



A GENTLE GUIDE AFTER A FAILED TRANSFER

*"When the call isn't the
one you were hoping for."*

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This guide is general education and emotional support. It does not replace advice from your GP, fertility specialist or counsellor.

— Kylie Heard
Founder, Nourish to Conceive

A NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

If you're reading this, I'm so sorry.

Maybe you've just received the call.

Maybe you've stared at the email.

Maybe you've seen the blood test result and felt your stomach drop before anyone even explained what it meant.

Maybe you've been crying for hours.

Or perhaps you're completely numb.

Whatever you're feeling right now, I want you to know something:

You do not need to be strong today.

You do not need to have a plan.

You do not need to know what comes next.

You do not need to be positive.

You simply need to get through today.

As a fertility nutritionist and IVF mum, I've spoken with many women navigating infertility. One thing I have learned is that failed transfers can leave a unique kind of grief.

A grief that is often invisible to everyone else.

People may not understand why you're hurting.

But you know.

Because it wasn't "just an embryo."

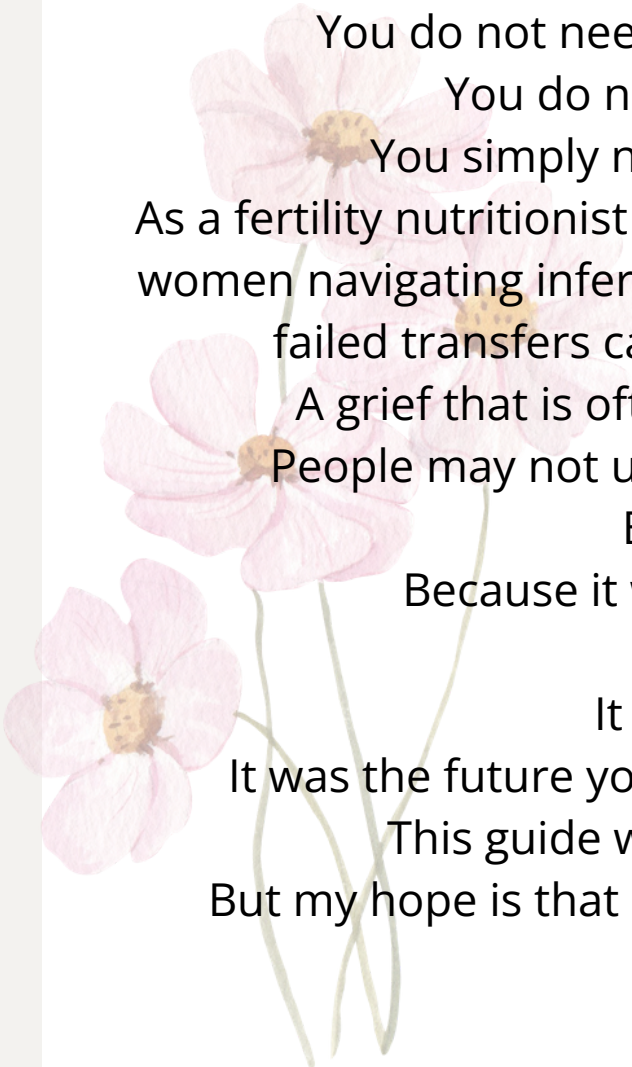
It was hope.

It was possibility.

It was the future you had already started imagining.

This guide won't fix your heartbreak.

But my hope is that it helps you feel a little less alone.



CHAPTER 1

Why This Hurts So Much

One of the most common things I hear after a failed transfer is:

"I feel silly for being this upset."

Let's talk about that.

You are not upset because of a blood test result.
You are grieving because of everything that result represented.

You might be grieving:

- The baby you had already imagined
- The due date you calculated
- The pregnancy announcement you pictured
- The nursery ideas you had saved
- The hope you allowed yourself to feel

Many women tell me they feel embarrassed by how deeply they grieve.

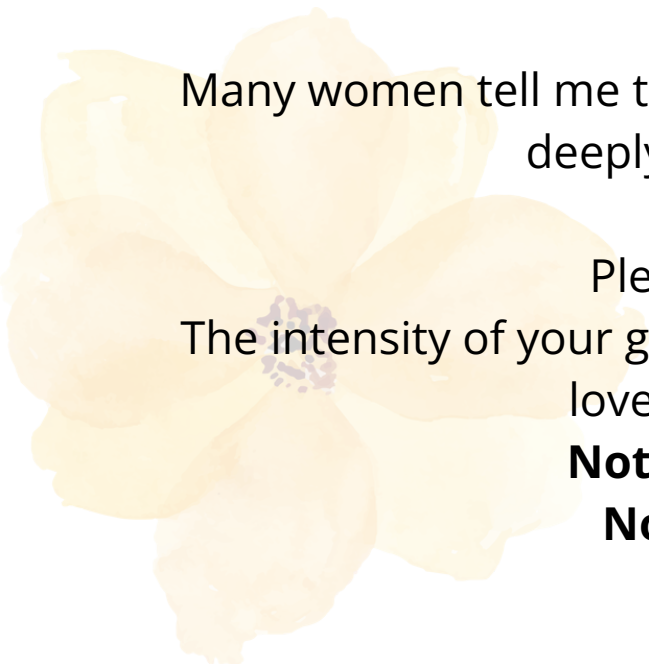
Please don't.

The intensity of your grief reflects the depth of your love and hope.

Not weakness.

Not failure.

Love.



The grief nobody sees

One of the hardest parts of infertility is that it often lacks the recognition other losses receive.

When someone loses a loved one, people send flowers.

They bring meals.

They attend funerals.

They acknowledge the loss.

With infertility, women are often expected to quietly continue with life as though nothing happened.

You may have gone to work the next day.

Packed lunchboxes.

Attended family events.

Smiled when people asked how you were.

Meanwhile, your heart was *breaking*.

