



Supporting Employees Through Pregnancy After Loss

Practical guidance to help HR teams and managers confidently support employees through one of the workplace's most emotionally complex journeys.

Signature Reflection

"Supporting pregnancy after loss isn't about having the perfect words. It's about creating a workplace where employees feel safe enough to bring their whole selves to work."



Welcome

A message from Sandie Dennis



One of the greatest privileges of my work is supporting employees through some of life's most significant moments.

Over the years, I've learnt that pregnancy after loss is one of the most emotionally complex journeys a person can experience.

Whilst colleagues often see exciting news, the employee may also be carrying memories of what came before.

Hope. Fear. Joy. Grief. Sometimes all at the same time.

Those emotions don't disappear when someone walks through the office door or logs-on for the day. They often remain quietly present throughout meetings, conversations, hospital appointments and everyday working life.

For HR professionals and line managers, this can feel unfamiliar. Many genuinely want to offer the right support but worry about saying the wrong thing or making assumptions. The reassuring truth is this... Employees rarely expect managers to have all the answers.

What they remember most is kindness. Feeling listened to. Feeling understood. Feeling safe enough to be honest. That's why we've created this guide.

Not to provide a script, but to offer practical guidance, thoughtful reflection and greater confidence when supporting employees through one of the workplace's most emotionally complex journeys.

Every pregnancy after loss is different.
Every employee's needs will be different.

But compassionate leadership has the power to make an extraordinary difference.

I hope this guide helps your organisation create a workplace where employees feel genuinely supported, understood and never alone.

Warm wishes,

Sandie Dennis
Founder

BeyondEAP

Reflection

“If an employee told you tomorrow that they were pregnant following a previous loss, how confident would your managers feel supporting them?”

BeyondEAP

How to Use This Guide

Supporting employees through pregnancy after loss isn't about following a checklist.

It's about understanding that every employee's experience will be different.

This guide has been created to help HR professionals, People teams and line managers approach these conversations with greater confidence, compassion and practical understanding.

Rather than offering rigid rules, it provides insights, conversation starters and practical guidance that can be adapted to everyone's needs.

No two journeys will ever look the same.

The most effective support begins with curiosity, empathy and a willingness to listen.

You may find this guide useful:

- ✓ Before meeting with an employee.
- ✓ Preparing for sensitive conversations.
- ✓ Supporting line managers.
- ✓ During HR case discussions.
- ✓ Alongside maternity and family policies.
- ✓ As part of manager development.
- ✓ To build confidence across your organisation.

Throughout this guide you'll find:



Beyond EAP Insight

Professional observations drawn from over a decade of supporting employees through complex life transitions.



Conversation Starter

Practical language managers can adapt when beginning sensitive conversations.



Practical Tip

Simple actions that can immediately improve an employee's workplace experience.



Reflection

Questions designed to encourage discussion within HR teams and leadership groups.



Team Discussion

Conversation prompts for HR meetings, manager workshops and leadership development.

Why This Guide Matters

For many employees, pregnancy after loss can be one of the most emotionally complex experiences they will ever navigate.

Whilst colleagues naturally see a pregnancy, the employee may also be carrying grief, anxiety and memories of what has happened before.

It's entirely possible to feel hopeful and frightened at the same time.

That emotional complexity doesn't disappear when someone comes to work.

It often travels quietly with them into meetings, conversations, hospital appointments and everyday working life.

Many employees describe:

- Increased anxiety before scans.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Worry about telling colleagues.
- Fear of becoming attached too soon.
- Feeling guilty when experiencing moments of happiness.
- Pressure to appear positive.
- Emotional exhaustion alongside physical exhaustion.

Most of these experiences remain invisible.

Yet they can significantly affect confidence, wellbeing and performance at work.

The role of HR and line managers isn't to remove those feelings.

It's to create a workplace where employees feel safe enough to be themselves without needing to hide what they're carrying.

Thoughtful support doesn't remove grief.

But it can remove the loneliness people sometimes experience whilst navigating it.



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At a Glance

Employees may be feeling...

