



SBD  
MENTORING

# MENTORING ACTIVITIES

# Welcome

Whether you are a prospective mentor or mentee, I thank you for visiting stillbirthday, and for considering joining our mentoring program. I am sorry for the loss(es) that you've endured, and I pray that stillbirthday offers even just a flicker of light that you might carry forward with you through your journey.

I'd like you to have an idea of what to expect through your mentoring with stillbirthday.

Grief is hard work. There are no quick fixes and there are no easy ways out. It takes a great level of commitment to engage in a mentoring relationship. Mentors are not professionals, and are not perfect. Mentors are peers, people who are still working to make sense and make healing out of their own darkest of experiences. Mentors do not have all of the answers. Instead, mentors encourage you to explore your own questions and give you the validation to discover your own unique grief journey, while helping you to discover resources and providing you with resources that may prove useful as your journey to healing begins to reveal itself.

The first few pages here are a sample outline of what your mentor might engage with you. Following this, are some resources to assist with conflict resolution, as conflict resolution can be an underlying theme to *many* of the disconnects we experience in our grief journey, and realizing that we truly are not alone, even when we feel we are, is so important to our healing.

I hope that these resources and that stillbirthday can bring comfort to you on your healing journey.

Warmly,

Heidi Faith

This format can be used as a template for mentors, to help with progressing the mentoring relationship through our 3 month (12 week) program.

**Week 1:** intro/exchange stories/.

In the initial email, the mentor will add this link (<http://stillbirthday.com/2011/12/29/mentorship-program/>) to make sure that the mentee has read through the guidelines. He/she will give their introduction, and ask the mentee to reply with his/hers. The mentor will let the mentee know that each week has a project that they can work on together, but that they can break from that whenever necessary.

**Week 2:** ID physical obstacles. When the mentor receives the first email back from the mentee, where he/she shares his/her story, the mentor will respond by first acknowledging and validating the experience of the mentee. Then, the mentor will ask the mentor what physical obstacles he/she sees in reaching healing. Examples could include: cost for burial, cost for headstone, having to go back to work, having other children with needs, bleeding so no intercourse/sense of connection to spouse, anything. The mentor will share some of the physical obstacles he/she faced in the earliest time after their own loss.

**Week 3:** ID support people. When the mentor receives the second email back from the mentee, where he/she IDs physical obstacles, the mentor will respond by offering any helpful resources he/she might know, or that he/she will be thinking of any resources (charities/programs to cover costs, etc.). The mentor will now ask the mentee to list any and all support people in their life (neighbor, friend, boss, coworker, pastor, anybody who could provide any aspect of support now or in the future). We are doing this because of our limited time with the mentor, and we want them to see that they can rely on other people throughout their process. This can also help generate ideas to help with the physical obstacles listed. Maybe a neighbor could spend time with the mentees other children for an hour so he/she can go for a walk, for example. The mentor will share any helpful ideas, and also the people that helped support him/her through their own experience.

**Week 4.** ID emotional/spiritual obstacles. When the mentor receives the third email back from the mentee, where he/she lists their support people, ask the mentee what spiritual or emotional obstacles they might have. Suggest taking a look at a calendar, and looking at major holidays and how much time the mentee has before facing them. Mother's day, Father's day, the due date, Thanksgiving, Christmas, anniversaries. finding out the gender, the stillbirthday. Other obstacles include tension in the marriage, infertility, return of menstrual cycle/PMS. The mentor can share his/her emotional/spiritual obstacles that were faced in their own experience.

**Week 5:** activity/explore/indulge. When the mentor receives the fourth email back from the mentee, where he/she lists their emotional/spiritual obstacles, the mentor can respond by suggesting resources to help with any of them. Then, the mentor can let the mentee know that this week's project is to do something fun. The mentor can suggest a book for the mentee to indulge and purchase, a movie that the mentor and mentee can both purchase or check out at the same time (both watching it on the same night) to come back to with questions or thoughts (books, movies and other listings will continue to be updated within the mentor group) or the mentor can tell the mentee to intentionally find something enjoyable each day this week, like a bath, a walk, a massage, something like that. Or the two of them can work on a fun online project together, like a silly questionnaire, any of the supplemental resources at the end of this document, or something like that.

