

Supporting people facing infertility

I was doubled up on the bed, amazed that the violent sobs I could hear were mine. This was not physical pain, but the emotional hurt and trauma of yet another failure to conceive. I could no longer express my emotions in any lucid or objective way. All I knew was that the roller coaster of emotions I felt month in and month out simply led to a hurt and grief unlike anything I'd ever known. One woman's experience of infertility

I can't honestly say I was consciously desperate for children. I was quite happy with my current lot and could envisage a fulfilling and useful future without children. I did at times wonder what I might miss if I never had a kid to push on a swing, see ride a bike without stabilisers....and then I might get a bit inexplicably and uncomfortably emotional. But the hardest bit was seeing the pain it caused my wife and in the face of it feeling a bit helpless and emotionally out of my depth. Because of this I was willing to give all the fertility treatment stuff a go. It was a bit of a slog and at times seemed to take a lot of fun out of living (and other things!). One man's experience of infertility

Who this leaflet is for.

Infertility can be a painful life issue to face. This leaflet is designed for supporters, friends and family of those facing infertility, to give some pointers about how to show support when it is needed. Though written primarily for christian supporters of christians facing infertility, it may be of use more generally.

Some facts and figures...

One definition of infertility: The inability to conceive after one year of normal unprotected sex. The focus of this leaflet is quite narrowly concentrated upon couples who seek to but are unable to conceive a child, rather than people who find themselves childless through other causes (e.g. singleness, miscarriage.)

Causes: Many and varied. Sometimes explainable biologically in terms of a problem with the woman's or man's reproductive system, sometimes unknown.

Frequency of occurrence: Around one in six couples visit their doctor because they are struggling to conceive.

Success rates of treatment: Hard to generalise. Not everyone is treatable, and success rates are lower than many people think.