

Common Thoughts and Feelings of Parents in the NICU

GUILTY

- This is my fault.
- What did I do to cause this to happen?
- I feel guilty if I leave the hospital.

INADEQUATE

- I don't know how to care for my baby.
- The nurses know how to care for my baby best, not me. What good am I to my baby?
- I can't help my baby.

ANGRY

- This isn't fair!
- Why is this happening to me?
- My doctors were wrong.

DISAPPOINTED/ SAD

- My baby feels like a stranger.
- I wish I could have had a "normal" pregnancy and birth.
- I wish I could feel like a normal parent.

WORRIED

- My baby looks like they are in pain.
- Will my baby be okay?
- Will my baby be healthy?
- How will I take care of my work, my other children, and everything at home, while also caring for my baby?
- If I leave the hospital, my baby won't know that I care.

SCARED

- My baby looks so fragile; I'm scared that my touch might hurt my baby.
- I'm scared that my baby will die, or not be healthy.
- The NICU is a scary environment.

CONFUSED

- Why did this happen?
- Where do I fit in?
- Everything that happens in the NICU is so new and chaotic. I don't understand anything. The nurses and doctors are speaking a new language that I have to learn

