



A Fertility Support
SG Initiative

fertility

Support Guide

A Guidebook for Employers
to support employees facing
fertility challenges

foreword

At Fertility Support SG, we believe that no one should walk the path of fertility challenges alone. Many of us know the heartache, the hope, and the quiet struggles that come with this journey.

That's why we exist – to offer support, understanding, and a voice to those who need it.

When we asked our community what would make the biggest difference, one answer stood out: the workplace. So many face this journey in silence at work, worried about being misunderstood or overlooked.

That's why we've created this guidebook.

Simple, practical steps to help employers build kinder, more supportive spaces. Because everyone deserves to feel valued, at work and beyond.

If your organisation is looking for support in taking the next step, we're here to help. Fertility Support SG works directly with employers to bring this guidebook to life - through workplace talks, roundtables, and roadshows.

We also host in-person meetups to create safe spaces for honest conversation.

Please reach out to us if you'd like to explore how we can support your team.



Shumin Lin
President
Fertility Support SG

foreword

At Fertility Support SG, our mission has always been to support individuals and couples navigating the complex and often emotional journey of fertility treatment.

Over the years, we've seen firsthand how this experience can deeply affect both personal and professional lives. Many face the challenge of balancing demanding treatment schedules with work responsibilities, and some encounter bias or even discrimination in the workplace due to time taken out for medical appointments.



Simran Toor
Board Member
Fertility Support SG

This guidebook - the first of its kind in Singapore - reflects our commitment to fostering fair, inclusive, and compassionate workplaces. It aims to provide a roadmap of support to employees during one of the most vulnerable periods of their lives.

The need for this guidebook has never been timelier. With the passing of the Workplace Fairness Act in 2025, there is a renewed emphasis on building fair and harmonious workplaces. The Act underscores the importance of protections against workplace discrimination so that everyone has the opportunity to thrive at the workplace.

But supporting employees through their fertility journey is not only a matter of fairness - it's a strategic imperative. Employers who embrace inclusive practices are better positioned to retain top talent, boost morale, and cultivate a loyal, motivated workforce.

We hope this guidebook serves as a catalyst for meaningful change by encouraging employers to proactively build a workplace culture rooted in empathy, inclusivity, and respect.

Together, we can make a lasting difference and set a new standard for workplace support in Singapore.



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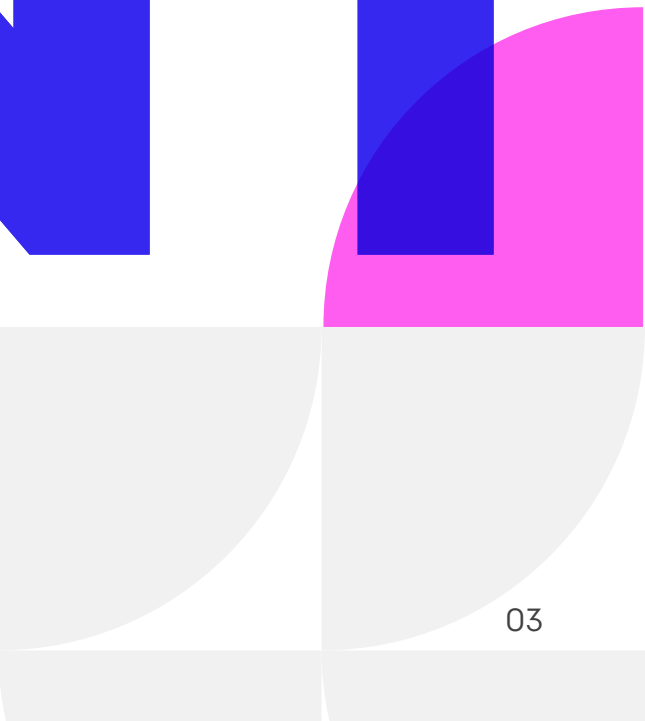
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TENT



O1 Intro *duction*

There is a
concerning gap
between what is

needed



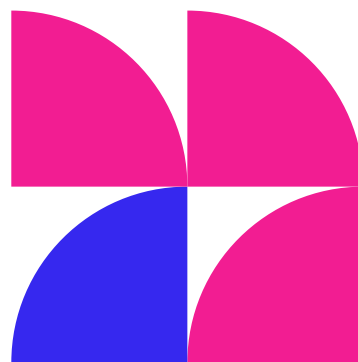
reality



Purpose

Through the years of engagements with our Fertility Support SG (FSS) community members, we hear that many choose to suffer in silence fearing that speaking up at work could expose them to stigma, judgment, or unintended career consequences.

