



JONES FOUNDATION INFERTILITY COUNSELING CONFERENCE 2025 SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am: Breakfast

7:00 am – 5:00 pm: Registration & Exhibitor Show

8:15 am – 8:30 am: Welcome – Andrea M. Braverman, PhD

8:30 am- 9:30 am: Legally Speaking: Updates on The Unsettled and Unsettling State of IVF And ART Law Across The US

Presenter: Susan L. Crockin, JD

Description: In 2024, the legal implications of the reversal of Roe v. Wade continues to reverberate around the country. An Alabama court declared IVF embryos the equivalent of born children, ten states placed protective abortion measures on the ballot, and a myriad of legislative and judicial developments are impacting ART Law, providers and patients. This talk will focus on some of those impacts and what the future may hold.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify continuing unsettled legal issues & vulnerabilities for ART professionals and patients in the aftermath of the Dobbs decision.
- Summarize the impact of disparate state laws on patient decision-making surrounding their cryopreserved embryos.
- Describe the critical need for state specific legal advice for patients pursuing 3rd party ART family building options.

9:30 am – 10:00 am: Fertility: Diet and Supplements and Trying to Conceive

Presenter: Jacqueline N. Gutmann, MD

Description: Individuals attempting to conceive often rely on various online platforms including Google searches, Tik Tok, Instagram and other sources for information. The desire for information is often greater for those experiencing infertility. Patients will do almost anything to achieve success. This is particularly true when it comes to diet and the use of supplements when trying to conceive. This presentation will review the real data regarding the impact of diet and supplements on fertility and fertility treatment.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize the impact of diet on fertility outcomes.
- Describe ways in which supplements may impact fertility.
- Summarize the role of diet and supplements on fertility treatment outcome.
- List three counseling considerations when patients are focused on diet and supplements as part of their fertility treatment.

10:00 am – 10:30 am: Morning Break – Overture

10:30 am – 12:00 pm: Morning Breakout Sessions

Track 1: Basics – Gestational Carrier Evaluations and Intended Parent Psychoeducational Consultations

Presenters: William D. Petok, PhD & Teni Davoudian, PhD, ABPP

Description: This track offers evaluation and consultation skills training with theoretical and logistical elements so that mental health clinicians are better able to provide feedback to reproductive endocrinology programs and patients. Separate components of evaluations, including the role of psychological assessment, and considerations on how to "frame" the evaluation for donors, carriers, recipients and intended parents will be reviewed.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize the use and structure of personality tests in third-party case evaluations.
- Identify key differences in the goals for intended parent consultations and donor/gestational carrier evaluations.
- Discuss strategies for optimal report writing that will enhance utilization for the ART programs and recruiting agencies that receive them.
- Review the implications of ethical issues raised by psychological testing of gamete donors and gestational carriers for professionals in the ART field.
- Describe a framework for providing consultation for those seeking the use of third-party gametes.

Track 2: Psychoanalytic theoretical perspective of fertility, infertility, ART and loss

Presenters: Nancy Kaufman, LCSW and Golzar Selbe Naghshineh, LP, CGP

Description: While addressing behavioral needs and surface level fears and anxieties is crucial in helping patients who struggle with infertility, it is also crucial that we help patients process their deeper unconscious and often conflicting feelings around treatment, failure, loss, inadequacy, and successful pregnancy. This presentation will address the role the unconscious plays in our patients' mental health; how the therapy needs to be a safe place for the patient to say everything without restraint; and understand the roles of transference and countertransference in helping our patients explore all of their feelings around ART. Case presentation will be used to illustrate basic psychoanalytic concepts in practice with ART patients.

Learning Objectives:

- List three psychoanalytic concepts that apply to ART patients.
- Demonstrate three ways psychoanalytic theory can be implemented in practice with ART patients.
- Identify three ways that countertransference feelings can interfere in the treatment of ART patients.

