



Coping with Infertility

By Teri Claassen MSW, LCSW, LCAC

8 Things to Remember When Coping with Infertility

Infertility can be a devastating process for a couple to go through. Its roller coaster effects can bring stress, grief, conflict, pain, and heartache into your relationship. Many people feel as if they live their life in two week cycles--waiting to ovulate and then two weeks later, suffering the devastation of not being pregnant and coping with infertility. The dream of a family seems to be further and further away as each month goes on. Here are some tools for you and your partner to practice as you travel the winding road of infertility.

- Speak your needs- Be upfront with your partner, friends, and family about what you need (or don't need) from them as you are going through this. Oftentimes people will act in ways they "think" might be helpful, when in reality they are only making it worse. Being real with your loved ones can give you the opportunity to teach them how to support you. Remember if you leave it to them to read your mind, they might get it wrong.
- Allow yourself to feel the emotions- Trying to stuff away the pain you are going through or pretending everything is okay when it's not can be exhausting. You spend so much time and energy trying to put up a front, that the emotions build up inside you and become overwhelming. Releasing your feelings in an emotionally safe way can be a beneficial way to lower your stress level (i.e. journaling, exercising, talking it through, etc).
- Don't expect others to cope the same way you do- Everyone experiences the disappointment of infertility in their own way.

There is no right or wrong way to do it--as long as you are coping and not living in denial. Grieving is not always a cookie cutter approach. Give yourself permission to cope the way you need to and respect your loved ones if they need something different. It is not personal, nor does it mean that they are not in as much pain as you. They might just be processing the pain differently.

- Avoid blaming yourself or your partner- The blame game gets you nowhere. If you find yourself on this path, ask, “What is it I am really trying to say?” Maybe you are having regrets or maybe you feel hopeless. Talk about those things rather than blaming. You cannot change the past decisions you have made, so focusing on them will only keep you stuck in the past. Blaming will create superficial conflict to deflect the real feelings you are going through. If you focus on and share your feelings, there will be no room for blame.
- Stay informed- Whether you research on your own, talk with a specialist, or consult someone who has been through it, getting as much information as you can will be helpful. Making informed choices gives you power and a feeling of control. Remember there are no stupid questions.
- Set limits for yourself- Setting limits helps you have control over things. For example, allowing yourself to talk about your infertility stresses at designated times with a specific time limit can help you feel like you are not consumed with it all day. Know when you need a break from talking about it or a month off of trying to conceive. Also, setting up a plan B with your partner can help you feel that there is hope out there. It is important to discuss with your partner topics such as what treatments you will and will not do, how much money you will spend, and how long you will keep trying. Doing this helps make sure your expectations are on the same page.

- Reach out for support- You are not alone. Unfortunately infertility is a silent pain many couples are facing. Talking to a therapist, going to a support group, or even joining a website forum for support can help. It doesn't mean there is something "wrong" with you or that you are weak for reaching out. It means you are human and that infertility is hard to go through. Finding support can help normalize your feelings and take away the isolation you may feel.
- Take care of yourself- Self-care is a must. Simple things such as a hobby, recreational events, or even a massage can make a big difference in how you feel. Also, don't be afraid to avoid baby-focused activities for a while. Saying no to baby shower invitations, for example, may be better than forcing yourself to sit through the event holding back tears. Just stay in tune with what you need and express it to your loved ones.

About Renewed Horizon

Renewed Horizon is a Christian counseling practice that serves individuals, couples, families, and teens to address difficulties in life. It is a place to find guidance, healing, and hope when life feels hopeless and unimaginable.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” ~ II Corinthians 5:17



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