

Alternative Parenting – Role of Counselling

Donation, Surrogacy, Transgender Conception & Fertility Preservation

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Trying for a Baby

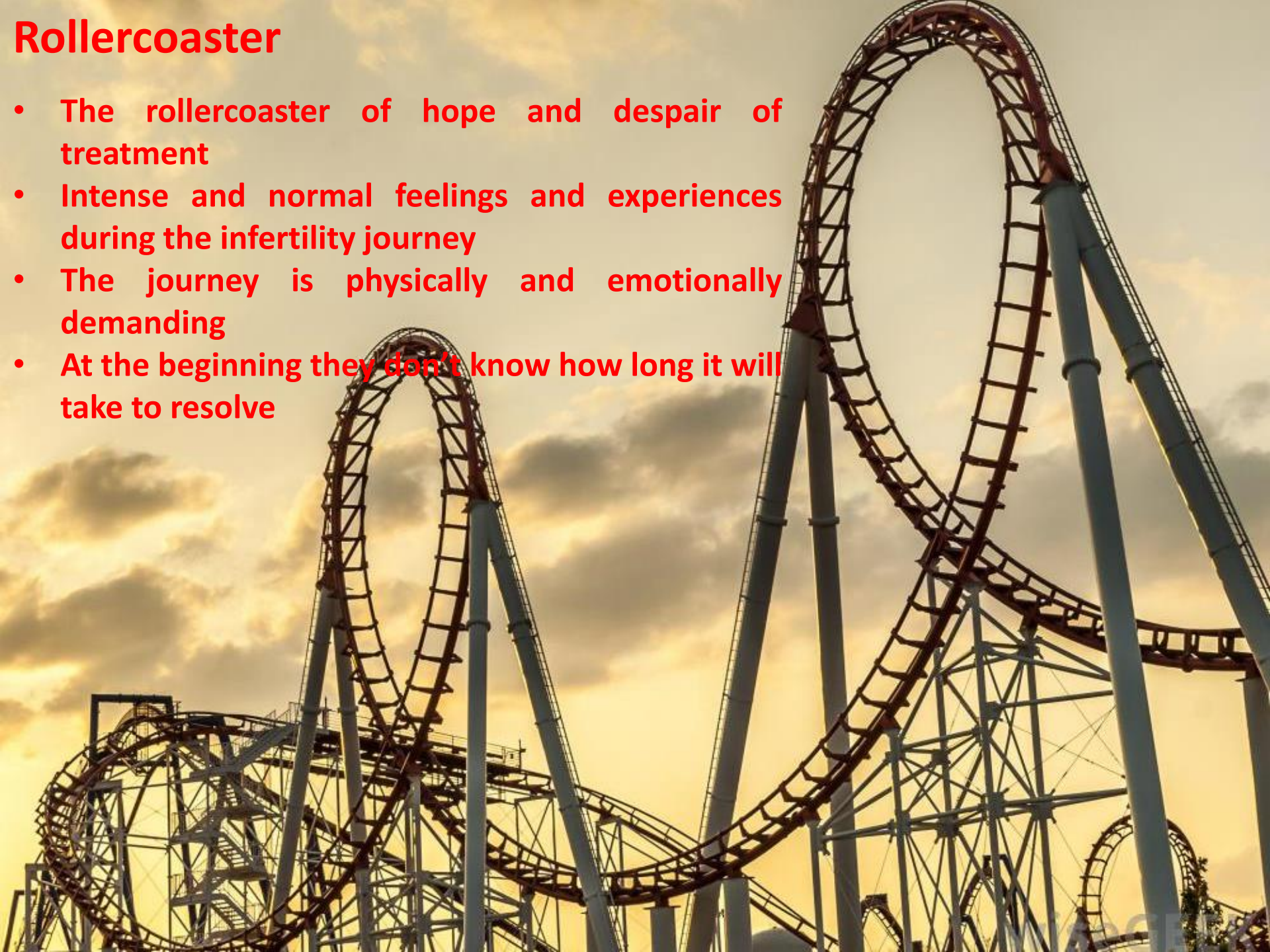
The Infertility Journey



The Emotional Impact

Rollercoaster

- The rollercoaster of hope and despair of treatment
- Intense and normal feelings and experiences during the infertility journey
- The journey is physically and emotionally demanding
- At the beginning they don't know how long it will take to resolve