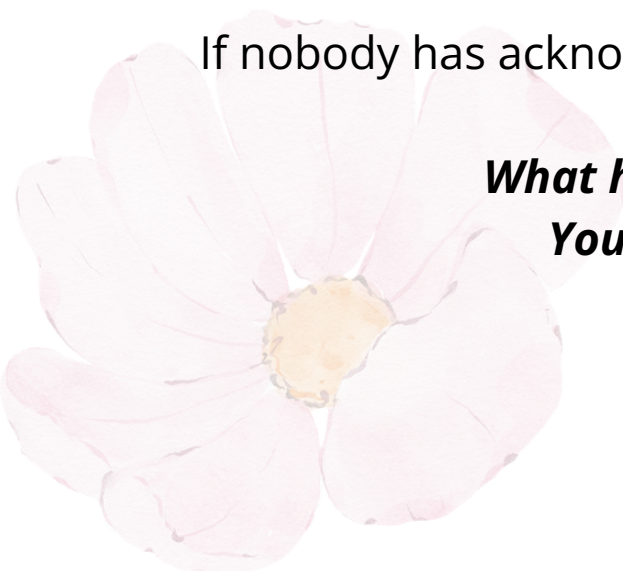
That is incredibly difficult.

If nobody has acknowledged your loss yet, let me do that now:

What happened matters.

Your grief matters.

You matter.



CHAPTER 2

Everything You're Feeling Is Normal

Anger

You may feel angry.

At your body.

At your fertility clinic.

At people who conceive easily.

At pregnancy announcements.

At social media.

At the unfairness of it all.

This does not make you a bad person.

It makes you *human*.

Jealousy

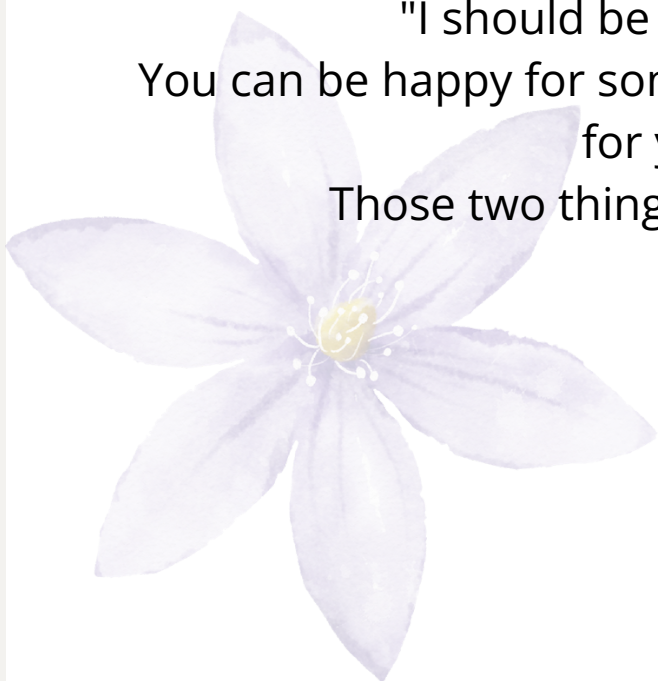
This one carries a lot of shame.

Many women think:

"I should be happy for them."

You can be happy for someone and still be devastated
for yourself.

Those two things can exist together.



Guilt

Did I exercise too much?
Should I have rested more?
Did I eat the wrong thing?
Was it that coffee?
Was it stress?

Most of the time, the answer is no.
Please don't spend the next week searching for the
one thing you did wrong.
Because in most cases, there wasn't one.



CHAPTER 3

What Not To Do This Week

Don't punish your body

After failed transfers, some women immediately decide:

"I need to be stricter."

"I need to lose weight faster."

"I need to cut more foods."

"I need another supplement."

Take a breath.

You do not need to punish your body.

Your body is not your enemy.

It deserves nourishment, kindness and care.

Especially now.



Don't analyse every moment

You may find yourself replaying:

What you ate

What you drank

What you lifted

How stressed you felt

Please remember:

One coffee didn't cause this.

One takeaway meal didn't cause this.

One stressful day didn't cause this.

One missed supplement didn't cause this.

The Shower Trick

If the day feels overwhelming:

Take a shower.

That's it.

Not because it solves anything.

Because it creates a reset point.

Many women tell me this helps more than they expect.

CHAPTER 4

The First 7 Days

Day 1 Goal

Survive.
That's it.
Not heal.
Not move on.
Not make a plan.
Just survive.

Practical ideas:

- ✓ Stay hydrated
- ✓ Eat something every few hours
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothes
- ✓ Cancel unnecessary commitments
- ✓ Cry if you need to
- ✓ Rest if you need to



Day 2 Goal

Nourish.

Simple meal ideas:

Eggs on toast

Greek yoghurt and berries

Smoothie

Soup and bread

Chicken wrap

Toast with baked beans

Not perfect.

Just nourishing.

Have A "Safe Food" List

When appetite disappears, don't aim for perfect nutrition.

Create a list of foods you can usually manage:

- Toast
- Eggs
- Yoghurt
- Fruit
- Smoothie
- Soup
- Crackers

Keep them accessible.

Day 3 Goal

Move

Not because you need to burn calories.

Not because you need to "get back on track."

Not because movement will magically fix how you're feeling.

Move because your body has been carrying a lot.

Today, your goal is simply to reconnect with it.

That might look like:

- ✓ A slow walk around the block
- ✓ Sitting in the sunshine for 10 minutes
- ✓ Gentle stretching
- ✓ Walking the dog
- ✓ A yoga class
- ✓ Dancing in your kitchen

The goal isn't intensity.

The goal is movement.

Research consistently shows that gentle movement can help support mood, reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing during difficult periods.

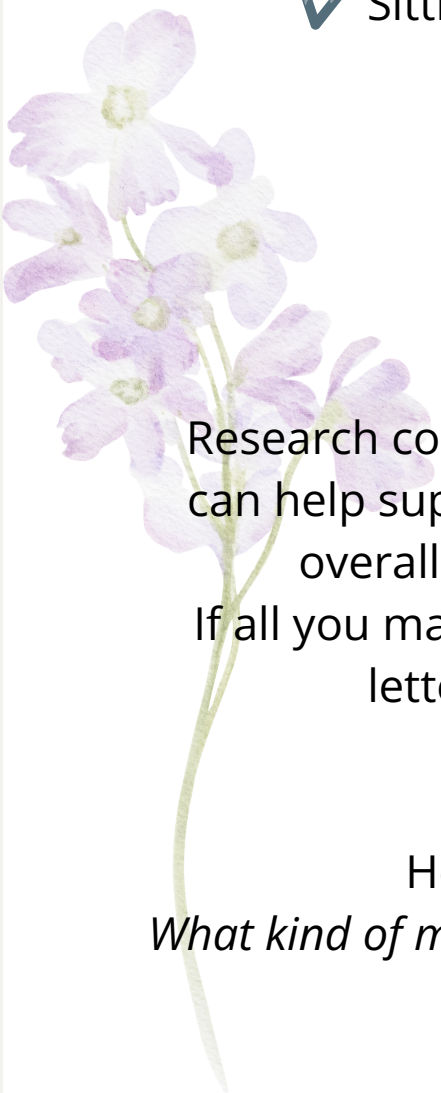
If all you manage today is a five-minute walk to the letterbox and back, that's enough.

