Support (e.g., High & Steuber, 2014; MacGeorge & Wilkum, 2012)
- Coping as Couples (e.g., Horstman & Holman, 2017; Swanson et al., 2003)
3. In Theory & In Praxis

- Evidence-Based Workshops for Healthcare Providers
- Local Support Groups for People Coping with Pregnancy Loss
- Outreach to Media Production Personnel
- Developing Better Policies, Programs, and Cultural Scripts
- “Expecting More”: Better Materials for Patients
Breaking the Silence

4. Share Your Story
4. Share Your Story
5. Social Support

**Instead of...**
1. “At least ....you can still get pregnant...or already have a child.”
2. “I know exactly how you feel.”
3. “You shouldn’t have...waited so long.”
4. “You can always try again/adopt.”

**Perhaps:**
1. “I am so sorry for your loss.”
2. “How are you feeling?”
3. “What can I do to help?”
4. “Take your time. I am here for you.”

**Breaking the Silence**
Breaking the Silence

5. Social Support

#SimplySay
Breaking the Silence

5. Social Support

Dr. Jessica Zucker’s #IHadAMiscarriage Cards
# Additional Resources

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<th>Websites</th>
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<tr>
<td>American Pregnancy Association</td>
<td>American Pregnancy Association’s Helpline: (800) 672-2296</td>
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<td>March of Dimes: Information about Miscarriage</td>
<td>C.A.R.E.: A support group for parents who have experienced pregnancy loss</td>
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<td>Cleveland Clinic: Information about Miscarriages</td>
<td>Contact Kim Folk-Axe at (419) 291-9475</td>
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<td>The Mayo Clinic: Coping with Pregnancy Loss</td>
<td>The Miscarriage Association</td>
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<td>The Miscarriage Association</td>
<td>Share: Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support</td>
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<td>A Place To Remember</td>
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<td>ICS Libguide on Miscarriage and Pregnancy Loss</td>
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Email: LisaKH@bgsu.edu
Join ICS in our upcoming events!

Community Organizations' Role in Combating Human Trafficking: From Local to Transnational Contexts
with Dr. Lara Lengel
Thursday, November 15th, 2018
6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Wood County District Public Library

Future of Leadership: The Role of Power, Equity and Design
with Antionette Carroll
Thursday, February 28th, 2019
6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
206 (Theater) Bowen-Thompson Student Union

www.bgsu.edu/ics