
Professional Certificate in Reproductive Psychology

Introduction to Reproductive Psychology

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Reproductive psychology is a specialized field within psychology that focuses on the study of human reproduction, including the psychological aspects of fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum experiences. This glossary aims to provide a comprehensive overview of key terms and concepts related to reproductive psychology for learners in the Professional Certificate in Reproductive Psychology course.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) refers to medical procedures used to help individuals or couples conceive a child when they are experiencing fertility issues. ART includes techniques such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), and gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT).

Bioethical Considerations

Bioethical considerations involve ethical principles and values related to reproductive health and technology. These considerations guide decisions about the use of reproductive technologies, genetic testing, and other interventions to ensure that they are morally acceptable and respect the rights and well-being of individuals involved.

Contraception

Contraception, also known as birth control, refers to methods or devices used to prevent pregnancy. There are various forms of contraception, including hormonal methods (e.g., birth control pills, patches, injections), barrier methods (e.g., condoms, diaphragms), and long-acting reversible contraceptives (e.g., intrauterine devices, implants).

Delayed Childbearing

Delayed childbearing refers to the trend of individuals choosing to have children at an older age than in previous generations. Factors contributing to delayed childbearing include pursuing education or career goals, financial considerations, and advancements in fertility treatments that allow for later reproduction.

Embryo Adoption

Embryo adoption involves the transfer of frozen embryos donated by individuals or couples who have undergone in vitro fertilization (IVF) and have remaining embryos. The recipient then carries and gives birth to the adopted embryo, becoming the biological parent of the child.

Family Planning

Family planning is the process of making informed decisions about when to have children, how many children to have, and spacing between pregnancies. Family planning services provide individuals and couples with information and access to contraception, fertility treatments, and reproductive health care.

Gamete Donation

Gamete donation involves the contribution of sperm or eggs from a donor to help individuals or couples conceive a child. Donated gametes are often used in assisted reproductive technologies such as artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization (IVF) to facilitate pregnancy.

High-Risk Pregnancy

A high-risk pregnancy is one that poses potential health risks to the mother, fetus, or both due to pre-existing medical conditions, maternal age, multiple pregnancies (e.g., twins, triplets), or complications that arise during pregnancy. High-risk pregnancies require specialized medical care and monitoring to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Infertility

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive a child after one year of regular, unprotected intercourse. Causes of infertility can be related to female factors (e.g., ovulatory disorders, tubal blockages), male factors (e.g., low sperm count, sperm motility issues), or a combination of both partners' reproductive health.

Jealousy in Pregnancy

Jealousy in pregnancy refers to feelings of envy or resentment experienced by partners, family members, or friends in response to a pregnant woman's attention, care, or changing relationships. Jealousy can arise from fears of being replaced or neglected as the focus shifts to the expectant mother and the impending arrival of a new family member.

Knowledge Gaps in Reproductive Psychology

Knowledge gaps in reproductive psychology refer to areas of research or practice where limited information or understanding exists regarding the psychological aspects of reproduction, fertility, pregnancy, childbirth, or postpartum experiences. Addressing knowledge gaps through research and education is essential for advancing the field of reproductive psychology.

Lactation Consulting

Lactation consulting involves providing support, education, and guidance to breastfeeding mothers to help them establish and maintain successful breastfeeding relationships with their infants. Lactation consultants are trained professionals who assist with breastfeeding challenges, such as latch issues, milk supply concerns, and breastfeeding positions.

Miscarriage

A miscarriage, also known as a spontaneous abortion, is the loss of a pregnancy before the fetus can survive

outside the womb, typically occurring within the first 20 weeks of gestation. Miscarriages can be caused by genetic abnormalities, hormonal imbalances, maternal health conditions, or unknown factors.

Neonatal Psychology

Neonatal psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on the psychological development, behavior, and well-being of newborn infants during the neonatal period (the first 28 days of life). Neonatal psychologists study how infants perceive and interact with their environment, form attachments, and regulate emotions.

Obstetric Violence

Obstetric violence refers to disrespectful, abusive, or coercive behavior experienced by pregnant individuals during prenatal care, labor, childbirth, or postpartum care. Examples of obstetric violence include non-consensual medical interventions, verbal abuse, physical restraint, and denial of informed choice in maternity care settings.

Perinatal Mood Disorders

Perinatal mood disorders are mental health conditions that can occur during pregnancy or within the first year postpartum, including depression, anxiety, and postpartum psychosis. Perinatal mood disorders can affect maternal well-being, infant development, and family dynamics, requiring timely assessment and treatment.

Queer Reproductive Health

Queer reproductive health refers to the unique experiences, needs, and challenges related to reproduction and fertility for individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, other sexual orientations, gender identities). Queer reproductive health may involve assisted reproduction, adoption, surrogacy, or other pathways to parenthood.

Reproductive Justice

Reproductive justice is a framework that emphasizes the intersectionality of reproductive health, rights, and social justice, addressing inequalities based on race, class, gender, sexuality, and other factors. Reproductive justice advocates for access to comprehensive reproductive health care, autonomy, and dignity for all individuals.

Stress in Pregnancy

Stress in pregnancy refers to psychological or emotional strain experienced by expectant mothers due to various factors, such as work pressures, relationship conflicts, financial worries, or health concerns. Prolonged or severe stress during pregnancy can impact maternal health, fetal development, and birth outcomes.

Termination of Pregnancy

Termination of pregnancy, also known as abortion, refers to the intentional ending of a pregnancy through medical or surgical means. Termination of pregnancy can be elective (chosen by the individual) or therapeutic (recommended for medical reasons), and access to safe and legal abortion services is essential for reproductive autonomy.

Unintended Pregnancy

An unintended pregnancy occurs when a pregnancy is either mistimed (occurring earlier or later than desired) or unwanted (not intended at all). Unintended pregnancies can result from contraceptive failure, inconsistent contraceptive use, lack of access to contraception, or other factors, highlighting the importance of family planning and reproductive health education.

Vaginismus

Vaginismus is a female sexual dysfunction characterized by involuntary muscle spasms in the pelvic floor muscles, causing pain, discomfort, or difficulty with vaginal penetration during sexual activity or gynecological exams. Vaginismus can be triggered by psychological factors, trauma, or physical conditions, requiring multidisciplinary treatment approaches.

Well-Woman Care

Well-woman care involves preventive health services and screenings tailored to the unique needs of women across the lifespan, including reproductive health exams, cancer screenings (e.g., mammograms, Pap tests), contraceptive counseling, and menopause management. Well-woman care promotes overall health and wellness for women of all ages.