

# The Positive Reappraisal Technique

## Instructions

This leaflet describes a technique you can use to manage your worries during the IVF cycle. The technique is called Positive Reappraisal technique and was developed by Drs Jacky Boivin and Deborah Lancaster, experts in coping and infertility at Cardiff University.

All situations involve some good aspects and some bad aspects and the aspects we pay attention to often determine how we feel.

Thinking more about the positive aspects of a difficult situation and dwelling less on problems or uncertainties for the future helps people feel better. This is especially true during the challenges of the IVF waiting period when there is not much a person can do to influence the outcome of treatment.

The positive reappraisal technique can help you manage your worries by encouraging you to think positively about the situation you are currently experiencing. In the context of fertility treatment, the positive reappraisal technique involves actively thinking about any positive aspects of infertility or fertility treatment itself.

Thinking about the positive aspects of a difficult situation does not mean pretending that everything is wonderful when you do not feel it is or thinking that you will definitely get pregnant when you feel unsure nor does it mean ignoring all the negative aspects of a difficult situation. What it does mean is choosing to take account of good aspects alongside the more negative aspects of the situation, and reminding yourself that even very challenging situations have some positive elements. Taking the positive aspects into account will help you feel better during the two-week waiting period.

To help people use the positive reappraisal technique we designed a card that contains ten different ways of thinking positively. The statements are general and do not refer to any one specific positive aspect because we know that different people will have different ideas about what is or isn't positive. This small card can be put in a purse or a pocket so you can remind yourself of the positive reappraisal technique whenever and wherever you feel the need.

You should read the statements and think about how each statement applies to you personally. For example, what do you feel you have learnt from this experience? Think about the parts of your experience of infertility or fertility treatment that have led to something positive or some benefit, or that help you to carry on even when the situation gets really difficult.

What do you consider to be some positive aspects of this situation?

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**We suggest that you read the card twice a day, once in the morning and once at night, and then any other time you feel the need.**

As with any new way of thinking and behaving, it can take time for the positive reappraisal technique to become second nature. Thinking differently can feel strange and unnatural at first. However, practice will help so try and persevere. You should find the technique easier the more you practice it and you should then find that you are not dwelling so much on thoughts that worry and upset you.

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## Positive reappraisal coping (RPCI) statements

During this experience I will:

- Focus on the benefits and not just the difficulties
- Try to think more about the positive things in my life
- Try to do something meaningful
- Learn from the experience
- See things positively
- Make the best of the situation
- Look on the bright side of things
- Find something good in what is happening
- Try to do something that makes me feel positive
- Focus on the positive aspects of the situation