Without a safe and supportive space to share, the topic remains unspoken. At the same time, many companies have not yet recognised fertility as part of their inclusion and wellbeing agenda.



While efforts toward diversity and family-friendly policies are growing, fertility remains a blind spot.

This guidebook aims to bridge that gap. We look to company leaders to use this guidebook as a practical resource to understand, implement, and advocate for fertility support in the workplace.

We want to help leaders create a culture where fertility challenges are acknowledged with empathy, and where every employee feels respected, supported, and safe to speak.

And beyond guidance, we hope it is a catalyst — to question assumptions, enhance policies, and co-create a future where no employee in Singapore has to choose between career and family.

Lastly, the guidebook encourages a shift in mindset — toward creating workplaces that are not only inclusive and progressive but aligned with Singapore's broader goals of supporting sustainable population growth and workforce resiliency.

How to use

Whether you are a Company Leader, a HR Professional, a Diversity & Inclusion Executive, a Team Manager or navigating your personal fertility journey while at work, **there is something in this guidebook for you.**

If you are a Company Leader, HR Professional, Diversity & Inclusion Executive, your leadership voice is crucial in signaling that fertility support is not merely an HR issue, but a core element of sustainable business and inclusive growth.

Use this guidebook:

- To align fertility support with your company's employee well-being philosophy and values, and to drive the change to cultivate or strengthen a workplace culture of care
- As a blueprint for implementation by reviewing the recommendations within
- Use the reflection prompts and awareness-raising materials provided to facilitate internal dialogues about fertility stigma

If you have a colleague who is undergoing fertility treatment, know that fertility journeys can be physically and emotionally taxing, and many individuals—both women and men — go through them quietly, fearing stigma or misunderstanding in the workplace.

As a peer, your awareness and sensitivity can make a meaningful difference in your colleague's experience. This guidebook offers you valuable insights into how to be a supportive, respectful, and informed teammate.

If you are someone undergoing or about to begin a fertility journey while continuing to work, this guidebook is here to support you. Fertility journeys can be deeply personal, unpredictable, and emotionally demanding—especially when balanced alongside professional responsibilities. We want to acknowledge what many employees go through silently— and offer practical, policy-based, and emotional support tools to help you feel less alone.

Setting
the

context

02

Fertility: The Rising Urgent National Agenda

Fertility challenges are becoming an increasingly prominent concern across the globe, with declining birth rates and delayed family-building emerging as key demographic issues in both developed and developing nations.

In Singapore, the situation is particularly pressing. The national Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell to a historic low of 0.97 in 2023 [according to Department of Statistics Singapore]— well below the replacement level of 2.1—underscoring a long-term trend of later marriages, smaller families, and postponed parenthood due to career, financial, and lifestyle considerations. The decline underscores a significant demographic trend, with implications for Singapore's population growth and workforce sustainability.

As more individuals and couples encounter difficulties conceiving, the demand for fertility treatment and support has grown, often intersecting with professional lives and workplace demands.

This is no longer a private or isolated issue—it is a social and economic challenge that cannot be ignored at the national level. Addressing fertility holistically, including within the workplace, is increasingly seen as essential to building an inclusive, sustainable future for Singapore.

Why Fertility Support Matters at the Workplace

Fertility is a deeply personal yet increasingly relevant workplace issue—one that affects not just women, but also men navigating the emotional, physical, and financial challenges of starting or expanding a family.

Treatments such as IVF, IUI, egg freezing, and other assisted reproductive technologies (ART) often require time off, emotional resilience, and financial resources—all of which can

directly impact an employee's work life. Fertility-related support include but are not limited to these—funding coverage, fertility leave, and emotional wellbeing services. Without adequate workplace support, employees may suffer in silence—leading to stress, burnout, absenteeism, and even attrition.