Be proud of that.

Reflection:

How does my body feel today?

What kind of movement would feel supportive rather than punishing?



Day 4 Goal

Connect

Infertility can be incredibly isolating.
Failed transfers can feel even more isolating.

Today, your goal is *connection*.

Not fixing.

Not explaining.

Simply connecting.

Reach out to someone who feels safe.

A friend.

A partner.

A family member.

A support group.

A counsellor.

Another woman who understands infertility.

You don't have to carry this alone.

Conversation starters:

♥ "I'm having a hard day today."

♥ "I don't need solutions. I just need someone to listen."

♥ "Can we talk about something completely unrelated to fertility?"

If talking feels overwhelming, try:

- ✓ Sending a text
- ✓ Voice noting a friend
- ✓ Sitting beside someone you trust
- ✓ Joining an online support community

Today's reminder:

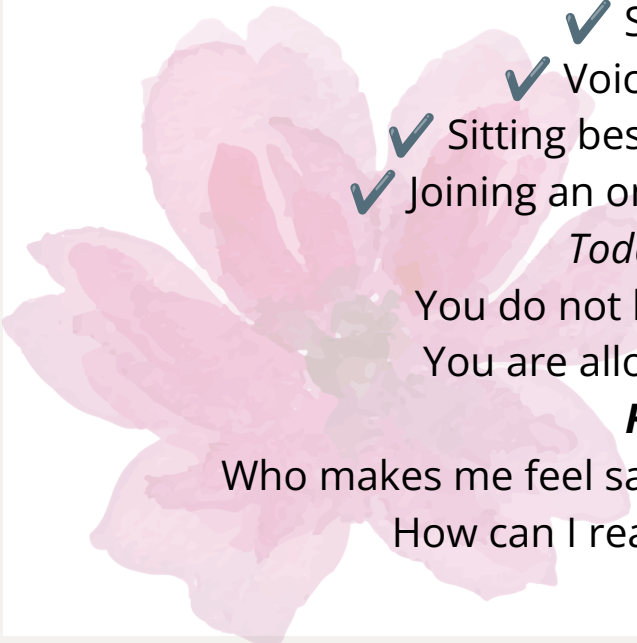
You do not have to earn support.

You are allowed to need people.

Reflection:

Who makes me feel safe, supported and understood?

How can I reach out to them today?



Day 5 Goal

Hope

This can be one of the hardest days.

The initial shock may have worn off.

People may assume you're okay.

Life may have started moving forward again.

But your heart may still feel very heavy.

Today, we're not talking about toxic positivity.

We're talking about hope.

Hope doesn't mean pretending you're okay.

Hope doesn't mean ignoring your pain.

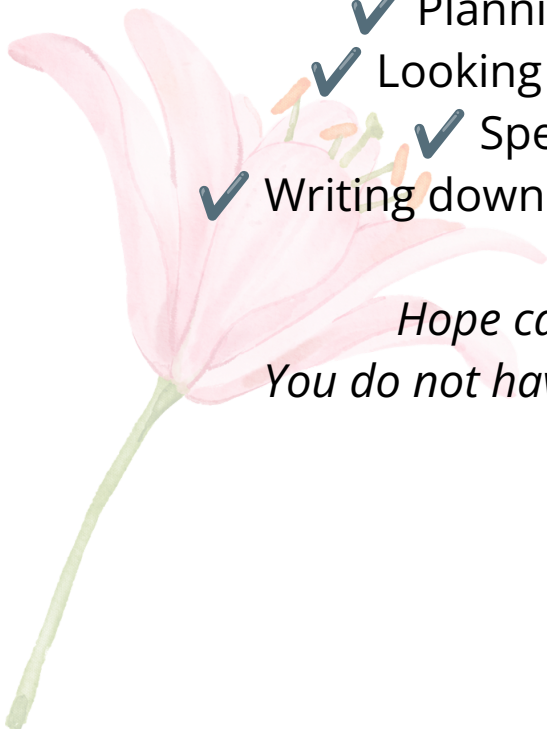
Hope simply means leaving a small space open for the possibility that your story isn't finished yet.

Things that can help today:

- ✓ Reading a book
- ✓ Listening to an inspiring podcast
- ✓ Planning something enjoyable
- ✓ Looking through happy memories
- ✓ Spending time outdoors
- ✓ Writing down three things you're grateful for

Hope can exist alongside grief.

You do not have to choose one or the other.



Day 6 Goal

Plan

You do not need all the answers today.
But sometimes having a plan can help reduce some of
the uncertainty.

Consider:

-  Questions for your specialist
-  Follow-up appointments
-  Blood tests
-  Future treatment options
-  Whether you need a break

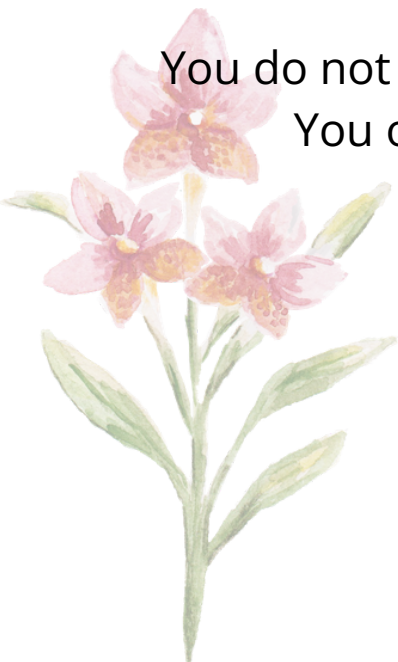
Remember:

Gathering information is not the same as making a
decision.

You are simply collecting pieces of the puzzle.

Today's reminder:

You do not need to know your entire path forward.
You only need to know your next step.



Day 7 Goal

Rebuild

You've survived one of the hardest weeks.
Not perfectly.
Not gracefully.
But you've made it through.
Today is about gently rebuilding.
Not rebuilding your fertility journey.
Rebuilding yourself.

Ask yourself:

What makes me feel like me?

