



Finding support

You have just had some very upsetting news and something you have worked hard for and longed for has not happened. People handle this in very different ways. If the people around you react differently to the disappointment it does not mean they do not care, but that their personalities, past experiences and ways of coping are different.

This information will help you identify ways you can find support from within yourself and from the people around you. The MFS Forum is a 24/7 patient group where registered users may have experienced similar outcomes to their own fertility treatments and offer each other constant support and empathy - the MFS Forum is available via www.midlandfertility.com.

If you need further support you can find a counsellor through your GP or via the **MFS Counselling Advice Line on 07931 520031**. This is particularly important if you still feel very low six to eight weeks after the treatment outcome, or if at any time you feel severely depressed.

First reactions

Over the next few days, weeks or maybe even months, it is likely you will experience a wide range of emotions that are normal in the circumstances but which can feel disturbing and overwhelming from time to time. These may include deep sadness, a sense of failure and hopelessness and anger, or guilt that you may have done something wrong either before or during treatment. None of this is true but it does not make the feeling go away!

Sometimes you may have physical symptoms such as a headache, cough, stomach pain or stiff muscles. You may find you cry a lot or that your sleep or appetite is disturbed. You may not feel like meeting people, or that you avoid certain social situations where families or children will be present.

What can you do?

Here are some ideas you may like to consider:

- acknowledge the feelings and understand that they are to be expected

- recall what things have helped you in a past crisis and try it again
- use your existing good support systems, such as family, friends, community or spiritual leaders. Let them know what you find helpful. This is more likely to be practical help or a listening ear rather than advice at this point in time
- exercise, get plenty of fresh air and rest, try relaxation techniques and pamper yourself
- stick to normal and usual routines in this time of uncertainty. This includes regular meals and sleep patterns
- express your feelings through activities that appeal to you, such as writing, playing sport, cooking or keeping a diary
- distract yourself from sad thoughts by pleasurable activities or company
- write down a list of those things where you have achieved success, however small. This could be something at home or work or things that went well through treatment
- mark the event in a constructive way as part of your history. For example buy a book - or a plant or tree - that expresses your personality and marks your experience

Next steps

When you feel you are ready and the emotions connected to the loss or disappointment are manageable, it is time to consider what you can do next. The staff at MFS can talk to you about the implications of further or different treatment, or help you to consider any non-treatment related alternatives. But they will wait until you contact them as they do not want you to feel under pressure to talk or to have to consider any fertility treatment again. You may want to explore other options and you will find some useful contacts at the end of this leaflet.

It is useful to consider how well you managed to deal with failure and uncertainty and take account of it when you plan your next move:

- can you personally deal with these emotions again?
- can your relationships deal with these emotions again?
- are there some things you would do differently next time?

Useful contacts

In addition to contacting Anne Owen-Williams, the MFS counselling services manager, via anne.owen-williams@midlandfertility.com or on 07931 520031, some patients have found the following organisations useful. All have links to other information and agencies that you may also find helpful.

- Infertility Network UK and More to Life
infertilitynetworkuk.com
0800 008 7464
- COTS (Surrogacy)
surrogacy.org.uk
0844 414 0181
- The Miscarriage Association
miscarriageassociation.org.uk
01924 200799
- The Daisy Network (Early Ovarian Failure)
daisynetwork.org.uk
0845 122 8616
- British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering
baaf.org.uk
020 7421 2600

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