Therefore, workplaces play a pivotal role in enabling employees to pursue parenthood without compromising their careers.

* Reflection Prompt

Are you aware of employees undergoing fertility treatment?

Do you know their struggles, if any? Is a zero-sum game?

Are your employees forced to choose between family planning and career?

Why Should Companies Care?

While fertility journeys are tied to the individual, they also carry implications for the workforce and your people strategy. Challenges in this space can impact the health, productivity, and engagement of your workforce.

Supporting employees through their fertility journeys is a way for companies to contribute meaningfully to the broader societal goal of encouraging family-building, while also enhancing your reputation as an employer of choice. It benefits both the employee and the business.

1

Strengthens Talent Attraction and Retention

Fertility support signals a long-term investment in employees’ lives beyond work. Therefore, considering offering fertility benefits is a competitive differentiator, especially for employees in their prime family-building years.

In Singapore, **41%** of Poll respondents reported that infertility treatment affected their work. **13%** stopped work entirely, **17%** took on less work and **11%** changed to a less demanding role (FSS Poll, 2025).

58% of survey respondents said they would be more likely to join a company offering fertility benefits, and **41%** indicated that such benefits would have a positive impact on employee retention (Milieu Survey, 2025).

2

Enhances Employer Brand and Corporate Reputation

Companies that offer fertility benefits show empathy and inclusivity—qualities that today’s workforce values deeply.

By supporting employees through one of life’s most personal and challenging journeys, companies:

- Enhance their image as a caring and forward-thinking employer.
- Position themselves as a great place to work—especially for top talent in their prime working and family-building years.
- Stand out in a competitive job market where benefits beyond salary are increasingly important.

3

Fosters an Inclusive and Equitable Culture

Fertility challenges affect people of all genders, backgrounds, and family structures. Recognising and supporting diverse paths to parenthood advances equity and psychological safety.

35% of survey respondents shared that they did not tell their workplace about their treatment. **77%** of survey respondents perceived a trade-off between work and pursuing fertility treatments (Milieu Survey, 2025)

* Reflection Prompt

What is your company's philosophy on employee wellbeing?

Can employees bring their whole self to the workplace without being judged or penalised?

4

Reflects Evolving Social Norms

Modern employees expect employers to support more than just their careers—they want support for holistic life goals. These expectations reflect broader social shifts where family-building support is increasingly viewed as a standard part of employee wellbeing.

More than **50%** of survey respondents believe employers should offer fertility leave and flexible treatment support. (Milieu Survey, 2025)

Fertility support isn't just compassionate — it's smart business. It builds trust, supports wellbeing, and helps companies stay relevant in a changing workforce landscape.

Understanding

Fertility Journeys

03

Fertility 101: What Every Employer & Employee Should Know

Fertility is the ability to conceive and carry a pregnancy to term.

While it is often taken for granted, **fertility is not guaranteed** — and for many individuals and couples, the path to **parenthood involves medical, emotional, and logistical challenges.**

Understanding the basics of fertility is the first step toward creating an inclusive and supportive workplace.

What is infertility:

Infertility is typically defined as the **inability to conceive after 12 months** of regular, unprotected sexual intercourse.

In some cases, medical evaluation may be recommended earlier (e.g. after 6 months) for women over 35 or those with known medical issues.

Facts:

- Fertility struggles are more common than you think **(1 in 6 couples* experience infertility)**
- Fertility challenges affect both women and men
- Fertility treatment is **time-intensive** and **unpredictable.**
- Fertility struggles can lead to **stress, anxiety, and depression, relationship strain** and **financial pressure**

* SingHealth Website:
<https://www.singhealth.com.sg/symptoms-treatments/male-infertility>

A Typical

fertility

Journey Timeline ● ● ●

The journey often includes **multiple stages** that can span **months or even years**, often requiring regular **medical appointments**, **physical recovery**, and **emotional resilience**.

1 Trying to Conceive Naturally

(0 – 12 months)

Workplace impact:

Usually minimal at this stage; employees may not require workplace accommodations

2 Seeking Medical Advice

(After ~12 months of unsuccessful attempts)

Initial consultations with fertility specialists

Diagnostic tests for both partners (bloodwork, hormone levels, semen analysis, ultrasounds, etc.)