Maybe it's:

- ✓ A hobby
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Reading
- ✓ Gardening
- ✓ Baking
- ✓ Coffee with a friend
- ✓ Time with your partner
- ✓ Time with your children

***Infertility is part of your story.
It is not your entire identity.***



As you move into the coming weeks, I hope you
remember this:

You are still allowed to laugh.
You are still allowed to have fun.
You are still allowed to enjoy life.
Doing so does not mean you cared any less.
It means you're human.

Final Reflection:

What have I learned about myself this week?
What do I need moving forward?
What would I like to leave behind?

And most importantly:

What is one small thing I can do this week that feels
like hope?

Tell Your Partner What You Actually Need

Not:

"I'm fine."

Instead:

"I need a hug."

"I need you to listen."

"I need distraction."

"I need takeaway and a movie."

People can't read minds.

CHAPTER 5

Nourishing Yourself Through Heartbreak

When Food Feels Hard

After a failed transfer, food can become complicated.

Some women lose their appetite completely.

Others find themselves eating everything in sight.

Some swing between both.

The truth is that grief affects appetite differently for everyone.

You may feel:

Nauseous

Hungry all the time

Completely uninterested in food

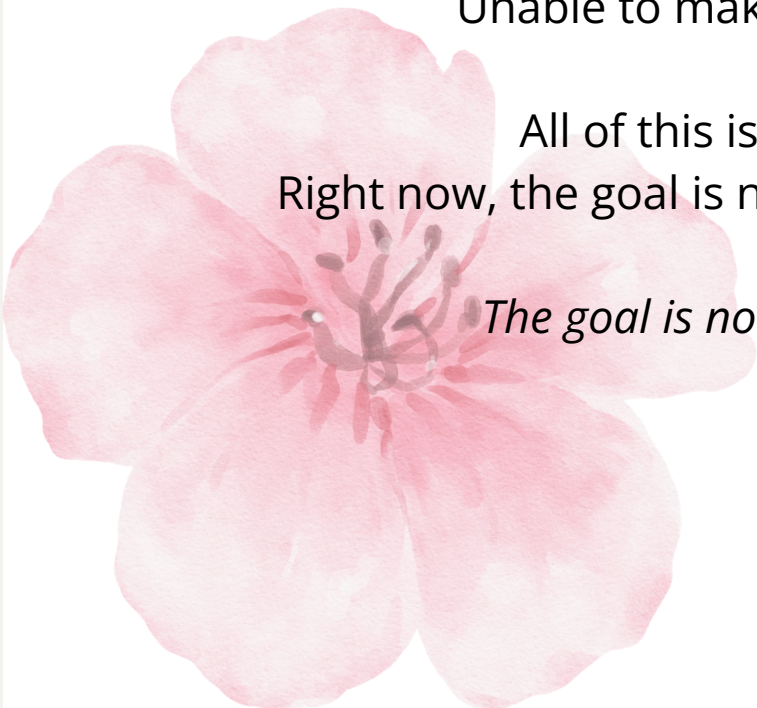
Drawn to comfort foods

Unable to make decisions

All of this is normal.

Right now, the goal is not perfect nutrition.

The goal is nourishment.



You Do Not Need To Earn Your Next Positive Test

One of the most heartbreaking things I see after failed transfers is women deciding they need to become "better."

They tell themselves:
"I need to eat cleaner."
"I need to be stricter."
"I need to lose weight."
"I need to try harder."

Take a breath.

Your worth is not determined by your diet.
You do not need to earn your next positive test.
You do not need to punish yourself.
You do not need to become perfect.



You need support.
You need nourishment.
You need compassion.

The Four Nutrition Priorities Right Now

Priority 1: Protein

Protein supports:

- ✓ Blood sugar balance
- ✓ Stable energy
- ✓ Muscle maintenance
 - ✓ Recovery
 - ✓ Satiety

Simple protein options:

Eggs

Greek yoghurt

Chicken

Tuna

Cottage cheese

Protein smoothies

Tofu

Edamame

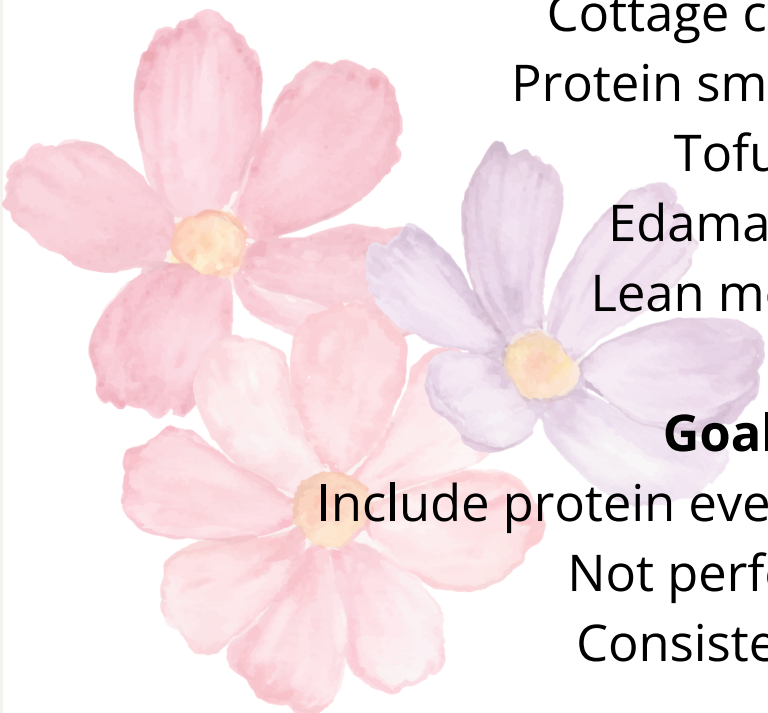
Lean meats

Goal:

Include protein every time you eat.

Not perfectly.

Consistently.



Priority 2: Hydration

Grief is exhausting.
Stress is exhausting.
Crying is exhausting.
Dehydration often makes fatigue and headaches worse.

Simple goal:

Keep a water bottle nearby.
Sip regularly.
Don't overthink it.

Priority 3: Colour

Think:
Berries
Carrots
Capsicum
Tomatoes
Spinach
Broccoli
Sweet potato

Different colours provide different nutrients and antioxidants.

You don't need a rainbow every meal.
Just look for opportunities to add colour where you can.



Priority 4: Consistency

Many women swing between:

"I'll eat nothing."

and

"I've eaten everything."

Try not to judge yourself.

Aim for:

Breakfast.

Lunch.

