

COPING THROUGH CHRISTMAS

A bit of support to help you through this triggering time xx

*I understand how difficult
this time of year can be...*

...I found myself getting upset around Christmas time, and getting more so with each year that passed without getting pregnant.

I saw Christmas as a milestone that I still didn't have a baby.

Every year I thought 'next Christmas we'll have a baby', so it was hard when Christmas came, but there was still no baby.

There are often lots of family events and it is a time of reflection on what you have done and achieved throughout the year.

This can be difficult as it puts so much focus on children, and it is difficult to avoid.



“—————

You are enough, exactly as you are!

—————”

If you are struggling this Christmas please be kind to yourself...

This time of year, more than ever, it is so important to focus on self-care and the things you do have, rather than the things you don't.

It is easier to cope with things when you are feeling stronger emotionally and taking care of yourself.

If you are struggling this Christmas please be kind to yourself and talk to someone that understands, so you can talk honestly about how you feel and get the support you need.

I wanted to share some tips to help you get through the Christmas holidays. I know how tough it can be, so take small steps and do what you need to do to get through it.



“—————

Be kind to yourself, it's ok to feel however you feel, so don't beat yourself up over it.

—————””

Coping at christmas

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

Allow yourself to feel however you feel, don't beat yourself up over feeling sad/jealous/upset, it's ok and perfectly normal to feel these things. Just acknowledge it and do things that make you feel nice and that make you smile.

PLAN IN TIME FOR SELF CARE

Christmas time is always a busy time of year, with buying presents, trying to see family, getting work complete before time off over Christmas, buying food and hosting visitors. Make sure you are planning time in for you to recharge your batteries in and amongst all the other commitments you have.

MAKE PLANS AS A COUPLE

If you have some time off work, use it to plan in nice trips, things as a couple or with friends that make you feel good, think about some of the things you really enjoy doing and the people you enjoy spending time with, and get some things planned in.

FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU DO HAVE

At this time of year we often reflect of the things we still don't have in our lives, so this year think about the things you do have in your life. Write a thankful list for all the things in your life that are important/special that you are thankful for.

IF YOU'RE NOT DRINKING OVER CHRISTMAS

Rather than organising nights out that focus on drinking, plan in going out for meals with friends where the focus is on food, or suggest doing something different to things you usually do, where drinking isn't the focus.

IF YOU WANT TO HIDE THAT YOU'RE NOT DRINKING

If you do meet up with friends where the focus is on drinking (or when you want to hide the fact you are not drinking), look for non-alcoholic alternatives so can still feel like you are involved, order drinks that you can pretend have alcohol in or confide in a friend you can trust who can pretend to order alcoholic drinks for you (lemonade disguised as gin/vodka etc) or say you're driving as you have a big family event the next day.



Coping at Christmas

TREAT YOURSELF TO SOMETHING NEW

It could be for a Christmas get together, or just generally for over Christmas time. It doesn't need to be expensive or a full outfit, it could be new earrings, a Christmas jumper, a new bag or shoes, etc. Something that will make you smile and feel good about yourself.

TREAT YOURSELF TO THE IVF POSITIVITY PLANNER

The planner helps you focus on the good things in your life, and it helps you plan some goals for the things you'd love to do. Treat yourself to the planner as a little Christmas gift to yourself, so you can go in to the New Year feeling positive and looking forward to spending more time on yourself.

THINK ABOUT GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR

Think about what you would like to do next year or something you would like to achieve. Once you have thought about things you would like to achieve, you can make a list of actions about how you can achieve it, it will give you a focus and help you feel more in control of your life.

GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO MISS EVENTS

If your close family know you are struggling to conceive you can explain that you find those events difficult at the minute and that you need to look after your emotional well being. If they don't know what you are going through, you could maybe make up an excuse as to why you can't go, if you would prefer that. Just remember it's ok to say no, to protect your emotional wellbeing!