Shocked Sleepless Tearful Punished
Broken Unlovable Jealous Depression Despair
Unfair Isolated Worried Guilt
Anxious Worthless Traumatic Gods Will
Loss **Heart-Breaking** Worried
Depressed Accepting Failure Sadness Determine
Grief Stricken To Blame Angry Barren
Lonely Broken Excited Suicidal
Stressed Anxiety Excited
Hopeful



Patients Experiences:

- From a Psychological, emotional and social perspective we know how isolating and distressing the impact of fertility treatment can have on individuals and couples
- Evidence from Fertility Network UK Survey conducted with Middlesex University (Oct. 2016) showed:
 - 90% of Patients feel depressed
 - 42% of Patients feel suicidal (up by 22% from the survey in 1997)
 - 70% of patients reported a detrimental impact on their relationships
 - 15% of patients reported their relationship with their partner ended or became strained as a result of fertility problems and treatment
- Research study highlighted 93% of men reported a negative impact on their well being and self esteem

The Counsellor:

What is a counsellor doing in a clinic?

- HFEA legal requirement of the Act to offer all patients the opportunity to discuss and receive proper counselling

Who we work with:

- Heterosexual Couples
- Same Sex Female Couples
- Same Sex Male Couples
- Single Female
- Single Men
- Trans Men
- Trans Females

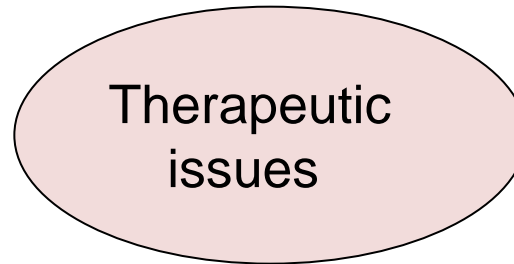
The Role of Counselling



- Normalise grief and loss
- Help patients with deeper emotions – anger, sadness, envy, jealousy, bitterness, projections of emotions
- Help prepare for outcomes/manage expectations
- Absorb concerns/complaints
- Preparation for next treatment cycle/ending treatment

TASK: Hold and contain issues, help patients to face their fears

The Role of Counselling



- Relationship Issues – partner, family, work
- Past grief and loss (TOP's bereavements)
- Preparing for future loss
- Mood and emotional Reactions
- Past abuse Issues

TASK: Give non-judgemental understanding, helping people focus, help acceptance

The Role of Counselling

New ways
of coping

- Explore coping strategies – Healthy vs Unhealthy what may work for them
- Greater self confidence and self-esteem
- Importance of looking after self/each other
- Looking for support and avoiding stressors
- Sources of Support

TASK: Help people find new coping strategies, how to support each other

The Role of Counselling

Implications of Treatment

- Adjustment : Lack of control - increased stress and anxiety
- Stresses and Strains: Lifestyle changes
- Relationship: Sex life, one person on their own making changes
- Support network: Work, family and friends
- Physical affects: Hormone drugs
- Expectations: Cultural and religious beliefs, Confidence in the stats working for them
- Financial
- **TASK: Help focus, support, validating and understanding of the individual journey.**

The Role of Counselling

Implications of giving and receiving donated gametes

- Considerations and implications of using donated genetic material
- For recipients and donors, occasionally the child - short/long term
- Eggs/Sperm, embryos and/or surrogacy to create a family
- Loss of genetic connection
- Importance of legal changes
- Advantages and disadvantages of openness
- Implications for potential child and any existing children
- Future implications
- Accessing information

Information:

Fairfax
FaceMatch™ >



Match yourself, your
partner or someone
famous to our donors

The Role of Counselling

Implications of Surrogacy

- “When a woman carries a baby for someone who is unable to conceive or carry a child themselves”
- The law governing surrogacy is not keeping pace with social change -public consultation
- Legalities of surrogacy – Surrogacy is legal in the UK, though currently arrangements are not legally enforceable
- Very complex area both psychologically and legally
- Considerations and implications of using Surrogacy to create a family
- Surrogacy Arrangement Act 1985 – offence to advertise for a surrogate/be a surrogate
- Types of surrogacy
 - “Straight” – Surrogates own egg
 - “Host” – Eggs from the IM or Donor Eggs
- One of the IP must be genetically related to the child