Workplace impact:

Occasional time off for medical appointments and diagnostic procedures

3 Initial Treatment Options

(~3 – 6 months)

Depending on diagnosis, treatments may include fertility medications to induce ovulation, Intrauterine insemination (IUI), surgical procedures (if applicable)

Workplace impact:

More frequent medical appointments, possible side effects from medications (fatigue, mood changes, physical discomfort)

The Journey **Continues**



4 In vitro fertilisation (IVF)

(After ~12 months of unsuccessful attempts)

Each IVF cycle typically involves 6 steps with varying durations depending on the specific circumstance of each individual:

- Pre-cycle preparation (1–2 weeks)
- Ovarian stimulation (10–14 days)
- Egg retrieval procedure (1 day)
- Fertilisation & embryo development (3–5 days)
- Embryo transfer (1 day)
- Two-week wait for pregnancy test

Workplace impact:

Intensive daily treatments and frequent monitoring, emotional highs and lows, uncertainty, and physical side effects from medication

5 Pregnancy

(If successful)

May involve high-risk pregnancy monitoring if applicable, and employee may experience additional anxiety, especially after previous fertility struggles

Workplace impact:

May require early or more frequent medical leave for appointments due to medical complications

6 Unsuccessful Cycles

(Pregnancy Loss)

May involve high-risk pregnancy monitoring if applicable, and employee may experience additional anxiety, especially after previous fertility struggles

Workplace impact:

May require early or more frequent medical leave for appointments due to medical complications

7 Alternative Family-Building Options

(Timing Varies)

Donor eggs/sperm, adoption, or decision to remain child-free

Workplace impact:

Varies depending on pathway chosen, may require additional time, legal or administrative processes

Imagine this at your workplace



A young executive, Mei Ling, in her early 30s, quietly starts IVF treatment.

She schedules her injections before dawn, her appointments during lunch hours, and her recovery after office hours.

She tells no one at work, fearing that her boss will think she is “less committed”.

Her teammates only see that she seems tired lately.



And there is Priya, who suffered a miscarriage at 9 weeks. She is struggling with grief and trying to process what has happened.

But she has to return to work two days later and act as if nothing has happened, because she is worried that her absence will affect her team’s view of her.

* Reflection Prompt

**Are these situations
happening at your workplace?**

How can you prevent them from repeating?

Then there is Daniel and Sarah, a couple in their late 30s, who have gone through **four unsuccessful rounds of IVF.**

Each time, they come into the office smiling the next day, trying to carry on with their work while **silently grieving the loss of hope,** again and again.

Melvin sees his wife **suffering daily injections,** and the **emotional roller coaster** of IVF.

He wants to play his part and accompany her to the almost daily check ups.

But he **doesn't know how to raise this** to his boss to ask for time off.

Sarah's boss was understanding.

For the first two rounds of IVF, she was supportive of the frequent check ups.

But both rounds failed.

Now, as Sarah embarks on her third round of IVF, she **worries about stretching the limits** of her boss' patience by asking for yet more flexibility.

I was seen as

*emotionally
unstable*



incompetent

due to fertility issues



Common Fertility Challenges

The taboo nature of infertility in our local context remains a key reason that companies and employees shun away from speaking about it at the workplace, deeming it being inappropriate.

Did you know?