- ✓ Hopeful
- ✓ Anxious
- ✓ Overwhelmed
- ✓ Grieving
- ✓ Excited
- ✓ Guilty for feeling excited
- ✓ Emotionally exhausted

Managers often worry about...

- ✓ Saying the wrong thing.
- ✓ Bringing up the previous loss.
- ✓ Making assumptions.
- ✓ Causing upset.
- ✓ Not knowing enough.

Employees often need...

- ✓ Compassion.
- ✓ Flexibility.
- ✓ Psychological safety.
- ✓ Thoughtful check-ins.
- ✓ Understanding around appointments.
- ✓ Someone who listens.

Remember

Every pregnancy after loss is unique. Curiosity and compassion will always be more valuable than assumptions.

Beyond EAP Insight

A pregnancy after loss isn't simply another pregnancy. It's a new journey shaped by a previous experience. Recognising that difference can transform how supported an employee feels.

Reflection

Do your managers automatically celebrate every pregnancy in the same way, or do they feel confident recognising that some journeys may require a different kind of support?

Understanding Pregnancy After Loss

Every pregnancy carries its own story

When an employee becomes pregnant following miscarriage, stillbirth, neonatal loss or the death of a baby, they are not beginning with a blank page.

They bring with them memories, emotions and experiences that inevitably shape this pregnancy.

Whilst colleagues may simply see happy news, the employee may be carrying something much more complex.

Many parents describe living with two emotions at the same time.

Hope.

And fear.

Both are real.

Both are valid.

And both can exist together.

This emotional complexity is one of the most important things HR professionals and managers can understand.

Pregnancy after loss isn't about looking backwards.

It's about carrying yesterday's experiences into today's pregnancy.

Understanding that changes everything.



Beyond EAP Insight

A new pregnancy doesn't replace the baby who was lost. It simply creates space for hope and grief to exist together.

Reflection

When managers congratulate an employee on their pregnancy, do they automatically assume that joy is the only emotion being experienced?

Understanding Invisible Milestones

The moments nobody else can see

One of the most important things managers can appreciate is that pregnancy after loss often contains **invisible milestones**.

These are dates and moments that carry enormous emotional significance for the employee yet are completely unknown to everyone around them.

They may include:

- The gestation at which the previous pregnancy ended.
- The first scan.
- Consultant appointments.
- Reaching a stage of pregnancy they never reached before.
- The original due date of the baby they lost.
- Birth after loss.
- Preparing for maternity leave whilst still processing grief.

A routine appointment in the diary may represent much more than a medical check-up.

It may bring back memories of fear, uncertainty and loss.

Simply recognising that these invisible milestones exist allows managers to respond with greater empathy and understanding.

Employees don't necessarily expect others to remember every date. But they often appreciate knowing someone understands that those moments matter.



Beyond EAP Insight

Not every significant milestone appears in a diary. Some are carried quietly in someone's heart.

Practical Tip

If you're aware an employee has an important scan or appointment approaching, a simple message such as: *"Just wanted you to know I'm thinking of you today."* can make a significant difference.

Reflection

What invisible milestones might your employees be carrying that nobody at work can see?

The Beyond EAP Perspective

One of the biggest misconceptions about pregnancy after loss is that support is needed only during difficult moments.

Our experience tells us something different.

Support is built through the small, everyday interactions that quietly communicate: "You don't have to carry this on your own."

Often, it's those seemingly ordinary conversations that employees remember long after the pregnancy has ended.

Support isn't built through policies alone.

It's built through relationships.

Through trust.

Through consistency.

Through everyday conversations. Sometimes the smallest conversations leave the biggest impression.



Beyond EAP Insight

Employees rarely expect managers to have all the answers. They remember whether someone cared enough to ask.

Reflection

Would your employees feel safe enough to tell you when today feels harder than yesterday?

Why Good Intentions Can Sometimes Miss the Mark

Managers naturally want to reassure people.

It's human.

We all want to make difficult situations feel better.

But pregnancy after loss is different.

Comments such as:

"Everything will be fine.", "Try not to worry.", "At least you're pregnant again.",
"This pregnancy is different." ...are almost always said with kindness.