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Hosted Lunch – Balcony

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Dine & Discuss: Career Building for Early Professionals – Discussion with Helen L. Coons, PhD and William Petok, PhD, Assembly G - pre-registration required, limited to 18 registrants

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm: Sperm Banks and The Diversity Problem: Causes and Consequences of The Black Sperm Donor Shortage

Presenter: Alyssa M. Newman, PhD

Description: Although a significant demand for Black sperm donors exists in the US, Black donors make up only 4% of the total donor population in sperm banks across the United States (Moreta et al. 2022). This presentation explores the contours of this disparity from two vantages: factors preventing or facilitating the participation of Black men as sperm donors, and the impact of the Black sperm donor shortage on intended recipients. Possible explanations for current trends include: the speculations of operators of sperm banks that Black men do not contribute their sperm to banks due to medical mistrust, lack of Black representation within sperm bank or fertility clinic staff, the challenges of overcoming the screening process, or lack of awareness about donating options. Unfortunately, these explanations lack the direct input of Black men. Furthermore, Black women, already impacted by exceptionally high and worsening maternal mortality rates, are forced into vulnerable positions when seeking Black donor sperm. Drawing upon survey data from both Black sperm donors, non-donors, as well as intended parents seeking a Black sperm donor, this presentation will explore the causes and consequences of the Black sperm donor shortage in the United States.

Learning Objectives:

- Summarize existing explanations for the challenges associated with obtaining a Black sperm donor in the United States.
- Describe the experiences of intended parents seeking Black sperm donors, and assess various practical, psychosocial, and family consequences of the donor shortage for their reproductive decision making.
- Compare experiences and expectations of various populations seeking donated gametes, especially based on race/ethnicity.

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm: Deconstructing the Family Pedigree: The Complexities of Genetic Screening In Third-Party Reproduction

Presenter: Lauren Isley, MS, CGC

This session will focus on the role and importance of family medical history in gamete donor screening. Common diagnoses and their genetic etiologies, including mental health disorders, will be discussed, as well as best practices for gamete donor screening using a multidisciplinary approach. ASRM guidelines will be reviewed to understand further how the use of genetic screening has evolved to its current use. The talk will also discuss how multidisciplinary collaboration is the best practice for the screening process for gamete donors.

Learning objectives:

- Review current ASRM guidelines on genetic screening of gamete donors, including the “two-pronged approach” of genetic testing and family medical history evaluation.
- Describe the three-generation family medical history and genetics risk assessment process based upon current knowledge around genetic etiologies of common health conditions.
- Summarized family history indicators for referral for genetic screening by mental health counselors.
- Discuss how multidisciplinary collaboration can enhance the genetic screening process of gamete donors.

Describe strategies for providing empathetic, compassionate care, and communicating effectively with individuals and couples experiencing pregnancy loss.

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm: Afternoon Break

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm: Ripped from Your Offices: Ethical and Clinical Considerations in Fertility Counseling
Presenters: Andrea M. Braverman, PhD; Laura Covington, PhD, MSW, LCSW, Nidhi Desai, JD and Wiyatta Fahnbulleh, PsyD

Description: A perennial favorite, this session is practical, instructive, and thought-provoking. We will summarize key ethical issues confronting professionals who provide infertility counseling and offer concrete recommendations on how to think about approaching ethical challenges. Examples include reaching out to more experienced colleagues and professional organizations for consultation, knowing our limits in patient care and what to do when we hit them, self-care strategies, and more. You will leave supported, energized, and better equipped to face those inevitable ethical challenges in clinical practice in the coming year.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify counseling and professional strategies raised by attendee submitted de-identified clinical cases.
- Discuss the clinical, professional and ethical issues raised in these cases for patients and professionals to enhance treatment decision making and reduce clinical and practice management risks associated with ethical challenges.
- Summarize indications for when infertility counselors should seek professional consultation on potential clinical, ethical and practice management risks.

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm: Welcome Reception, The Arts Ballroom, no transportation needed, within walking distance of hotel.

