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## COUNSELLING

### INTRODUCTION

Fertility East offers counselling to all patients. This includes some emotional support that patients may require from time to time during their fertility treatment. This service is provided at a fee of \$150 per session. This service may however, be included in the fees of the IVF treatment that are being undertaken and no further payment required.

Fertility East also provides compulsory counselling for all gamete donors and recipients and for patients undertaking the surrogacy program.

Our consultant Fertility East counsellors are Beverley Aronstan and Dorianne Jacobson years. They both have extensive experience as a relationship counsellor and family therapist and are members of ANZICA (Australian & New Zealand Infertility Counsellors Association).

### WHAT IS COUNSELLING?

The RTAC guidelines for counselling stipulate three different kinds of counselling related to assisted reproduction: supportive, therapeutic and implications counselling. For those using donor gametes, including donor eggs, counselling is mandatory. This kind of counselling aims to help the patient understand the implications of using donor eggs, for the recipient couple, the donor couple, and any potential child borne of the treatment. There are also different types of donations, including known, de-identified and anonymous.

The Psychologist meets with the recipient couple, assessing their background and history through interview, and exploring the emotional, social, psychological and legal implications of using donor eggs. Time is spent discussing issues such as their feelings about not being the genetic parent(s) of the child, and the implications of this for the rest of the life of the child, as well as the possible impact of the child's relationship with the biological and non-genetic parent. Marital dynamics are explored, with a focus on the impact of the difference between one parent being genetically related to the child and the other parent not being genetically related.

The current NSW legislation stipulates that children have a right to information about their genetic origins when they turn 18, and these laws are discussed in terms of their impact onto the recipient couple and onto the potential child. Possible changes to these laws are discussed but no direct legal advice is given. The counselling includes psycho-education, as well as information on the research about how and when to tell children that they are donor conceived. Couples are provided with assistance by being linked to relevant resources and support groups.

If the donor is known to the recipient couple, then mandatory counselling includes meeting with the donor couple, the recipient couple, and a joint session to discuss issues such as boundaries, expectations, disclosure and future relationships.

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*Our success is your baby*

Suite 2603, Level 26, Westfield Tower 1, 520 Oxford Street Bondi Junction NSW 2022

PO Box 345 Bondi Junction NSW 1355 • Tel:(02) 9389 1177 Fax:(02) 9387 8580

[admin@fertilityeast.com.au](mailto:admin@fertilityeast.com.au) [www.fertilityeast.com.au](http://www.fertilityeast.com.au)