Dinner.

A snack if needed.

That's enough.

Hard Day Meals

Because some days cooking feels impossible.

Ideas:

🥚 Eggs on toast

🥣 Greek yoghurt, berries and seeds

🥤 Smoothie

🥪 Chicken sandwich

🍲 Soup and bread

🍲 Leftovers

🥔 Baked potato with tuna

Remember:

Fed is better than perfect.



CHAPTER 6

Calming A Nervous System That Feels On High Alert

Why Everything Feels So Intense..

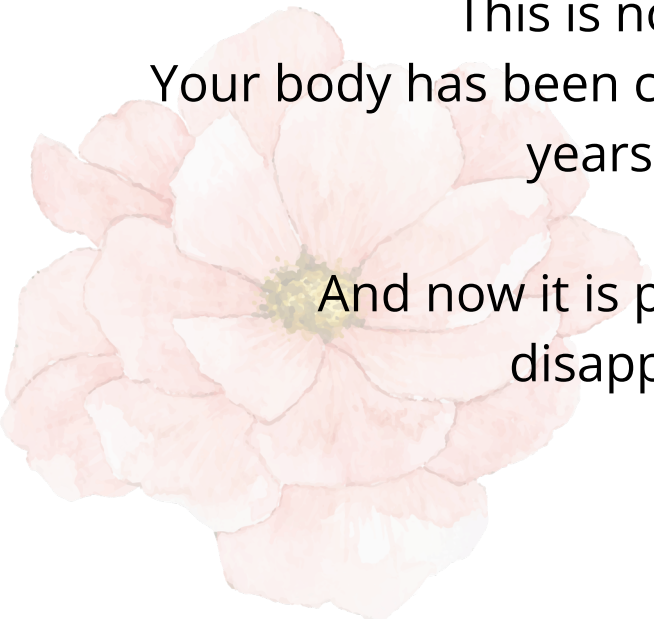
After a failed transfer many women feel:

wired
exhausted
emotional
restless
unable to switch off

This is not weakness.

Your body has been carrying weeks, months or
years of stress.

And now it is processing another
disappointment.



The Stress Bucket

Imagine your stress like a bucket.

Inside the bucket may be:

infertility
work stress
financial stress
appointments
medications
relationship pressure
uncertainty

A failed transfer can feel like the final drop that causes the bucket to overflow.

The answer isn't to become stress-free.

The answer is creating small moments that help empty the bucket.



Nervous System Resets

Choose one daily.

Five Minute Walk

No phone.

No podcast.

Just walk.

Sit In The Sun

10 minutes.

Face towards natural light.

Breathe.

Hand On Heart Exercise

Place your hand over your chest.

Say:

"I'm safe."

"I am supported."

"I can get through today."

Warm Shower

Not productivity.

Not fixing.

Just comfort.

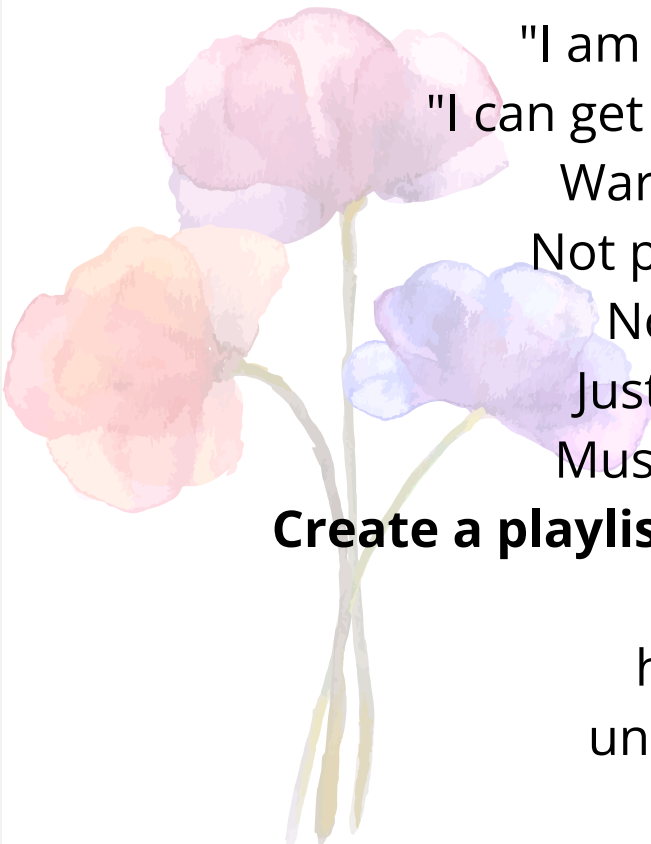
Music Therapy

Create a playlist that helps you feel:

calm

hopeful

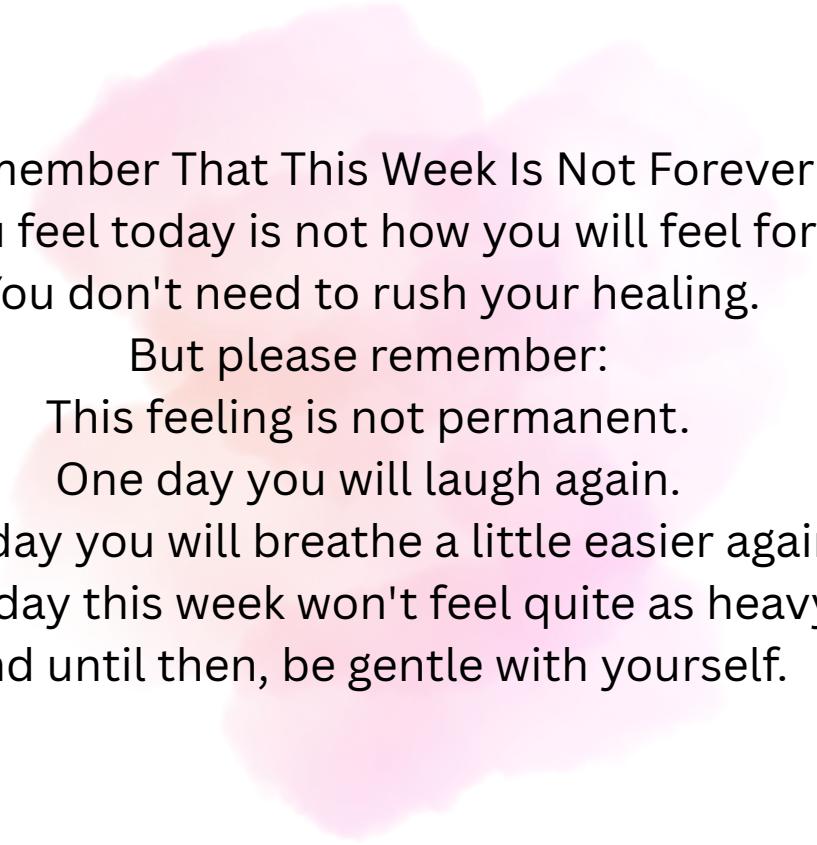
understood



Things That Help More Than You Think

Fresh sheets
Clean pyjamas
A hot drink
A hug
A walk with a friend
A cuddle with a pet
Early bedtime

Simple things matter.



