



Fertility Support

A common occurrence: your best friend just told you that she is pregnant. You want to be happy for her, and intellectually you are. But on an emotional level the pervading feelings are sadness for yourself, anger at the unfairness because you have been trying for years to conceive without success, and envy because it happened so easily for her and she has what you want – to be pregnant. And now, on top of everything, you feel like a bad friend because you do not feel unequivocally happy.

But how can you reasonably rejoice hearing your friend's news? While self-injecting medications that make you look pregnant and cause uncontrollable mood swings, you are surrounded by pregnant women including your sister, your sister in law, and a work colleague who accidentally became pregnant with her fourth child. Facebook is filled with pictures of babies and toddlers; it seems that everyone you have ever befriended or known has a child — except you.

Invitations to baby showers are dreaded, as are negative pregnancy tests, cattle-call fertility-doctor waiting rooms, and unsolicited advice about how to conceive. Infertility is profoundly difficult. At the very least, it is an expensive and time-consuming problem to address. But it is so much more than expensive and time consuming, which is why having the right support is critical.

What is the right support? To begin, the Fertility Warriors Facebook community that all of you all joined. Through FW, you are connected with similarly-situated women – women who will not tell you “to just relax and it will happen,” and who understand your frustration with doctors, medication confusion, and heartbreaks from failed IUI and IVF attempts. Your FW sisters are intelligent, knowledgeable women who altruistically share their experiences in effort to help others and who offer empathy, encouragement, and information. A shout out to the FW women who remain connected even after having children; you offer hope to those who are still trying.

Some of you though, may be dealing with issues that are unique to your infertility situation and/or that are particularly difficult or personal. An example of this might be relationship/marital stress resulting from the struggle to conceive. While some couples are able to unite as a team when confronting this challenge, other couples – many other couples – experience relationship tension and distance. Other unique and/or personal circumstances could include a single woman going through this process, or a male or

female couple, or alternative interventions such as surrogacy, bariatric surgery, or at-home insemination.

Relatedly, some of you may be having trouble coping with the stress and emotions that infertility and infertility interventions cause. Common emotions include, but are not limited to, profound anxiety, depression, sadness, anger, self-loathing and guilt. To the extent that these or other emotions are interfering with the ability to function, or if substances or food are relied on to cope, additional support from a therapist can be helpful. And this is particularly true since some women who are trying to become pregnant will opt not to take psychiatric medication, even if clinically indicated.

The good news is that many of you will eventually conceive. But in the interim, it is critical to surround yourself with adequate support, including professional help if necessary.

Baby dust to all of you!
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