DODGE 'THE' QUESTION

You will always get some family member or friend asking 'THE' question at family gatherings. Have a think about an answer beforehand so you are not caught out having to think on the spot. You can then reply and move on quickly. Think about the level of detail you want to disclose and what you would feel comfortable saying.

START NEW TRADITIONS

Create a tradition as a couple or with your friends that you can continue over the years. This will help to make Christmas time about the memories you make with your friends and partner, rather than it all being about families.



Coping at Christmas

FOCUS ON OTHERS

It's really important to look after yourself at Christmas time, but helping other people is a great way to make yourself feel good, keep busy and make a difference to someone else's life.

USE YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

If you are having a bad day, call a friend or family member that understands and just say you are feeling sad and just need a hug or someone to listen to you. There are support groups that are a great source of support and understanding. Please reach out if you are struggling, you are not alone and you will not be the only one feeling wobbly.

IT'S OK TO COME OFF SOCIAL MEDIA

Give yourself permission to come off social media for as long as you need to over Christmas time. If you're struggling with seeing pictures of Santa visits and matching PJs, remember that you get to choose the things you let in to your life, the things you see and read, and that you need to protect yourself and your emotional well being.

REMEMBER IT'S OK TO SAY NO

Christmas time can be overwhelming, so it's more important than ever to prioritise your emotional well-being. Only you can decide what you feel up to and what you need to do to protect your emotional health, so don't be afraid to say no, to set your boundaries and stick to them.

IT'S OK IF YOU NEED TO NOT SEE FRIENDS WITH CHILDREN

it's ok if you don't want to see friends with babies....Just in case you needed to hear this...

I know that it can be a reminder of all you don't have and that you still want, and that it can be confusing knowing what you want to do.

It's ok to say no to going to things that will be too hard, it's ok to make up an excuse if you don't want people to know why you don't want to go. It's ok to not want to hold your friends babies.



You are welcome to join my free support group **TTC Support UK** for more support over Christmas time xx

My coping over Christmas plan...



What things do I find triggering at Christmas time?



What can I do to help when I feel triggered, or how can I avoid them?



What or who will help me cope when I feel triggered?



How do I want to feel at Christmas time?

My coping over Christmas plan...



Who would I like to spend time with over Christmas time?



What things can I plan with...

- My other half...
- My friends...
- My family...



How do I want to redefine Christmas?



What new traditions can I start?

