



## When to Share About Your Infertility Experience

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Experiencing infertility or other family building challenges can be isolating. The question of when to talk to others about it can be complicated. Will it create awkward moments? Will you feel embarrassed? Are you going to feel vulnerable? The answers to these questions are not clear. In part it depends on the other person, but even more so it depends on you. Below are some questions to ask yourself when considering sharing with others.

- 1. Why are you sharing?** We share with our friends because that's what people do. We talk about what is happening in our lives. But infertility is different. Think carefully about what actually you are hoping to achieve by sharing. Here are some good reasons to share. To:
  - Feel connected to people who can support you or to others going through it.
  - Get emotional/spiritual support
  - Have your experience and feelings witnessed
  - Feel comforted
  - Get a reality check
  - Have accountability (for selfcare, treatment, etc)
  - Learn other's perspectives & experiences
  - Learn options and possibilities
  - Get practical support (money, a meal, a ride, distractions)
  - Set your boundaries (sensitivity, baby events, rude people)
- 2. With whom are you sharing?** This becomes a little easier when you know what you hope to achieve by sharing. The question you have to ask and answer honestly is: will you get what you are hoping for from this person? Sharing with your sister to get comfort – will you really get comforted? Sharing with coworkers so they will stop asking – can you set that boundary clearly? Sharing with someone who went through it to learn – will they be giving you advice you don't want? And just because you have started talking does not entitle the other to any information, obligate you to respond to their agenda, or prevent you from changing your mind and stop sharing. Focus on what you want and include those who will help you get it.
- 3. What are you going to share?** No need to share more than necessary. You do not need to answer anyone else's questions. Share only what you are comfortable with sharing in order to get what you need. One nice thing about this list is it gives you ways to tell people what you want! Some people already know and want to help and sharing with this list in mind gives them an idea of how to help. Share enough to get it. You can get more than one thing from someone too. You can share with someone to shore up your selfcare and you also may be able to get a good reality check. If your "who" includes therapists and other professionals, many of them may know resources for you to utilize. If you have a trusting relationship established, then sharing more might get more of your needs met. No need to rush, though. Remember your "why" and keep within your boundaries of comfort.