



Mind & Heart on the Journey to Parenthood



A CBT-based resource for navigating the emotional path of trying to conceive

You are not alone. The path to parenthood can be filled with hope, heartbreak, waiting, and uncertainty — sometimes all in the same day. This resource is designed to help you understand how your thoughts affect your emotions, and gently shift patterns that may be adding to your pain.

🗨️ How Our Thoughts Shape Our Feelings

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) teaches us that it's not the situation itself — but how we think about it — that drives how we feel and what we do.

Situation → Thought → Feeling → Behaviour
Changing our thoughts can shift how we feel — and what we do next.

📦 Common Thinking Traps on the TTC Journey

Our minds try to protect us — but sometimes they create patterns that make things harder. See if any of these feel familiar:

Thinking Trap	Sounds Like...	A Gentler Perspective
All-or-Nothing Thinking	<i>"If this cycle doesn't work, nothing will ever work."</i>	This cycle is one data point — not the whole story.
Catastrophising	<i>"I had a miscarriage. My body is broken and I'll never carry a baby."</i>	A miscarriage is a devastating loss — and it does not define what's possible.
Mind Reading	<i>"Everyone at the baby shower feels sorry for me."</i>	I can't know what others are thinking. Most people care about me.
Should Statements	<i>"I should be further along by now. I should feel more positive."</i>	There is no 'should' on this journey. Where I am is where I am.
Personalisation	<i>"This is happening because of something I did wrong."</i>	Fertility challenges happen to people who do everything 'right'. This is not my fault.
Emotional Reasoning	<i>"I feel like it will never happen, so it must be true."</i>	Feelings are real — but feelings are not facts.
Filtering	<i>"Even though I had a positive sign this month, all I can think about is what went wrong."</i>	I can notice the positive alongside the hard. Both can be true.

Your Thought Challenging Worksheet

When you notice a painful thought, try walking through these questions:

1. What is the thought?

Write it down exactly as it appears in your mind. e.g. "This will never work for me."

2. What thinking trap might be at play?

Look back at the table above and see if anything fits.

3. What is the evidence FOR this thought?

Be honest — what facts support it?

4. What is the evidence AGAINST this thought?

What have I survived? What do I not know for certain?

5. What would I say to a close friend thinking this?

Offer yourself that same compassion.

6. What is a more balanced, compassionate thought?

It doesn't have to be positive — just fair. e.g. "This is incredibly hard, and I don't know what the future holds. I am doing my best."

Grounding When Overwhelmed

When anxiety or grief spikes, try:

→ 5-4-3-2-1: Name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.

→ Box breathing: Breathe in 4 counts, hold 4, out 4, hold 4. Repeat.

→ Place one hand on your heart. Say: "This is hard. I am here."

→ Step outside. Feel your feet on the ground.

Self-Compassion Reminders

Grief after miscarriage or failed treatment is real loss. You are allowed to mourn.

Hope and heartbreak can exist at the same time.

You are not 'too sensitive.' This is genuinely hard.

Your worth is not determined by whether or when you conceive.

Rest is not giving up. Setting limits on social events is okay.

Your Values Anchor

When the wait feels unbearable, reconnect with who you are beyond the trying.

Ask yourself:

- ✦ What matters to me beyond becoming a parent?
- ✦ What small act today reflects the person I want to be?
- ✦ What is one thing I can do to nurture myself or my relationship this week?

Remember: Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

This resource is a companion tool — not a replacement for professional care. Speak with your therapist or counsellor if you feel stuck, overwhelmed, or in need of deeper support.