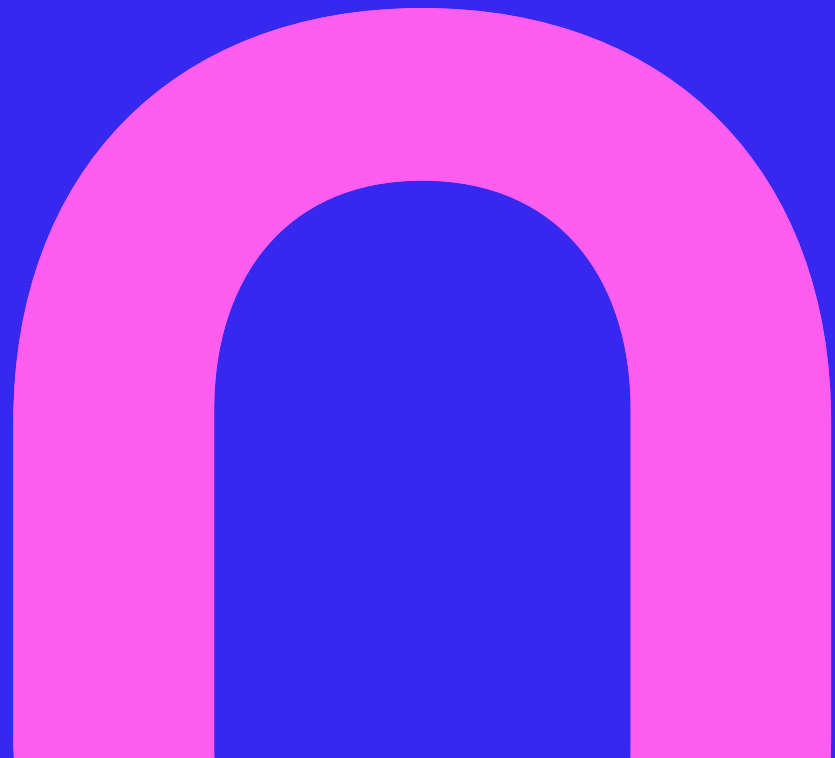
Fertility treatments can be **physically demanding**, **emotionally complex**, and **time-consuming** for employees.

A. Physical Challenges	B. Emotional Challenges	C. Financial Challenges	D. Career Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue, hormonal mood swings and other body discomfort (nausea, bloating, abdominal discomfort, headaches) from fertility medications, injections, and procedures• Recovery periods after egg retrieval, embryo transfers, or minor surgical procedures• Increased health risks or complications during pregnancy after assisted conception	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety, worry, and constant emotional rollercoasters during treatment cycles• Grief and sadness after unsuccessful cycles or pregnancy loss• Feelings of isolation due to reluctance to share struggles openly• Strained relationships due to prolonged fertility challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High out-of-pocket costs for fertility treatments (especially at private clinics)• Limited or no insurance coverage for certain procedures• Additional costs for supportive services (counselling, supplements, genetic testing, etc.)• Loss of income due to unpaid leave or reduced working hours during treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fear of stigma or judgment from colleagues and supervisors• Fear of negative impact on career progression or being perceived as “less committed”• Being treated differently as a result of sharing openly• Guilt for taking time off or burdening teammates• Stress of balancing work responsibilities with personal treatment schedules• Discomfort in navigating HR systems that require disclosure of sensitive information

Building a

fertility ~ inclusive

workplace



What Support Do Employees Value The Most?

- 1

Paid or unpaid leave for fertility treatments
- 2

Financial support for fertility treatments (e.g. IVF)
 - Health insurance coverage for fertility treatments
 - Direct financial support (reimbursement for treatments)
 - In-house fertility counseling and resources
- 3

More access to fertility treatments (e.g. co-pays with more clinics)
- 4

Focus on flexible working arrangements
 - Flexible work hours for fertility- related appointments
 - Telecommuting / remote work
- 5

Mental health and counselling support

	Fertility-Friendly	Family-Friendly
Primary Focus	Supports employees in conceiving and building a family, often addressing infertility.	Supports employees in caring for and raising a family, often after children are born.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coverage for IVF, IUI, egg/sperm freezing• Fertility testing• Fertility leave• Access to counseling or fertility clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parental leave (maternity/paternity)• Childcare support• Flexible work arrangements• Caregiving leave
Target Group	Individuals or couples trying to start a family, including those facing infertility or delaying parenthood.	Individuals or families with children or dependents already.
Timing of Support	Pre-parenthood phase: planning, trying to conceive, or preserving fertility.	Parenthood phase: managing responsibilities after birth or adoption.
Common in HR Policy?	Less common; often seen in progressive or fertility-friendly companies.	More widely adopted; often aligned with national labor or family protection laws.

*Reflection Prompt

We believe there is a difference between Fertility-Friendly and Family-Friendly policies.

Are you wondering if your company's policies are sufficient to address fertility needs?



I had
no support
at the workplace
because fertility
treatment was deemed
a distraction

What Role Can An Companies Play in Supporting an Employee's Fertility Journey?

Companies should create inclusive, respectful workplaces that support employees through all life stages, including family-building.