The Role of Counselling

Implications of Surrogacy

- Seeking a suitable Surrogate
- Counselling for Intended Parents and Surrogate and Partner
- Legal Parenthood of Surrogacy
- Parental Orders

TASK:

- Challenging and Directed work
- Exploring ethical, emotional and social considerations
- Psycho-emotional impact; their thoughts and feelings
- Helping them to make a fully informed decision which is right for them

The Role of Counselling

Implications of Fertility Preservation

- Considerations and implications of preserving fertility
- For trans patients (male and female), oncology patients and elective egg freezing

- Our work is NOT about considering if the patient is Transgender....
 - The Equality Act 2010 *states "It is unlawful for a licensed clinic to discriminate against a trans person that requires their service"*.
 - *2 separate issues – reserving fertility and creating a family*
- Estimated 200,000 to 500, 000 trans people in the UK
- Adults seeking medical treatment has doubled in the last 5 years to 130,000
- Leeds Fertility referral pathway with GID's

Oncology:

- Preserving fertility for use at a later day
- Posthumous use consenting
- Urgency for treatment
- Impact

Elective Egg freezing:

- Growing increase
- Social Media
- Statistics
- Insurance Policy
- Unsuccessful treatment
- No guarantees

The Role of Counselling

Help with
'endings'

- Preparing for the end of treatment: loss, grief, fear of the future
- Exploring moving on – giving up treatment, consideration of adoption, contemplating childlessness
- Adjustment to new situation – infertility has been a way of life for them for many years
- Decision making – restructuring and re-mapping their lives
- Consolidation of relationships

TASK: Helping people have realistic expectations and try and move on

The Role of Counselling

Implications of Treatment

Therapeutic issues

Implications of giving and receiving donated gametes

New ways of coping

Emotional Support

WELFARE OF THE CHILD

Implications of Elective Egg Freezing

Implications of Surrogacy

Implications of Oncology Fertility Preservation

Implications of Transgender Fertility Preservation

Help with 'endings'

- A sister offering to be a surrogate for her brother and his wife.
- A father offering to be the 'known' sperm donor for his son and daughter-in-law;
- A heterosexual couple in a "second" relationship, where the female partner wants her 19 year-old daughter to be their egg donor.
- A couple in their late 30's in a long-term 10+ years of marriage whom have never had full intercourse due to the psychological impact on the female from historical sexual abuse
- A trans-gender patient wanting to store his sperm prior to gender reassignment treatment and surgery.
- A couple offering to egg-share so their treatment cost is reduced
- A same-sex female couple using a male friend in a same-sex relationship so they can co-parent
- An Asian couple requiring egg donation speaking minimal English and don't mind a "Caucasian Donor"
- A husband with terminal cancer with minimal life expectancy wishing to store his sperm so his wife can use it posthumously

It is worth reading these scenarios again from the perspective of the child conceived in this way.

The emotional impact of infertility should not be underestimated

Harvard med found that couples dealing with infertility have the same level of psychological trauma as patients facing cancer.

Infertility has a real and measurable impact on patient's mental health...

Let's talk.

#InfertilityAwareness #BellLetsTalk



Leeds
Fertility



Bell
Let's Talk

Patient Feedback:

- **Felt the counsellor was really supportive and knowledgeable with the process, helped to justify reasons for the decisions we made and put us both at ease at a very difficult time.**
- **This is a really vital service and it helped to prevent deterioration in my mental health.**
- **Counselling helped through the stress of IVF particularly failed cycles but also through the adjustment of pregnancy after IVF. We sadly lost our little boy later in pregnancy but without counselling we would have had no support. We are really grateful for the counselling service and the easy access.**
- **I just wanted to thank-you for the sessions, it was a real turning point in my journey and I'm so grateful for all your help. Its been such a challenging few years and after our sessions I gave myself permission to go live my life. I gave myself permission to laugh, have fun and enjoy my life like normal and that changed everything.....Regardless of the outcome we'll be forever grateful**

Thank-you for listening!

Any Questions? Contact me:

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