**Week 6.** thankful list. This week, the mentor will let the mentee know that the project is to make a thankful list. This list will consist of any kind of loving response, any compassionate word, any act of kindness that the mentee has received since the loss. The mentor will ask the mentee to reflect on these. The mentor will also share some of the positive responses that he/she received in the earliest days, and how that has impacted his/her own grief journey in the long term.

**Week 7.** important people in your life list. When the mentor receives the sixth email back from the mentee, where he/she lists their thankfulness list, the mentor will congratulate the mentee for forming a big list and seeing all the room for thankfulness even in grief. Then the mentor will ask the mentee to list all of the important people in his/her life. The mentor will not share their own list with the mentee yet, but will suggest a few people. their parents, pastors, their siblings, etc. After the mentee replies with

their list, the mentor will see if the mentee added their recent infant loss. If not, the mentor will take this time to help validate to the mentee that the pregnancy/infant loss was in fact a person and that person has already changed them in great/big ways.

**Week 8.** amazing events in your life list. The mentor will ask the mentee to list the most amazing events that took place in his/her life. This will be helpful as at least two months have gone by since the loss, and this can be a crucial time for newly grieved parents who may be considering suicide or other harmful thoughts such as divorce. The mentor should list activities from his/her own childhood, and things like their wedding. This will help the mentee generate his/her own list, and will help him/her reflect on the joyous times that he/she has had. This might also make the mentee think of life events that the pregnancy/infant loss baby won't be able to participate in for themselves. The next week's assignment will help with this.

**Week 9.** write a letter to your baby. When the mentor receives the amazing events list from their mentee, the mentor will ask the mentee to write a letter to their baby, reminding them that they have all week to work on it. The mentor will invite the mentee to share the letter with him/her, but tell them that it is not required, just that the mentee informs the mentor when the letter is finished.

**Week 10.** ID feelings. this is a way to check against the emotional/spiritual obstacles list of week 4, to make sure that the mentee is progressing forward, at least a little. The mentor will ask the mentee to write how they feel now about, and how they felt at the time about their pregnancy, how they feel about the baby, the loss, their grief experience so far, about God. The mentor will share how he/she feels about the progress of the mentee as an encouragement.

**Week 11.** write a letter to God. When the mentor receives the ID feelings list, the mentor will ask the mentee to write a letter to God. The mentor will first provide their own letter, so that the mentee can read it. This letter should include the ways the mentor sees the mentee progressing, the challenges they've faced, the growth that has taken place, and a request that God will continue to walk with the mentee far beyond the mentoring relationship, particularly on the days ahead that the mentee is

dreading (from the emotional/spiritual obstacles list from week 4) and lead the mentee to finding ways to use their experience to help others through their experience of loss or grief. It should be extremely encouraging.

At some point during weeks 9, 10, or 11, writing a “Love Letter to My Body” can also be very healing. You can visit [stillbirthday](#) to learn more about this.

**Week 12:** preparing to step forward/resolutions. For this final week, ask the mentee to submit to you a list of resolutions that will serve to help him/her in the time ahead. Here are some examples:

-when facing this person, I will...

-when facing this holiday/event, I will...

-when feeling \_\_\_\_, I will....

-when feeling hopeless from the loss, I will (claim my purpose in the present, for example)

-when interpreting my spouses behavior, I will...

-when I long for my child, I will....(dream about the reunion in heaven, for example)

This would also be a great time to encourage the mentee to review the thankful for list from week 6, and see if there are areas in his/her life that he/she could use to help others/pay-it-forward, particularly through grief/loss, if this hasn't been discussed yet in the relationship.

# *Additional Activities*

Mentors are encouraged to engage in these or similar activities and apply them to their own unique grief journey, to know how these might apply when engaging them with a mentee. If you are a stillbirthday mentor and have tried any of these activities, and would like to share about your experience at stillbirthday, your journaling of your experience can be published in the SBD News section and your mentor profile can be updated to reflect your “continuing education” in relevant activities to birth and bereavement mentoring.

Found at stillbirthday:

- [The Invisible Pregnancy](#) has 40 activities
- [“Love Letter to My Body”](#)
- [Womandalas / Zeroes Count Project](#)

Other Resources:

- [Learn Resolution Vocabulary](#)
- [Be Strong, Be Mean, or Give In?](#)
- [Talk it Out Together Chart](#)
- [Positives and Negatives about Conflict](#)