Providing fertility support in the workplace is multi-faceted, combining policy, culture, leadership, and empathy.

- 
- A** Demonstrate leadership commitment
 - B** Implement fertility-related policies
 - C** Provide financial and practical support
 - D** Equip managers with training
 - E** Protect confidentiality and privacy
 - F** Create a safe and supportive culture

With any of the above measures, you do not have to reinvent the wheel.

Seek out partnership support such as from Fertility Support SG and clinics.

A

Demonstrate leadership commitment

What to consider?

When leadership openly supports fertility-friendly initiatives, it sends a strong signal that employee wellbeing is valued. Leadership sponsorship is key to making these initiatives sustainable and embedded into the company's values. multi-faceted, combining policy, culture, leadership, and empathy.

What does action look like?

- Publicly endorse fertility-friendly workplace values
- Appoint senior leaders to sponsor fertility support initiatives
- Embed fertility support into the company's overall wellbeing and inclusion agenda
- Raise awareness amongst upper-level management on fertility matters

B

Implement fertility-related policies

What to consider?

Policy is the starting point for any organisation wanting to provide fertility support to their employees.

It's often the first port of call for those needing fertility treatment, providing a clear signal as to whether their workplace recognises and supports this significant life event.

Choose either an informal guidance document or a formal policy, setting out the specific support on offer, whilst signposting to extracts from existing policies.

Either can work equally well, and we encourage these to be written in the tone of voice of the organisation empathy.

What does action look like?

- Develop a comprehensive fertility policy which clearly outlines an employee's entitlements in respect of fertility support
- Provide flexible work arrangements (e.g. hybrid work, adjusted hours)
- Introduce specific fertility leave or allow the use of existing leave for treatment
- Allow flexibility for short-notice medical appointments tied to treatment cycles

Examples of policies:

- Paid leave for ART appointments (e.g. 2 days per IVF cycle)
- Partner leave to accompany spouse for procedures
- Flexible scheduling or remote work during treatment cycles

C

Provide financial and practical support

What to consider?

Where possible, companies can include fertility-related benefits in their health plans, such as coverage for assisted reproductive treatments, counselling, or reimbursement for treatment-related expenses.

Even small gestures, like paid time off for appointments, can make a meaningful difference.

Note: Individuals can receive up to 75% in co-funding from Government for Assisted Contraception Procedures at public Assisted Reproduction (AR) Centres, and can tap on MediSave to offset the cost of these procedures. Co-funding at public AR centres and MediSave use is also extended to mainstreamed pre-implantation genetic testing.

What does action look like?

- Explore adding fertility treatment coverage (e.g. IVF, IUI, elective egg freezing) into employee medical plans
- Offer reimbursement or subsidy programmes for fertility-related expenses
- Provide access to counselling, mental health, and emotional support services

Examples of Fertility Treatment Reimbursement:

- Co-pay or full coverage for fertility treatments (IUI, IVF). Coverage can be by lumpsum, lifetime limit or number of cycles
- Reimbursement for fertility testing, egg freezing, or counselling
- Group insurance riders for fertility care

D

Equip managers with training

What to consider?

People managers are often the first line of support. Training them to respond with empathy, discretion, and flexibility ensures that employees receive appropriate support from their direct supervisors.

What does action look like?

- Train managers to respond empathetically and confidentially
- Equip HR with guidelines to handle disclosures appropriately and provide consistent support
- Include fertility topics as part of broader manager training on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Conduct specific workshops and seminars to educate employees about infertility and ART

E

Protect confidentiality and privacy

What to consider?

Companies should ensure clear processes to handle sensitive disclosures, protect employee privacy, and avoid unnecessary disclosure of medical or personal information.

What does action look like?

- Create clear protocols for handling personal medical information
- Ensure that information shared remains confidential and protected
- Respect employee privacy at every stage

F

Create a safe and supportive culture

What to consider?

Companies play a crucial role in normalising fertility conversations and reducing stigma.

This means fostering an environment where employees feel safe to share their fertility challenges without fear of judgment, gossip, or negative career consequences.

What does action look like?

