

Creating families

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International Infertility support and information for Infertile males and their partners.

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Mensfe is primarily for men by men who find communication difficult and do not have easy access to support. Simply, it is **“your open forum”** website which provides support and a wealth of fertility related information.

We are all aware Infertility affects men and women in approximately equal proportion, worldwide it is generally accepted that the causes of infertility are aprox. 36% male factor, 34% female factor and 30% combined male-female unexplained factors.

However while women have historically been the focus of infertility treatment due to medical necessity, we are fully aware that the male plays a significant role in a couple's efforts to achieve a pregnancy and the quality of family life that has so far eluded them. It may be said that men in this situation are largely not given a voice, or cannot express their helplessness, despair and concern for their own issues and those of their partners.

Mensfe is trying to fill what we believe is an important gap in counselling support and information provision. The support is very male focussed for obvious reasons “for males by males” but we expect that professionals and wives/partners will also gain insight, as they obtain access to the forums and discussion groups. One of the groups deals with gender communication issues and female involvement is encouraged. Our ultimate aim is to see blighted relationships brightened and future hope restored.

The Mensfe website has been developed to contain a wealth of fertility related information in common with many other existing sites however the site goes a lot further than other sites.

Specialist support is provided by eminent clinicians and professionals who specialise in male infertility treatment, and associated psychological issues. Their aim is to devote time (when appropriate) to improve the quality of and delivery of male support and infertility care, through more extensive information and explanation being available about specific gender related issues. These include additional coping strategies, detailed self help advice plus a wide range of professional and other sources of help.

Most importantly the site places real stories, detailed accounts in their/your own words, low mood, despair and crucially their/your strategies for overcoming them. Since its conception it has helped 100's of 1000's of individuals.

The site is a search engine optimised with suitable use of key words and design in order that it is quickly found on typical male fertility web searches. However, it is intended that the site has a particular male "feel" and "sensitivity" unlike most fertility related web sites which tend to be necessarily "generic". It is intended that this first impression may encourage men to use the site and also to register in order to gain entry to the password protected areas of the site.

It has been the secure areas of the site where we particularly hoped to engage visitors by encouraging participation in small group forums. These groups tend to comprise men with similar issues and questions which they are encouraged to share in much the same way as formal group therapy might operate. A professional moderator of each group reviews progress regularly and helps to keep the group focussed and directed.

The theoretical and philosophical foundation for the site presentation is based on the basic principles of Gender Specific Infertility Communication and of Social Constructionist Narrative Therapy. In plain terms the basic philosophy is that the way you see and talk about something has a profound effect on what you experience

and can do something with it. Care has been taken to try to present fertility issues in a way that positions those effected with options, strategies and empowerment to minimise its effects in their lives.

In conclusion “Mensfe is an interactive patient website accessible internationally, which is overseen and supported by professionals. We are linked to other international groups offering specialist support for men encompassing many varied and diverse cultures.

“This is your web site by you for you make that difference, tell your story and help others”.

Feedback about the site is welcome, as the intention is to update and extend it on a regular basis if you wish to contribute please email us either direct or through the website.

www.mensfe.net

References:

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