Yet they can unintentionally make someone feel that their fears have been overlooked.

The anxiety experienced during pregnancy after loss isn't about being pessimistic.

It's about having lived through something that changed how safe the world feels.

Employees rarely expect managers to remove those fears.

More often, they simply hope those fears will be acknowledged. Validation often provides more comfort than reassurance.



Beyond EAP Insight

Managers don't need perfect words. They need the confidence to acknowledge what an employee may be experiencing without trying to fix it.

Conversation Starter

"I imagine this pregnancy may bring lots of different emotions. Is there anything that would help us support you at work?"

Reflection

Are your managers more comfortable offering reassurance... or taking the time to understand what an employee is experiencing?

Supporting Employees Throughout Pregnancy

Once an employee has shared that they are pregnant following a previous loss, one of the most important things a manager can do is recognise that support shouldn't be a single conversation.

Needs often change throughout pregnancy.

Some weeks may feel manageable.

Others may feel significantly more difficult.

An employee who appears confident one month may feel overwhelmed the next, particularly around scans, hospital appointments or significant personal milestones.

Rather than assuming everything is progressing well, consider how you can create opportunities for regular, supportive check-ins.

These don't need to be formal meetings.

Sometimes a simple conversation is enough to remind someone that support remains available.

Practical Ways to Offer Support

Consider:

- Flexibility around hospital appointments and scans.
- Regular but unobtrusive check-ins.
- Agreeing how much colleagues should know.
- Reviewing workloads during particularly anxious periods.
- Respecting that some appointments may carry emotional significance beyond their medical purpose.

Every employee's needs will be different.

The most valuable support is often shaped by asking, rather than assuming.

Beyond EAP Insight

Support isn't measured by how often you ask. It's measured by whether someone feels able to answer honestly.

Reflection

Does your organisation create space for support throughout pregnancy, or only at the beginning and end?

Starting the Conversation

Many managers tell us the same thing.

"I'm frightened I'll say the wrong thing."

The reassuring news is that employees rarely expect perfection.

They simply hope they'll be met with empathy, respect and a willingness to listen.

The purpose of the conversation isn't to solve the situation.

It's to understand how the employee would like to be supported.

Open questions often work best because they allow the employee to decide how much they wish to share.

Conversation Starters

You might say:

"Thank you for trusting me with this."

"Everyone's experience is different, so I'd really like to understand what would be most helpful for you."

"Would you like us to agree how much, if anything, we share with colleagues?"

"Are there any upcoming appointments or dates where some flexibility might help?"

Remember... Silence is okay.

Employees often appreciate having time to think before answering.

Listening is sometimes the most supportive response.

Practical Tip

You don't need to have every answer before starting the conversation.

Curiosity and compassion are usually far more valuable than expertise.

Beyond EAP Insight

Employees rarely remember every word that was said. They remember how safe they felt during the conversation.

Reflection

If one of your managers had this conversation tomorrow, how confident would they feel?

What Managers Should Avoid

Most unhelpful comments are made with the very best intentions. Managers naturally want to reassure employees and reduce their anxiety. However, reassurance can sometimes unintentionally minimise what someone is experiencing.

Avoid saying:

- ✗ "Everything will be fine."
- ✗ "Try not to worry."
- ✗ "At least you're pregnant again."
- ✗ "I'm sure this pregnancy will be different."
- ✗ "You need to stay positive."
- ✗ "You're over the difficult part now."

Although intended to comfort, these phrases may unintentionally suggest that an employee's fears are unnecessary or should simply disappear. Instead...

Acknowledge their experience.
Accept that mixed emotions are entirely normal.
Allow them to decide what support feels helpful.

Sometimes the most supportive response is simply:

"Thank you for sharing that with me."

Or...

"I'm really glad you've told me."

Those simple words communicate acceptance, understanding and psychological safety.

Beyond EAP Insight

Validation doesn't increase someone's anxiety. It reduces the loneliness of carrying it.

Practical Tip

If you're unsure what to say...

Pause.

Listen.

Then ask:

"What would feel most helpful from us right now?"