- Promote open, stigma-free conversations around fertility
- Communicate that seeking fertility support does not affect performance evaluations or career progression
- Implement wellbeing initiatives such as mentoring and support groups
- Celebrate Fertility Awareness Week
- Ensure that information shared remains confidential and protected
- Respect employee privacy at every stage

* Reflection Prompt

What is the profile mix of your company's employees?

Does it include white-collar and blue-collar workers, frontline versus back-office workers?

What measures would best suit these profiles?

It is important to recognise that each profile has different needs and would require differentiated fertility support measures.

For example: A white-collar worker may need remote work/flexi-hours or workload adjustments, whereas a blue-collar worker may need established shift-swapping policies and processes or early clock-out with no penalty.

I felt like I was done a
favour by my manager to
leave for appointments
instead of a right to do so.
And it was

stressful



Starting Point: How Can Your Company Begin?

We recommend the following key steps to become more fertility-friendly.

1 Secure Leadership Buy-in

- Educate senior leadership on the business case: talent retention, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) impact, and wellbeing outcomes
- Identify an executive sponsor to champion fertility-friendly initiatives
- Align with broader HR, DEI, or wellbeing strategies

2 Assess Current Gaps and Employee Needs

- Conduct internal surveys or focus groups to understand current challenges and needs
- Review existing policies (leave, benefits, insurance, flexibility) to identify gaps
- Benchmark against best practices in fertility-inclusive workplaces

3 Take Action to Implement

- Prioritise a list of changes to HR policies and align on implementation timeline (short to long term horizon)
- Coordinate cross departments. For example:
 - HR: Policy design, communication, training
 - Finance: Budgeting and claims
 - Legal: Discrimination safeguards, privacy protection
 - Payroll: Processing ART-related claims
- Reach out to Fertility Support SG to request for awareness roadshows and education material for internal manager training
- Add fertility under diversity and inclusion initiative

4 Communicate Clearly and Compassionately

- Update employee handbooks, intranet, FAQ
- Announce policies through multiple channels such as townhalls, emails or employee portal
- Launch internal campaigns to de-stigmatise fertility conversations

5 Monitor, Measure and Evolve

- Track uptake of fertility-related benefits and leave
- Collect employee feedback regularly
- Adjust policies and training based on evolving needs and experiences

TIP: Start small, scale smart

Companies do not need to implement everything at once. Even if full insurance coverage isn't possible immediately, offering flexibility, training, and empathy costs little — but makes a big difference.

Over time, build progressively based on employee needs.

Fertility-Friendly Workplace Checklist

Once your company has decided to embark on your fertility-inclusiveness journey, use this checklist as progress tracker.

Leadership Commitment

- ✓ Senior leadership is briefed on Singapore's declining fertility rate and workplace impact
- ✓ An executive sponsor is appointed to champion fertility support as part of HR/DEI/wellbeing strategy
- ✓ Fertility support is endorsed in company values or leadership communications

Manager and HR Readiness

- ✓ Managers are trained on how to respond empathetically to fertility-related disclosures
- ✓ HR is equipped to answer questions on leave, confidentiality, and insurance claims
- ✓ Protocols are in place to ensure privacy and discretion when handling fertility-related issues

Policy and Benefits

- ✓ Dedicated fertility leave (paid or unpaid) is available separate from standard medical leave
- ✓ Flexible work arrangements (e.g. hybrid, staggered hours) are offered for fertility appointments or recovery
- ✓ Fertility treatment coverage (e.g. IVF, IUI, egg freezing) is included in the corporate medical insurance plan, or subsidised through HR
- ✓ Staff are aware of available Government financial support for fertility-related treatments
- ✓ Mental health support (e.g. Employee Assistance Programmes, counselling) includes access to fertility-informed professionals

Workplace Culture

- ✓ Internal awareness campaigns address stigma and normalise fertility challenges (e.g. webinars, story sharing)
- ✓ Fertility is included in employee conversations to encourage and normalise such conversations
- ✓ Employees feel safe discussing fertility needs without fear of career penalties
- ✓ Fertility struggles are acknowledged with the same compassion as other medical or wellbeing challenges

Internal Communications

- ✓ Fertility-related benefits and leave policies are clearly documented in the employee handbook or intranet
- ✓ A confidential point of contact (e.g. HR partner) is designated for fertility support queries
- ✓ Internal FAQs or email templates are available for employees to request support
- ✓ Updates on fertility-related offerings are shared periodically in staff newsletters or onboarding packs.

