Free Mini Course for mental health and fertility

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Looking within for the answers

FERTILITY IN A PANDEMIC: During lockdown, the world stopped – and so did access to fertility treatments, tests and investigations. Women could no longer rely on blood tests or scans; they just had to be. And not being able to take action and seek outside help is often a scary place to be.

But we all have the opportunity in these extraordinary times to start looking inside for answers rather than outside. Put it this way: if we don't go within, we go without.

Rather than living in fear, what if we started to trust the wisdom of our own bodies? What if we were to reconnect with our bodies on a deeper level?

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound impact on fertility and IVF related anxiety and stress. Women can no longer access fertility treatments, tests and investigations or rely on routines blood tests or scans; they just have to be. The mind can have a very powerful influence on the whole process of conception. Negative thoughts, emotions and behaviours can lead to increased anxiety and depression and sabotage goals to conceive. This is what has led Zita West to launch HUG, a new fertility service born out of lockdown to help women combat the heightened stresses and strains that fertility and IVF can bring whilst we live in this pandemic – and once we come out the other side of it as well.

Zita West says, "The pandemic has added a huge layer of change and stress for women trying to conceive. Not being able to take action and seek outside help is often a scary place to be. We are living through a time of tremendous change both socially and digitally, and as a result, women have become disconnected from their bodies. They rely on apps, gadgets and gizmos to seek knowledge about fertility. HUG has been created to help show women how to look inside themselves (rather than outside) and to trust in the wisdom of their own bodies in order to reduce stress and anxiety, let go of fear and help increase their fertility, IVF and their overall wellbeing. Never has our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing been so important."

Join Zita West on the 13th January for a FREE mini version of her HUG course via Instagram Live.

WHAT IS HUG? HUG stands for heart, uterus and gut. HUG is a transformational set of coaching tools, techniques and guided visualisations, delivered through an easy to access online course. Through breathwork and guided visualisations, HUG shows women how to tap into the powerful biology within their heart, uterus and gut and embrace the natural intelligence of their body to help them overcome fears, challenges and reduce stress, for optimal health and fertility.

Neuroscience and ancient Chinese wisdom form the basis of HUG, and the concept follows from the work done by Grant Soosalu, which Zita has adapted for fertility, IVF and pregnancy. The brain can grow neurons and neural networks by learning new skills such as languages. When you're learning you are thinking about

what you're doing and making synaptic connections; the brain is primed for new experiences. When we focus and repeat our new skill, our brain changes. If you keep repeating, you extend the neural network. So, changing the way you think means your new thoughts make new connections.

You can also strengthen neural pathways negatively and positively by thoughts. If you are positive and happy, you strengthen these pathways positively; if you are negative and stressed you strengthen them negatively.

"HUG is all about how to communicate and connect the mind and body. HUG provides you with techniques through breathing and visualisation to communicate and connect with your mind and body, tapping into the different functions of each neural centre and communicating with the brain, the heart, the solar plexus, the gut, the uterus and the pelvic area. I want to help women to experience this and help them know that the answers lie within." Explains Zita.

HUG will:
• Help you to understand how to connect with your inner wisdom
• Give you the knowledge on how to talk to your body
• Create a grounding daily practice to keep you centred and be able to set your agenda for the day, every day
• Describe how to practise breathing at intervals throughout the day to put you into parasympathetic mode
• Give you tools and techniques to use in everyday life.

Tips on how to manage fertility issues in a pandemic from Zita West

"I have always been a big believer in mindset when trying to conceive naturally or through IVF. Learning to manage your thoughts and emotions, and dealing with uncertainty are key to dealing with stressors. My mini course will help give you a framework and structure"

1. Focus your mind and set your thoughts and emotions. Become aware of the patterns, the frequency and the feelings you are experiencing that dominate your world. HUG offers a set of tools to help you feel more centred and more in control with simple breathing techniques.

2. Become aware through guided visualisation. The effects and connections to the mind and body via the autonomic nervous system will switch your body through breathing into a relaxation mode.

3. Create daily ritual routines. This is becoming increasingly important during this time – stillness, mediation, movement, cooking…finding some form of creativity is important. Limit your use of digital media to certain times of the day, so try not to reach for your mobile as soon as you wake up. Sit and centre yourself for the day - the first thought you wake up with determines your day and sets the mood. Doing this will help centre you, although it can be difficult to break this habit. I find the best way is to leave your devices out of the bedroom.

4. Build your energy reserves. Get enough sleep, go to bed early and get out in nature to balance your serotonin levels. Be disciplined! Movement and exercise are really important.

5. Take supplements. At the moment, Vitamin D is especially important – it's the powerhouse of the immune system. But you also need a good multivitamin with Folate as well as an Omega 3 supplement.

Zita West says, "Your body has great wisdom if you listen to it, you just have to know how to start the conversation. Yes, the science and evidence are important, but when it comes to trying to conceive, IVF and pregnancy, it's all about mindset and mental and emotional blocks. By showing women how to connect with their bodies, they can transform their mindset and everything else falls into place. When the mind learns how to listen to the body's wisdom, magic happens."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

** Links to research:
1. Study finds the uterus plays a role in memory,: https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323999
2. Your gut is directly connected to your brain, by a newly discovered neuron circuit|Science|AAAS - https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/09/your-gut-directly-connected-your-brain-newly-discovered-neuron-circuit
3. Head, Heart, and Gut in Decision Making: Development of a Multiple Brain Preference - Grant Soosalu, Suzanne Henwood and Arun Deo - https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244019837439

For information, imagery and interviews please contact Sofie Franklin on sofie@frankmedia.me

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