

One out of every six couples in the United States is coping with infertility. Yet when you are affected by it, it can be a very lonely experience, creating tremendous physical, financial, and emotional challenges for the individual and couple.

### **You might feel . . .**

shocked	depressed
anxious	helpless
sad	resentful
angry	lonely
ashamed	guilty
fearful	jealous
preoccupied	worthless
isolated	pessimistic
out of control	

### **You may experience . . .**

- loss of interest in usual activities
- strained relationships with your partner, family, friends, and/or colleagues
- difficulty thinking of anything other than your infertility
- a change in your sleeping and/or eating patterns
- fleeting thoughts of death or dying
- difficulty making decisions
- feelings of isolation and loneliness

### **Issues you may face . . .**

- Should we pursue treatment?
- Which treatment is appropriate for us? For how long?
- Should we try third party assistance (sperm donation, ovum donation, surrogacy, gestational carrier)?
- Is adoption an option for us?
- Should we stop treatment?
- What if my partner and I have different ideas about the direction we should take?
- Are my feelings of depression, anger, jealousy, guilt . . . normal?
- How can my partner and I continue to try to enjoy our life together during this difficult time?
- Can we cope with a multiple pregnancy or selective reduction?
- Secondary infertility - What if we're not succeeding in adding to our family?
- What can we do when our friends and family don't understand what we're going through?

### **Help is available.**

#### **Talking with a mental health professional experienced in infertility can help you begin to . . .**

- gather the appropriate type and amount of information you need to make your informed decisions.
- make treatment decisions.
- prepare for and cope with the medical and surgical treatments.
- understand and cope with your emotional reactions to infertility.
- reduce the strain that infertility can put on your relationship with your partner, family, and friends.
- explore all of the family building options available to you.
- learn how to control the stress, anxiety and depression that often accompany infertility.
- communicate more effectively with family, friends, your physician and his/her staff.
- cope with the losses that infertility presents.
- create a joyful, rich life for yourself.

## How do I find a qualified mental health professional experienced in working with infertility?

It is recommended that you choose a counselor who has:

- a graduate degree in a mental health profession
- a license to practice
- clinical training in infertility treatment and experience in the medical and emotional aspects of infertility

You can interview more than one person. Ask about credentials and experience with infertility issues and treatment, including the assisted reproductive technologies, third party reproduction, pregnancy loss, adoption and childfree issues. Ask if he/she is currently seeing other people with infertility.

*Help is available for individuals working to overcome the emotional challenge of an infertility diagnosis.*

## Infertility counseling services include:

**INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING** - can reduce anxiety, stress, and depression and can help with decision making; can provide tools to help the individual cope with grief and loss.

**COUPLES COUNSELING** - can help couples strengthen their relationship; can assist couples in managing all the stages of their journey to have a child.

**EXTENDED FAMILY COUNSELING** - can aid individuals in support building and negotiating difficult moments with family and friends.

**GROUP COUNSELING** - can provide opportunity for an exchange of experiences, feelings, and information with others undergoing a similar experience.

For referral to a mental health professional, ask your reproductive endocrinologist, consult the ASRM Mental Health Professional Group web site membership directory at <http://www.asrm.org/mhpg/> or contact a local support organization such as RESOLVE.



For more information, contact the:

Mental Health Professional Group  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
*Formerly The American Fertility Society*  
1209 Montgomery Highway  
Birmingham, Alabama 35216-2809  
Tel: (205) 978-5000  
Fax: (205) 978-5005

## If you are having trouble conceiving,



**Speak with someone who can help.**

*“Infertility has been the most stressful experience I have ever had to face.”*