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am: Breakfast

7:00 am – 5:00 pm: Registration & Exhibitor Show

8:15 am – 8:30 am: Welcome Back – Andrea M. Braverman, PhD

8:30 am – 9:30 am: Capturing Complexity: Best Practices in Third Party Psychological Documentation
Presenter: Julia T. Woodward, PhD

Description: This session will focus on the critical elements in Third-Party reproductive assessments, discussing idiosyncratic differences seen in provider reports and analyzing elements which represent best practice. We will discuss the fundamental goals of third-party assessments, the difference between screening and evaluation, how to choose appropriate psychological tests and communicate findings from this testing. Specifically, we will discuss how common elevations in positive impression management are communicated in third-party reproductive evaluation reports. We will review guidelines applicable to third-party assessments from the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology. We will discuss the critical elements of third-party psychoeducation, including lack of anonymity, confidentiality and information sharing, future contact, types of recipient families served, and known psychological and medical risks of participation. Exemplar language for communicating findings in reports consistent with best clinical practice, including how to communicate findings if a candidate is found unsuitable for participation will also be reviewed. Additionally, we will offer sample language utilized in thoughtful consent forms which benefit patients and meet regulatory standards, and consider the multiple potential audiences for data collected, including clinics, agencies, intended parents, donor-conceived persons and the donor or gestational carrier candidate. Standards for information sharing and records release, especially if coordinating between multiple clinics across states will also be reviewed.

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze unique and common elements in Third-Party reproductive assessment reports.
- Describe appropriate language for communicating findings to multiple audiences.
- Discuss information sharing and records release as outlined in comprehensive consent forms and in Third-Party reproductive assessments.

9:30 am – 10:30 am: Psychosocial and Behavioral Research in Reproductive Medicine Made Less Scary

Presenter: Alice D. Domar, PhD

Description: This presentation will begin as a brief “research methods 101” to orient participants to different study designs and the pros and cons of each in reproductive medicine research. Past and current research on psychosocial and behavioral components of infertility, fertility treatment outcomes, and the efficacy of psychological interventions on distress and treatment outcomes will also be highlighted. Different published studies will be presented with “good” and “bad” designs to allow participants to judge the validity of the stated conclusions so that the audience will learn how to read, and study published studies “like an editor”. The designs and goals of the presenter’s current research will be shared, including the cutting-edge use of physiological methods to quantify the impact of psychological distress on patient treatment outcomes. We will also discuss how to initiate research projects in your professional setting. Participants will be encouraged to present their research ideas for group discussion and suggestions for improvement. Outlines of good quality manuscript presentation will be included. Finally, suggestions for how to accurately present current research to patients will be presented with an emphasis on the importance of sticking to science, no clinical experience, potential biases, or impressions.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe the different designs of clinical research on the impact of psychological interventions and their respective strengths and weaknesses to understand how to correctly interpret present and published research.
- Identify the challenges of performing randomized controlled trials on psychosocial and behavioral interventions to improve patient experience during and after infertility care as well as fertility treatment outcomes.

10:30 am – 11:00 am: Morning Break - Overture

11:00 am – 12:00 pm: Breakout 1: [Review separate Breakout Schedule](#)

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm: Hosted Lunch – Balcony

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Dine & Discuss: What’s on Your Mind? – Discussion with Andrea Braverman, PhD and Lisa Rinehart, JD – Assembly G, *pre-registration required, limited to 18*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm: Dine & Discuss: What’s on Your Mind? – Discussion with Susan Crockin, JD and Teni Davoudian, PhD – Chamber Board Room, *pre-registration required, limited to 18*

1:30 pm – 2:30 pm: [Breakout 2 - Review separate Breakout Schedule](#)

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm: [Breakout 3 - Review separate Breakout Schedule](#)

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm: Afternoon Break – Overture

**4:00 pm – 5:00 pm: Report on The ASRM Taskforce on the “Needs and Interests Of Donor Conceived People”:
Process, Findings, Recommendations And Where Do We Go From Here**

Presenter: Lori Pasch, PhD – Symphony Ballroom

In 2022, the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) created a new taskforce charged with helping ASRM clarify and articulate priorities regarding support for the needs and interests of donor conceived people and their families. The taskforce consisted of 15 professionals from REI, mental health, law, nursing, and genetics as well as donors, parents, and donor conceived people. The final recommendations were influenced by review of the research literature, the experiences and expertise of the taskforce members, and systematic incorporation of information generated from stakeholder listening sessions. This presentation will summarize the background, composition, findings, and recommendations of the taskforce and outline opportunities, strategies and challenges regarding implementation and next steps.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the historical background underlying the current practice of gamete donation with attention to parental rights, disclosure of donor origins to Donor Conceived People, donor identification, and contact by the parties.
- Summarize the purpose, process, and recommendations set forth by the ASRM Taskforce on the Needs and Interests of Donor Conceived People.
- Evaluate opportunities, strategies and challenges regarding implementation of next steps in supporting individuals and families from donor conception.