Remember That This Week Is Not Forever
How you feel today is not how you will feel forever.
You don't need to rush your healing.
But please remember:
This feeling is not permanent.
One day you will laugh again.
One day you will breathe a little easier again.
One day this week won't feel quite as heavy.
And until then, be gentle with yourself.

CHAPTER 7

Sleep, Anxiety And The 2am Thoughts

Why Sleep Becomes Difficult

After a failed transfer, your brain often wants answers.

It starts asking:

"What did I miss?"

"What if it never happens?"

"What should I do next?"

Unfortunately, these thoughts often arrive when your head hits the pillow.

The Brain Dump Method

Keep a notebook beside your bed.

Before sleep:

Write down:

worries

questions

reminders

fears

Get them out of your head.

Onto paper.



If You Wake At 2am

Try:

- ✗ Not reaching for Google
- ✗ Not reading IVF forums

Instead:

- ✓ Slow breathing
- ✓ A calming podcast
- ✓ A meditation
- ✓ Reading something comforting

Sleep Support Checklist

- ☐ Dark room
- ☐ Cool room
- ☐ No fertility forums before bed
- ☐ Limit caffeine late in the day
- ☐ Consistent bedtime
- ☐ Gentle evening routine

**Progress.
Not perfection.**



CHAPTER 8

Questions For Your Follow-Up Appointment

One of the most empowering things you can do after a failed transfer is walk into your appointment prepared.

Bring a notebook.

Write your questions down beforehand.

You deserve answers.

Transfer Questions

How did my lining look?

Was the transfer straightforward?

Were there any concerns?

Is there anything you would do differently next time?

Progesterone Questions

Were my progesterone levels optimal?

Should they be monitored differently?

Would you change my support next cycle?

Embryo Questions

What was the embryo grading?

Were there any concerns?

Are there lessons from this cycle?

Investigation Questions

Are there any additional investigations worth discussing?

Have we ruled out endometriosis?

Is thyroid function optimal?

Is vitamin D worth checking?

CHAPTER 9

When You're Not Sure You Can Do This Again

If you've found yourself saying:
"I can't do this anymore."

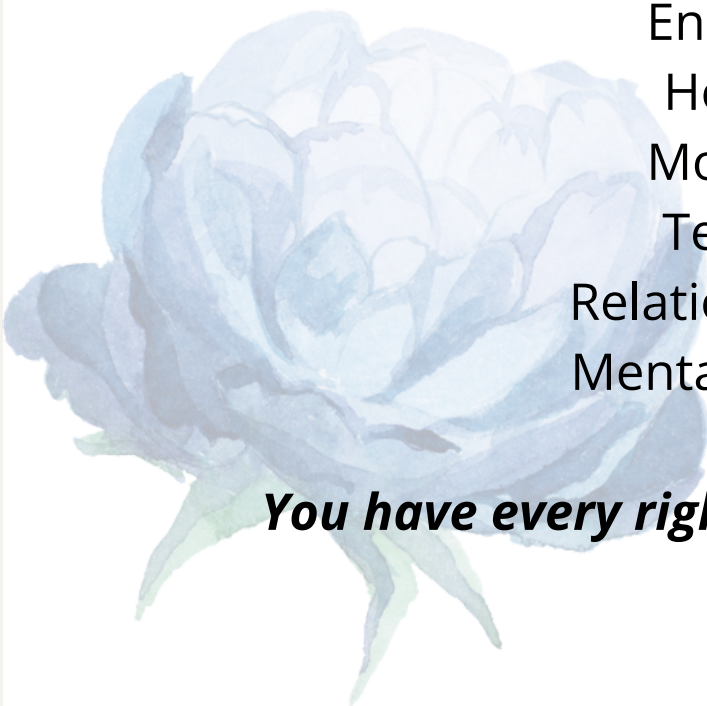
Please know that you are not alone.
This is one of the most common thoughts
women experience after a failed transfer.

And honestly?
It makes sense.

You've invested:

Time
Energy
Hope
Money
Tears
Relationships
Mental space

You have every right to feel exhausted.



The Myth Of Endless Strength

One of the biggest misconceptions about infertility is that women need to be endlessly strong.

They don't.

You are allowed to:

Feel broken

Feel angry

Feel tired

Feel confused

Feel done

Being exhausted doesn't mean you're giving up.
It means you've been carrying something heavy.

Before Making Any Big Decisions

After a failed transfer, try to avoid making major decisions in the first few days if possible.

You don't need to decide:

Whether you'll do another cycle

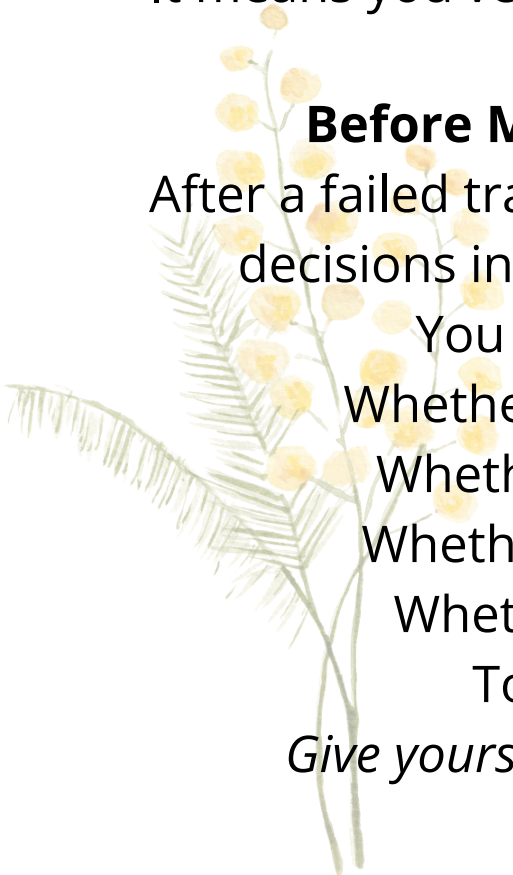
Whether you'll change clinics

Whether you'll stop treatment

Whether you'll take a break

Today is not the day.

