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The loss of self: The effect of miscarriage, stillbirth, and child death on maternal self-esteem

Patricia Wonch Hill , Joanne Cacciatore, Karina M. Shreffler & Kayla M. Pritchard

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ABSTRACT

A child's death augments how grieving parents view the world, the family, and the self. Using a

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representative sample of women ages 25–45 who have ever given birth, we assessed whether miscarriage, stillbirth, and child death impact self-esteem and whether this loss is moderated by maternal identity. We found that stillbirth and child death, but not miscarriage, negatively impacted self-esteem. For those who experienced a loss, the impact on self-esteem was moderated by maternal identity. Women who experienced a stillbirth were the only group who had significantly lower self-esteem after controlling for background characteristics and maternal identity variables.

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