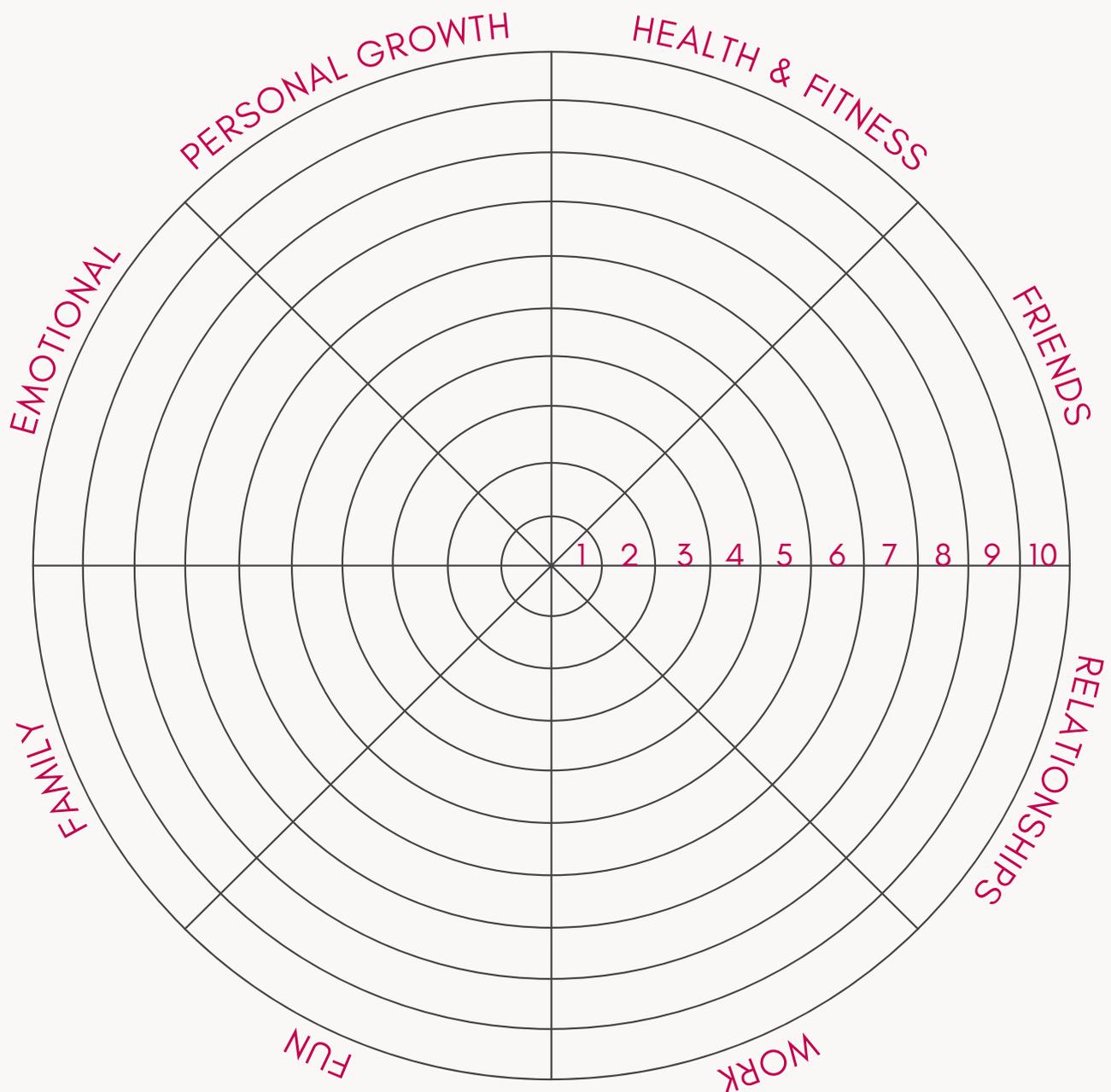
WHEEL OF CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS TIME IS A OFTEN A TIME OF REFLECTION, AND THE WHEEL OF CHRISTMAS IS A GREAT TOOL THAT HELPS YOU LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE SO YOU CAN THINK ABOUT WHICH AREAS YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE AND HOW YOU CAN DO IT.

THINK ABOUT THE 8 LIFE CATEGORIES BELOW, AND RATE THEM FROM 1 - 10.

THEN THINK ABOUT 2 ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE IN EACH AREA TO TAKE THEM A POINT OR TWO HIGHER.

IT DOESN'T NEED TO BE ANYTHING BIG, JUST SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER AND HELP YOU TAKE CONTROL IN THE NEW YEAR.





WHEEL OF

CHRISTMAS

YOU CAN WRITE YOUR ACTIONS DOWN HERE, AND WHY NOT WRITE A DATE YOU'LL DO THEM BY TO HELP YOU KEEP ON TRACK.

Health and fitness

Friends

Relationships

Work

Fun

Family

Emotional

Personal Growth



I'M STILL HERE FOR YOU...

If you have found it helpful to focus on you and take back some control using this booklet, then you can continue to get this support and more through my IVF Positivity Planner. You can grab a copy at www.positivityplanners.com

You are welcome to join my free Facebook support group TTC Support UK to get support from thousands of others who completely understand.

I share lots of support and advice on my Instagram account @ivfpositivityplanner so follow me there for more support.

You can always message me on the group or Instagram, or email me at sarah@sarahbanks.coach if you need some support.

Take care and happy Christmas, love Sarah xx