

Fear Of Loving - A Group Program To Prevent Mental Health And Relationship Issues In Those Pregnant After ART

Julia Feutrill¹, Michelle Stuckey^{1,2,3}

¹The Elizabeth Clinic, Perth, Australia ²Genea Hollywood Fertility, Perth, Australia ³Fertility Specialists South, Perth, Australia

email of corresponding author

Fertility struggles take their toll on everyone, and can make the transition to pregnancy a particularly anxious and stressful time. Pregnancy after fertility treatment is a high stakes pregnancy and usually represents a considerable investment of time, emotion, energy, money and medical treatments. Once the pregnancy is achieved, the psychological and physical changes adjustments are considerable. We have developed an antenatal group program for couples who become pregnant following a period of infertility. This 3 session group offers an opportunity to process the transition from getting pregnant to being pregnant, so that parents can participate in the ordinary richness of really feeling the psychological and emotional changes that are a normal part of pregnancy. The group aims to increase the participants understanding of the internal changes they have experienced as they are becoming a parent; to reflect on their relationship with their partner and to learn strategies for dealing with stress such as mindfulness. We know from both experience and the literature that a supportive relationship alongside targeted guidance and information in pregnancy can prevent women experiencing mental health problems in the postpartum period.