

# California Fertility Partners

## Emotional Aspects of Infertility

Infertility can be an emotionally and physically distressing experience for many patients. Feelings of depression, loss of self-esteem, grief, anxiety, isolation, and chronic stress throughout the process are common complaints. The treatment process can add to the stress that a patient feels due to the need for frequent office visits, juggling work and appointments, dealing with insurance benefits, and coping with the multitude of medical decisions and uncertainties. After all of the efforts that an individual or couple puts into the process, they are often faced with disappointing results which only compounds the feelings of despair.

It is important to acknowledge the stress and even shame that many individuals and couples experience as a result of their infertility, and to start the treatment process with a plan for helping them cope with the difficulties that can arise along the way. Having an understanding of the outlined treatment plan and a realistic idea of the chance for success as well as the side effects of all prescribed medications is a good way to start the process. It's important to talk openly with your partner, friend, doctor and whomever else is part of your support structure throughout the process. Because infertility is a personal health issue, many patients tend to isolate themselves emotionally which can add to their stress level. Depression and anxiety are a frequent consequences and should be identified and treated.

There are mental health providers (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, etc.) who specialize in infertility counseling and can be an excellent support tool to help patients during this difficult time. These therapists can help patients and couples deal with the emotional aspects of infertility and can teach ways to help cope with the conflicts that can arise due to the frequent doctor visits, procedures, and often negative results.

Scientific studies have confirmed that the stress of infertility can adversely affect the outcomes of many fertility procedures. Efforts have been directed at reducing the physical and emotional stresses during treatment through various modalities affecting the mind-body connection including relaxation techniques, acupuncture, counseling, prayer, hypnosis, imagery, and body work, all with some degree of success.

At California Fertility Partners we recognize the complexity of the emotional experience that infertility can bring each patient and we strive to offer a caring, supportive and calm environment to minimize the stress level of going through treatment. By providing patients with outlined treatment plans, realistic success rates, and serving as fertility coach during the process, we feel that we can best guide patients through the process.

### **Referral Sources:**

American Society of Reproductive Medicine:

American Fertility Association

Resolve

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