The answer may surprise you.

Reflection

Do your managers feel they have to 'fix' difficult conversations, or simply create a safe space for them?

Building Psychological Safety

Creating a workplace where employees don't have to pretend

One of the most valuable things a manager can offer an employee during pregnancy after loss isn't certainty. It's psychological safety.

A workplace where someone feels able to say:

"Today's a difficult day."

"I'm feeling anxious about tomorrow's scan."

"I'm finding it harder to concentrate this week."

....without worrying they'll be judged, treated differently or seen as less capable.

Psychological safety doesn't mean having all the answers.

It means creating an environment where employees feel safe enough to be honest.

Often, it's the small moments that matter most.

Checking in. Listening without interrupting. Respecting confidentiality.

Remembering that emotional needs may change throughout pregnancy.

When employees don't feel they have to hide what they're experiencing, they're far more likely to ask for support before they begin to struggle.



Beyond EAP Insight

Psychological safety isn't created by one conversation. It's built through many small moments of trust.

Practical Tip

Support doesn't always have to be verbal.

A simple message after a hospital appointment saying,

"Thinking of you today."

can be enough to remind someone they aren't navigating their journey alone.

Reflection

If an employee was having a particularly difficult week, would they feel safe enough to tell their manager?

Supporting Line Managers

Managers need support too

Pregnancy after loss can feel unfamiliar for managers.

Many tell us they're worried about:

- Saying the wrong thing.
- Making the employee upset.
- Overstepping professional boundaries.
- Not knowing what support is appropriate.
- Making assumptions.

These concerns are entirely understandable

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Most managers have never received training on supporting employees through pregnancy after loss.

They're trying to do the right thing.

Helping managers feel more confident benefits everyone.

Employees receive better support.

Managers feel less anxious.

HR spend less time firefighting difficult situations.

What Managers Need Most

Managers don't need counselling skills.

They need:

- ✓ Confidence.
- ✓ Practical guidance.
- ✓ Permission to ask simple questions.
- ✓ Somewhere to seek advice.
- ✓ Knowing they're not expected to have all the answers.

Sometimes simply reminding managers of that can significantly reduce their anxiety.

Beyond EAP Insight

Confident managers aren't the ones who always know what to say. They're the ones who are willing to listen.

Reflection

How confident do your managers currently feel supporting pregnancy after loss?

Beyond EAP Action Checklist

Before the Conversation

- ☐ Arrange somewhere private to talk.
- ☐ Allow enough time.
- ☐ Avoid interruptions.
- ☐ Don't begin by making assumptions.

During the Conversation

- ☐ Thank the employee for sharing.
- ☐ Listen more than you speak.
- ☐ Ask open questions.
- ☐ Respect confidentiality.
- ☐ Avoid trying to "fix" the situation.
- ☐ Ask what support would be helpful.

Throughout Pregnancy

- ☐ Review support regularly.
- ☐ Offer flexibility around appointments.
- ☐ Recognise significant dates and milestones.
- ☐ Review workload where appropriate.
- ☐ Respect changing needs.

Preparing for Parental Leave

- ☐ Discuss communication preferences.
- ☐ Talk about KIT days if appropriate.
- ☐ Agree what ongoing support looks like.
- ☐ Keep the conversation open.

Returning to Work

- ☐ Plan ahead.
- ☐ Avoid assumptions about how the employee feels.
- ☐ Continue regular check-ins.
- ☐ Remember that becoming a parent after loss may continue to bring mixed emotions.

Beyond EAP Insight

The most supportive workplaces don't rely on perfect policies. They create consistent, compassionate conversations.

Team Discussion

If every manager in your organisation followed this checklist, what difference might employees experience?



One Question to Take Back to Your Team

What invisible milestones might employees in our organisation be carrying today that nobody else can see?

Take five minutes during your next HR or manager meeting to discuss this question.

Invisible milestones aren't recorded in policies.

They aren't always shared with colleagues.

But they can shape how an employee experiences every working day.

Sometimes the greatest act of workplace support begins with recognising that these unseen moments exist.