Give yourself permission to grieve first.



Questions To Ask Yourself

When you're ready, gently reflect:

What do I need right now?

What feels supportive?

What feels overwhelming?

What would help me feel more informed?

What would help me feel more hopeful?

There are no right answers.

Permission To Pause

A pause is not failure.

A pause is not quitting.

A pause is simply a pause.

Sometimes rest is part of the journey.

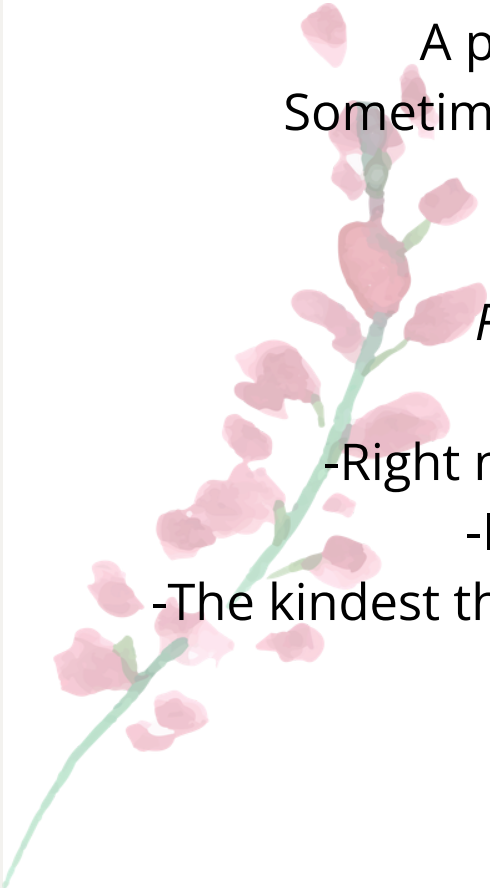
Reflection Exercise

Finish these sentences:

-Right now I need more _____

-I need less _____

-The kindest thing I could do for myself this week
is _____



CHAPTER 10

You And Your Partner Grieve Differently

One of the hardest parts of infertility is that partners often grieve in very different ways.

You may want to talk.

They may want silence.

You may cry.

They may focus on solutions.

You may need comfort.

They may need distraction.

Neither approach is wrong.

They're simply different.

The Most Common Misunderstanding

Many women tell me:

"They don't seem as upset as I am."

The reality is that many partners process grief differently.

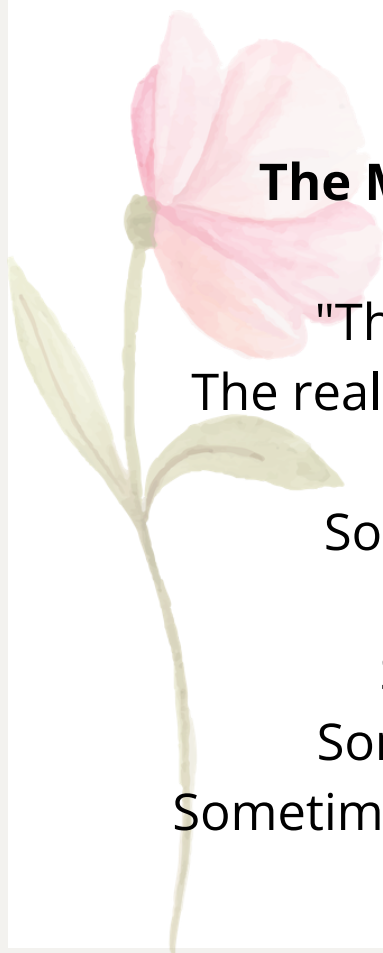
Some throw themselves into work.

Some become quiet.

Some don't know what to say.

Some feel they need to stay strong.

Sometimes what looks like not caring is actually struggling.



Start With Curiosity

Instead of:

"Why don't you understand?"

Try:

"How are you feeling about everything?"

You may be surprised by the answer.

Things To Do Together

Go for a walk

Watch a movie

Order takeaway

Sit in the backyard

Talk about something unrelated to fertility

Not every moment needs to be about treatment.

A Simple Conversation Starter

Ask:

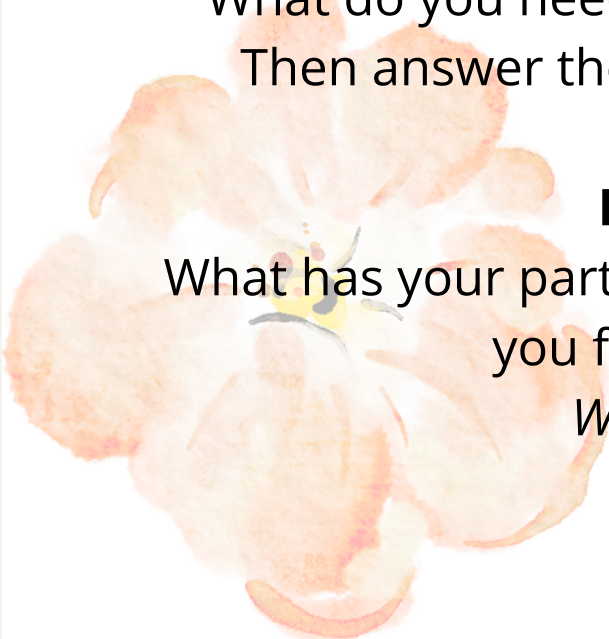
"What do you need most from me right now?"

Then answer the same question yourself.

Reflection

What has your partner done recently that made you feel supported?

Write it down.



CHAPTER 11

When Everyone Around You Seems To Be Pregnant

This chapter is for the women who feel like they
can't escape it.

The announcements.

The baby showers.

The due dates.

