

# Collaborative development of arts and compassion-focused bereavement programme for women following pregnancy loss: Findings from The PEARL Study pilot trial



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## TAKE HOME MESSAGE

A co-designed, midwife-led bereavement workshop delivered in community settings was feasible, acceptable and highly valued by women following pregnancy loss.

### WHY PEARL?

- Pregnancy loss can have substantial and enduring psychological consequences, yet many women report unmet needs for compassionate, accessible support.
- Evidence-based, community-based bereavement interventions remain limited.

**Aim**  
To co-create and pilot the feasibility and acceptability of a midwife-led bereavement programme for women following pregnancy loss.

### CO-DESIGNING PEARL

30-member Project Advisory Group



Co-design + Development + Pilot + Refinement

### THE PEARL PROGRAMME

one day - community based - group workshop

**Presence:** meeting the water where you are

**Emotions:** Learning to float, not fight

**Anchors:** Finding your footing again

**Relationships & Reflection:** Swimming together

**Living with Loss:** Carrying forward, not leaving behind

Co-facilitated by a midwife and woman with lived experience

### PEARL IN NUMBERS



30 PAG Members



65 Women Participants



6 Workshops delivered



4 Locations



3 Survey assessment points



5 focus groups



55% aged 35-44



63% had experienced > 1 loss



- 42% had experienced their most recent loss within the previous 6 months
- 32% had experienced their most recent loss more than two years previously



- 59 post-workshop responses
- 43 one-month follow-up responses
- 16 women took part in a focus group

PROLONGED GRIEF +  
Kendall's W = .15, p = .003

COMPLEX PTSD SYMPTOMS +  
Kendall's W = .10, p = .021

DEPRESSION +  
Kendall's W = .10, p = .021

Anxiety, wellbeing and self-compassion did not show statistically significant change.



### WHAT DID WE FIND?

CONNECTION: shared experience reduced isolation

FOCUS ON ME: space to focus on the woman, not only the loss

SAFE SPACE: safety enabled honesty, reflection and emotional release

MOVING FORWARD: women left feeling lighter, while identifying a need for ongoing support

“It was as though a massive weight had lifted off my shoulders. And I was calm. I was so calm.”

- PEARL was feasible and acceptable, with promising preliminary evidence of reductions in prolonged grief, complex traumatic stress and depressive symptoms.
- PEARL highlights the potential for nurses and midwives to bridge the gap between acute clinical care and longer-term community bereavement support following pregnancy loss.