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THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN OF TRYING TO GET PREGNANT

When I talk to my clients about how they are feeling, the immense emotional strain of trying to get pregnant is often a big topic of conversation. Sometimes it's hard to cope when you feel that something may be wrong with you. Perhaps you don't feel normal and are angry that you are finding something difficult that others seem to find easy. You may be experiencing grief from a previous miscarriage, or anxiety and worry about losing future pregnancies. You might feel left out when your friends and family are having children.

Many of my clients speak about the injustice of seeing pregnant women and babies everywhere, as well as the hurtful words of people who mean well, but can be insensitive.

For those of you who have decided to embark on IVF treatment, you will be coping with lots of tests and procedures, as well as the additional financial strain.

It may be that stress is making it harder for you

to conceive due to the effect of stress hormones on your reproductive system, so every monthly disappointment becomes a vicious cycle. This can lead to issues between partners, with the pressure to perform sexually in a scheduled and clinical way exacerbating an already strained relationship.

However you are feeling, it's important to remember that these feelings are understandable and natural, and that you are not alone. It's also a good idea to try and reduce your general stress levels. Here are some of my top tips on how to do just that.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REDUCING YOUR STRESS LEVELS

Talk it through

There are many things you can do to try and reduce your stress levels. Most important is having someone to talk to - maybe a friend



or family member. If this makes you feel uncomfortable then you might like to consider counselling, attending a fertility support group or chatting anonymously on an online forum. This can help you feel less isolated and provide support. Remember that there are probably people you know going through the same thing as you. One in four couples have problems conceiving and finding other people who are experiencing the same as you can really help.

Consider your own feelings

It's a good idea to avoid situations that upset you, and remember, don't feel guilty about it! If you don't want to go to a friend's baby shower, don't go. If you don't want to go in to the baby shop, get a present online. Consider your own feelings and don't put unnecessary pressure on yourself to do the so called 'right thing'. Do what's right for you.

Do a stress audit

Ask yourself if you have the right work/life balance. Are you working too much or taking on too much responsibility? Look at the different areas of stress in your life and think about whether any of these stresses can be reduced or removed, as the cumulative effect may be taking its toll on your fertility. The



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more stress hormones are circulating round your body, the more disruption is caused to your reproductive hormones and hence your fertility.

Do things you love – and look after yourself

If you don't have interests or hobbies, find something you love and do it. You should also build in daily relaxation to your schedule. This could be going for walks, doing yoga, visualisation, meditation or having a regular massage. Gentle

exercise is also important. It helps alleviate anxiety and tension plus releases happy, calming hormones into your system. A good book that I often recommend my clients to read is, *The Inside Out Revolution* by Michael Neill as this helps us to see how our thoughts affect our feelings. Many of my clients feel that they will only be truly happy when they have a baby. This book really helps you to appreciate that it is you, and you alone that can create happiness; no external influence can do that, not even a baby, even though it really looks like that!

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Above all, make sure you have some play time – schedule it in if you must, as it's easy to forget the importance of fun while your life seems dominated by trying to conceive. Research has even shown that feelings of joy help us create more of the hormone DHEA in the body. DHEA is a luxury hormone, that means that the body can convert it into other hormones like Progesterone. As women age progesterone naturally declines and when women are stressed progesterone levels are often lower. Progesterone is THE pregnancy hormone and without enough of it we cannot hold a pregnancy, so any extra DHEA could make an important difference to your Progesterone levels.

Invest in your relationship

As you know, many relationships suffer when fertility issues arise, so make time to focus on your relationship, and friendship, with your partner. This is a good time for romantic dinners and weekends away to help keep the spark alive.

Be honest with yourself about your feelings

Some of my clients write their thoughts and feelings down in a diary. This helps them release anxieties and frustrations without worrying that they are burdening someone else with them or being judged, and it's a great way to free up some emotional space inside.

Take a break

If you feel like your fertility issues are taking over your life, why not take a break from trying for a few months to remove the issue and escape the vicious cycle for a while? Clear your head and allow your life, your relationship and your hormones to rebalance before you think about trying again.

Use Australian Bush Flower Essences

You might find the following combinations useful:

- "Calm & Clear Essence" is great for relaxing and unwinding
- "Dynamis Essence" is useful if you are feeling exhausted from stress and anxiety
- "Relationship Essence" can help enhance the quality of intimate relationships



You can buy Australian Bush Flower Essences from a good health food store such as: revital.co.uk/catalogsearch/result/?q=australian+bush+flower+essences

Take as directed on the bottle.

Put essential oils in the bath

Not only is the very act of making time for a bath a great form of relaxation and creates 'me time', but some essential oils can be used to induce a deeper sense of relaxation. A combination of rose, jasmine and neroli is ideal. These will help you to relieve stress and for women they will also enhance feminine qualities necessary for improving fertility. Alternatively, you can buy ready-made essential oil blends from nealsyardremedies.com which are more cost-effective than buying individual oils.

Try homeopathic remedies

The following homeopathic remedies can be taken for acute anxiety and emotional upsets. Select the remedy that most closely matches your thoughts and feelings. Buy it in 30c potency from a pharmacy or health food store and take one pill when needed, up to a maximum of three a day for three days, leaving at least a week before repeating:

- **Arg Nit:** for anticipatory anxiety, worrying about the baby during pregnancy or before doing a pregnancy test
- **Gelsemium:** for anxiety especially after a shock or bad news e.g. from a miscarriage or diagnosis from the doctor
- **Ignatia:** for the emotional roller coaster, feeling very tearful and even hysterical, embarrassed about emotions
- **Natrum Mur:** for repeated grief and disappointment, want to be on your own, can't cry any more
- **Pulsatilla:** for feeling weepy all the time, don't want to be alone, feel better after a good cry

If your symptoms persist, always seek professional advice from a qualified homeopath.

I really hope this has given you some useful suggestions as to how you can relax and de-stress, and cope with the emotional strain of trying to get pregnant. For more information on tailor-made natural solutions which could help you get pregnant please visit my website: cassieeverett.com or call on 07588 820 409.