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm: Networking Dinner, Fringe Bar, Transportation provided (Optional event, pre-registration required)

FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 2025

7:00 am – 8:00 am: Breakfast

7:00 am – 12:00 pm: Information Desk & Exhibitor Show

8:15 am: Welcome back – Andrea M. Braverman, PhD

8:30 am – 10:00 am: Patient Panel – Sperm Donors’ Experience Informing Ethical Considerations And Best Practices For Psychological Evaluations And Consultation

Moderator: William D. Petok, PhD

Description: Commercial sperm banks screen candidates for medical health and, in the last 10 years, most sperm banks also screen donors for mental health. A large part of this screening involves implications counseling by mental health professionals. This panel will offer the diverse viewpoints of several adults who donated sperm. These donors will provide unique insight into their experiences which will inform best practices for mental health screening. Sperm donors’ reflections will also highlight ethical concerns and conflicts that have implications for mental health screening and counseling.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe medical and mental health components of screening sperm donors.
- Summarize three ethical concerns and their implications for mental health screening and counseling.
- List indications for when mental health professionals should seek professional consultation for ethical concerns associated with screening sperm donors.

10:00 am – 10:30 am – Morning Break - Overture

10:30 am – 11:30 am: Hidden Wounds: Addressing Mental Health and The Emotional Toll Of Pregnancy Loss And Recurrent Miscarriage

Presenter: Pamela A. Geller, PhD

Description: This presentation will explore the often-profound mental health impact of pregnancy loss and recurrent miscarriage within the broader infertility diagnosis and treatment experience, with a specific focus on emotional well-being and effective mental health treatment approaches. The range of mental health responses, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and prolonged grief, as well as the psychological and social challenges individuals and couples face will be examined. The unique emotional toll of repeated pregnancy loss will also be highlighted as will the compounded trauma that often remains unspoken and unsupported. The session will address evidence-based mental health treatments, including cognitive-behavioral approaches, grief counseling, trauma-informed therapy, and mind-body interventions. The important role of multidisciplinary healthcare professionals in providing empathy, support, and care beyond the immediate physical outcomes will be emphasized.

Learning Objectives:

- Describe mental health challenges associated with pregnancy loss and recurrent miscarriage, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and complicated grief.
- Identify key mental health symptoms and emotional outcomes following pregnancy loss, as well as risk factors that may lead to prolonged emotional distress.
- Summarize evidence-based mental health interventions effective for treatment of mental health responses following pregnancy loss (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy, grief counseling, trauma-informed therapies, holistic approaches such as mindfulness).

11:30 am – 12:30 pm: Do No Harm: Ethical Quandaries in Fertility Counseling

Presenter: Julia T. Woodward, PhD and Teni Davoudian, PhD, ABPP

Description: The focus of this presentation is on ethical dilemmas faced by fertility counselors providing third party reproduction and non-third party services. Balancing the interests of stakeholders and potential ways to approach resolving dilemmas will be discussed illustrated with the use of actual cases. Participants will engage in small group discussion and the presenters will summarize key ethical considerations.

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze the ethical permissibility of restricting/postponing access to fertility services.
- Identify ethical dilemmas that arise when fertility counseling involved interjurisdictional consultation, assessment, treatment and/or reports.
- Describe the ethics and challenges of posthumous reproduction.

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm: NEW Ethical Tips for Mental Health Counseling and Infertility Care for the Road Home

Speakers: Andrea M Braverman, PhD, Susan L. Crockin, JD and William D. Petok, PhD

Description: The landscape of family building continues to be populated by ethical, legal, social, and technological changes that will challenge mental health professionals in their practice. Guiding intended parents through the quagmire of ethical issues involved in those family building choices is demanding and requires the mental health professional to practice their own self-care too to be effective and balance their professional demands with their own personal lives.

Learning Objectives

- Identify key ethical challenges for ART Mental Health Professionals as ART family building options and arrangements continue to expand.
- List clinical, practice management and self-care strategies for meeting emerging ethical challenges in ART

1:00 pm: Conference Concludes