Team Discussion

How could your organisation create more opportunities for employees to feel safe enough to talk about the milestones that matter to them?



When Specialist Support Can Help

Supporting employees through pregnancy after loss isn't about expecting managers to become counsellors.

It's about recognising when someone may benefit from additional, specialist support.

For some employees, compassionate conversations with their manager will be enough.

For others, the emotional impact of a previous loss, ongoing anxiety or the transition into parenthood may require more specialist support.

Recognising this early can make a significant difference to both the employee's wellbeing and their experience at work.

Beyond EAP provides confidential specialist support including:

- ✓ Pregnancy after loss.
- ✓ Miscarriage, stillbirth and baby loss.
- ✓ Fertility and family-building.
- ✓ Pregnancy and parental leave.
- ✓ Trauma and bereavement.
- ✓ Preparing for returning to work.
- ✓ Ongoing emotional wellbeing.

Support is always tailored to the individual, recognising that no two experiences are ever the same.

Our role isn't to replace the valuable support already offered by HR and managers.

It's to work alongside organisations, providing specialist expertise when employees need it most.



Beyond EAP Insight

The most supportive organisations recognise that compassion and specialist expertise work best together.

? Reflection

If one of your employees needed more support tomorrow, would your managers know where to turn?

Key Takeaways

Remember...

- Every pregnancy after loss is unique.
- Hope and fear can exist together.
- Invisible milestones matter.
- Managers are expected to support, not solve.
- Compassion creates psychological safety.
- Employees rarely expect perfection. They remember kindness.
- Small moments of kindness are often remembered long after pregnancy has ended.

Continue Your Learning

Supporting employees through life's most complex moments doesn't begin and end with one guide.

The Beyond EAP HR Knowledge Hub has been created as a growing library of practical resources to help HR professionals and managers confidently support employees through significant life events.

You may also find these resources helpful:

[HR Guides](#)

- Real HR Challenges
- Supporting Employees from Pregnancy Announcement to Parental Leave
- Supporting Employees Following a Serious Health Diagnosis
- (Coming Soon) Supporting Employees Following a Cancer Diagnosis

[Insights](#)

- Pregnancy After Loss: What Employers Need to Understand
- Supporting Employees When Life Gets Complex
- Beyond Traditional Wellbeing

[Manager Workshops](#)

Managing Maternity Leave: From Announcement to Return-to-Work

Helping managers confidently support employees throughout pregnancy, parental leave and their return to work.

Explore the Beyond EAP HR Knowledge Hub

A growing collection of:

- ✓ Practical HR Guides
- ✓ Specialist Insights
- ✓ Manager Workshops
- ✓ Workplace Resources

Designed to help organisations confidently support employees through life's most significant transitions.

www.beyondeap.co.uk/insights-and-resources

Team Discussion

Which resource would be most valuable for your managers to explore next?

Why Organisations Choose Beyond EAP

Beyond EAP provides specialist employee support when life becomes more complex.
Working alongside HR teams, we help organisations confidently support employees through:

Family Building & Parenthood

Supporting employees through fertility treatment, pregnancy, pregnancy after loss, parental leave, adoption, neurodiverse parenting and the transition back to work.

Trauma, Loss & Bereavement

Compassionate support following bereavement, traumatic events, critical incidents, baby loss and complex grief.

Post-Diagnosis Health

Supporting employees adjusting to cancer, chronic illness, disability, hearing loss and other life-changing health conditions.

Workplace Culture & Leadership

Helping organisations build psychologically safe workplaces through specialist coaching, manager workshops, HR guidance and practical workplace resources.

Beyond EAP HR Knowledge Hub

A growing collection of:

- ✓ Practical HR Guides
- ✓ Specialist Insights
- ✓ Manager Workshops
- ✓ Workplace Resources

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www.beyondeap.co.uk

**Because life doesn't stop outside the workplace.
Neither should support.**





Let's Start a Conversation

If you're facing a situation that feels complex, sensitive or unfamiliar, you don't need to navigate it alone. Let's have a conversation.

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Supporting employees through life's most significant transitions since 2014

