



**COUNSELLING  
SERVICES**



**Department of Reproductive  
Medicine**

**Sheila Sim is our Unit counsellor. Sheila has worked at RHW since 1990 and has wide experience in all aspects of reproductive health. She is an accredited member of the Australian Association of Social Workers and a member of FSA and ANZICA, the fertility counsellors' group.**

## **Counselling Services**

Going through infertility diagnosis and treatment can be stressful and challenging. As well as the physical effects, there are emotional aspects to deal with. The counsellor is part of the team at Reproductive Medicine, available to care for you and your partner during and after your treatment. For some treatments, as a first step, all involved parties must have counselling about the implications of your choices.

The counsellor's role is to help you recognise your strengths as well as possible stressors. You can refer yourself, or be referred by your doctor or nurse. The counsellor will meet everyone at least once before they begin a program, to ensure you have time set aside to review what you have already been through in your hopes for a pregnancy. Many people need to talk about the years of past difficulties, and their hopes and fears for the future. You may have questions about the program, and your own personal concerns. Talking about these concerns, and working out solutions, can help you feel more powerful and ready to cope with your emotional and physical investment in the program. You can come back to the counsellor at any stage in your treatment, individually or as a couple.

## **Talking about your experiences**

We will talk with you about the issues that might arise for you. They could include:

- The history of the infertility, the impact it has had, your pain, fears and hopes
- How to reduce your feelings of powerlessness or not being in control
- Your relationship with your partner, and the effect of focussing so intensely on conception
- What to do about your sense of loss and sadness about infertility
- How to make choices, and decisions, when so much is uncertain

Sometimes the issues relate more to how to deal with the outside world:

- How to cope with family and friends' expectations
- How to handle other pregnancies, births and family occasions
- How to juggle work demands and the program – whether and what to tell your work colleagues

Talking together with your partner is often the most supportive thing you can do. Many couples find that coming to see the counsellor reduces anxiety and helps them prepare for various reactions to the steps in the program. It can also increase a sense of working together as a couple towards your goal.

## **Contacting your counsellor**

There is no charge for our counselling service. Interpreters can be arranged if needed. To make an appointment or to discuss your needs please contact

**Sheila Sim**

**Level 3, RHW – Department of Social Work**

**Ph: 02 9382 6670 / 9382 6699 (direct line)**

**Email:**

[SheilaBryce.Sim@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SheilaBryce.Sim@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

The counsellor is also available to help you plan the process of telling your child about how they began, and can help with written and internet resources around this and many other aspects of infertility.