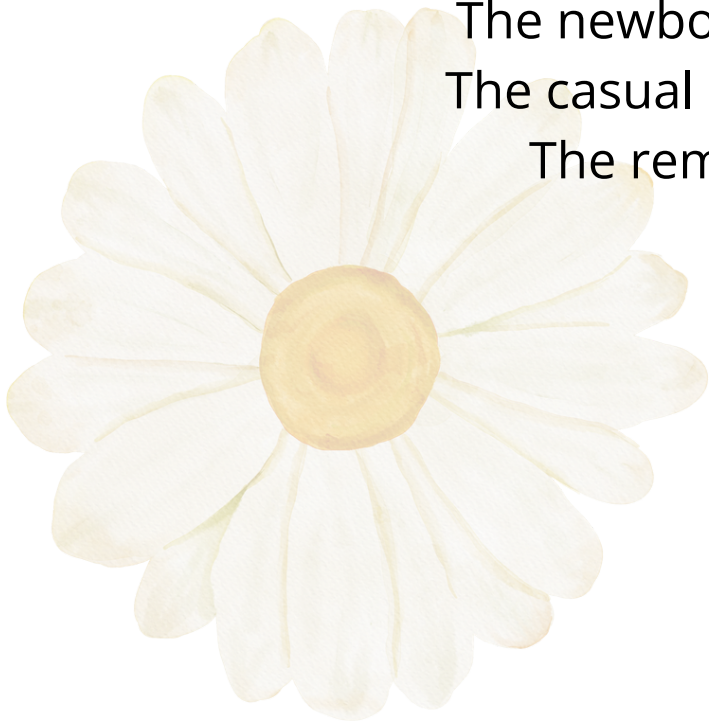
The social media posts.

The gender reveals.

The newborn photos.

The casual comments.

The reminders.



First: You Are Not A Bad Person

Let's get this out of the way.

If you've ever:
Hidden a pregnancy announcement
Muted someone
Skipped a baby shower
Cried after hearing someone's news

You are not a bad person.

You are hurting.
There's a difference.
Two Feelings Can Exist At Once

You can:
Be happy for them.
And devastated for yourself.
Both can be true.



Protecting Your Peace

You are allowed to:

- ✓ Mute accounts
- ✓ Leave groups
- ✓ Decline invitations
- ✓ Step back from conversations
- ✓ Take social media breaks

Protecting your mental health is not selfish.

It's necessary.

What To Say When You're Asked Questions

Some examples:

"When are you having kids?"

"We're hoping for that one day."

"Have you thought about IVF?"

"Yes, we're exploring our options."

"Just relax."

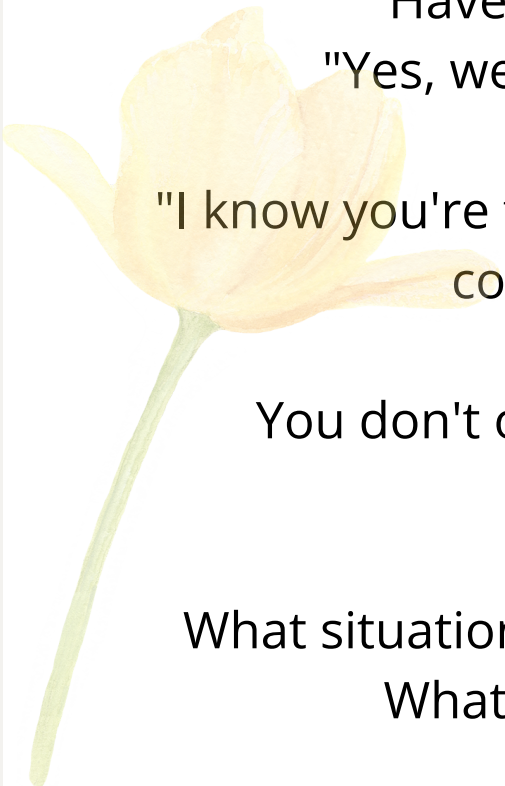
"I know you're trying to help, but it's a little more complicated than that."

You don't owe anyone your entire story.

Reflection

What situations currently feel most triggering?

What boundaries could help?



CHAPTER 12

A Letter To The Woman Reading This

If you've made it this far, I want you to pause for a moment.

Take a breath.

And read this slowly.

Dear beautiful woman,

I know this isn't where you hoped to be.

I know you thought this transfer might be the one.

I know you've probably imagined a hundred different versions of
how this chapter would unfold.

And I know how heavy it feels when reality doesn't match those
hopes.

Right now, you may feel heartbroken.

You may feel angry.

You may feel exhausted.

You may feel completely lost.

Whatever you're feeling, please know this:

You do not need to have it all figured out.

You do not need to know what comes next.

You do not need to be positive every minute of every day.

You do not need to carry this perfectly.

You are allowed to grieve.

You are allowed to cry.

You are allowed to rest.

You are allowed to hope.

You are allowed to protect your heart.

And you are allowed to keep believing in a future that looks
different from today.

Because today is not your entire story.

This moment is not your entire story.

This transfer is not your entire story.

You are still worthy.

You are still enough.

You are still deserving of love, support and compassion.

And no matter what happens next, I hope you never forget how
incredibly strong you've already been.

Not because you've never fallen apart.

But because you've continued showing up, even when things felt
impossible.

Be gentle with yourself.

One breath.

One meal.

One day.

At a time.

I see you

With love,



Fertility Nutritionist | IVF Mum

About The Author

If you've made it this far, thank you for allowing me to spend a small part of this journey with you.

My name is Kylie, and I wear a few different hats.

I'm a fertility nutritionist, an IVF mum, and most importantly, someone who understands that infertility is about so much more than food, blood tests and treatment plans.

Like many women, my own path to motherhood wasn't straightforward.

I know what it feels like to desperately want something that seems to come so easily for others.

I know what it feels like to sit in waiting rooms, count down days, analyse symptoms and carry the emotional weight that comes with trying to build a family.

Those experiences are a big part of why I do the work I do today. As a fertility nutritionist, I support women navigating fertility challenges including unexplained infertility, IVF, PMOS (formerly PCOS), endometriosis, recurrent pregnancy loss and egg quality concerns. While nutrition is a huge part of what I do, I've learned that fertility support is about much more than knowing what to eat. It's about helping women feel informed. Helping them feel heard. Helping them feel empowered to ask questions. Helping them feel less alone. And helping them navigate a journey that can often feel incredibly overwhelming.

One of the things I hear most often from women is:

"I just wish someone had explained that to me."

That's why I created this guide. Not because I have all the answers. But because I know how valuable it can be when someone simply says:

"I understand."

If you're reading this after a failed transfer, please know this:

You are not broken. You have not failed.

And regardless of what happens next, your story matters.

Thank you for allowing me to be a small part of it.

