

# Psychological Challenges of Infertility and Infertility Treatment: A Qualitative Perspective

by  
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*Author of Struggling with Infertility*

*"As living beings, humans have biology and an innate instinct to reproduce. Sex is fundamental to life and living, as it is to procreation. Developmentally, men and women mature to have the ability to produce offspring. In most families, cultures, and societies, there is an expectation that they do so. It is a fundamental part of the cycle of life." – Struggling with Infertility*

## Overview and structure of the presentation

- ❑ Brief introduction
- ❑ Some key questions
- ❑ The relevance of a qualitative perspective
- ❑ Core narrative themes
- ❑ Selected cases from research and clinical work
- ❑ Supporting those struggling with infertility and undergoing infertility treatment and beyond
- ❑ Conclusion

## What is Infertility And infertility treatment?

Relevance:

World Health Organization (2023)

*1 in 6* adults globally faces some form of infertility.



## A qualitative, narrative methodology: Stories inform care

Research  
Data collection  
Interpretation  
Relevance  
Impact

## Core narrative themes

- ❑ The emotional journey of infertility: Grief, loss, and identity challenges
- ❑ Relationships and social impacts
- ❑ Cultural and Religious Perspectives
- ❑ Medical narratives vs personal narratives
- ❑ Gendered experiences of infertility

# **The emotional journey of infertility: Grief, loss, and identity challenges**

## **Reproductive loss**

Miscarriage, perinatal loss, loss of the ability to have a maternal/paternal biological child, dual-factor infertility

## **Decision to pursue treatment**

Loss of control; cost of treatment (financial, time, energy, emotional); access to resources; support/isolation

## **Psychological Impact**

Hopelessness, sadness, and anger; envy and jealousy; trauma

## The emotional journey of infertility and infertility treatments

Three brief, selected illustrative stories from research and clinical work.

1. Ana K.
2. Josey D.
3. Meryl Z.

Similarities and differences



## **Core themes and additional qualitative examples**

### **Relationships and social impacts**

Relationships: Husbands (Partners), family and friends, colleagues  
Decision-making

### **Cultural and Religious Perspectives**

Religion

### **Medical narratives vs personal narratives**

### **Gendered experiences of infertility**

## Supporting those struggling with infertility and/or undergoing infertility treatment and beyond

- ❑ Visibility
- ❑ Offering a voice
- ❑ Empathy and understanding
- ❑ Sensitivity to the particular needs of those who are/have struggled with infertility and have/are pursuing fertility treatment
- ❑ Awareness (e.g., depression, anxiety); connection and continued care
- ❑ Advocacy

Conclusion

Thank you!

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