Monitoring and Improvement

- ✓ Employee feedback on fertility support is collected anonymously (e.g. in wellbeing surveys)
- ✓ Uptake of fertility benefits is tracked and reviewed annually
- ✓ Policies are reviewed regularly and benchmarked against local and global practices
- ✓ Partnerships with Singapore-based fertility clinics or support organisations are explored
- ✓ Keep up to date on fertility-related progress and conversations by following Fertility Support SG socials

Supporting

05

a Colleague on
Their Fertility Journey

If you are in a management role..

Dos

Lead with Empathy

Listen actively and without judgment.

Acknowledge the difficulty of the situation.

Avoid offering unsolicited advice.

Respect Privacy

Do not press for personal medical details.

Maintain confidentiality at all times.

Offer Flexibility

Adjust work schedules to accommodate appointments.

Support use of leave options where possible.

Be understanding if treatment cycles change unexpectedly.

Signal Psychological Safety

Reassure employees that their careers will not be negatively affected.

Create a safe space for open, honest conversations.

Partner with HR

Seek HR guidance on policies and available support.

Work with HR to address any leave, benefits, or special arrangements.

Don'ts

Don't minimise
the issue
("Just relax and it'll happen").

Don't discuss
an employee's fertility situation with others.

Don't question
the need for time off or request medical proof unnecessarily.
("Are you sure you can handle work right now?")

Remember: You don't need to have all the answers.
You just need to lead with care, flexibility, and respect.

If you had a peer/colleague undergoing fertility treatment...

Dos

Understand what they might be going through

Read up about the emotional, medical, and logistical realities of fertility treatment.

Learn what support looks like

Encourage colleague to work with HR to understand workplace accommodations that may be available.

Respect their privacy
Check in without prying
Be a listening ear, without offering solutions or suggestions.

Be an ally in reducing stigma

If you are in a position to speak up, advocate for inclusive practices.

Don'ts

Don't patronise and diminish

the gravity of the situation
("Everything happens for a reason").

Don't make assumptions

("You're young, you still have time").

Don't suggest alternative parenthood options

("Why don't you just adopt?").

Don't be dismissive for those with secondary infertility

("At least you already have one child.")

Don't share success stories without invitation

("My friend did IVF once and now has twins!")

Remember: When in doubt, listen more than you speak. Respect privacy. Show empathy without offering advice. Let the person lead the conversation, or simply offer your quiet support.



Sample conversation

Pointers

For when an employee opens up to you about his/her struggles

“Thank you for trusting me and sharing this with me. I understand that this may not have been easy to talk about, and I want you to know I’m here to support you.”

For when you want to show empathy without pressing for details

“You don’t have to share more than you’re comfortable with. I’m here to listen and help however I can. Please let me know how we can best support you during this time.”

For when you want to acknowledge the impact on work gently

“If there are times you’ll need to step away for appointments or need flexibility, let’s talk about how we can make that work.”

For when an employee asks about what he/she should do to manage

“There may be options for time off, flexible hours, or remote work, depending on your needs. We can work with HR to explore what’s possible.”

For when an employee expresses worry over implications on work

“Please be assured this will stay confidential and won’t affect how your performance is viewed or your opportunities here.”

“You are valued as a member of this team, and we want to support you through this personally and professionally.”

For when an employee expresses worry over implications on work

“I just wanted to check in and see how you’re doing — no pressure, just here if you need anything.”

“Let me know if anything changes or if you need any adjustments.”

06

Communicating

Your Needs on Your
Fertility Journey

Self undergoing

1. Know Your Rights and Options

Start by reviewing your workplace policies and legal considerations. Understand what forms of leave or flexibility may be available to you, whether formal (e.g. unpaid leave, medical leave, time-off-in-lieu) or informal (e.g. schedule adjustments, remote work).

While Singapore does not yet have mandated fertility leave, many progressive companies are beginning to adopt fertility-friendly benefits.

Knowing what's possible can empower you to make informed decisions.

2. Decide What (and How) You Want to Share

When you're ready, speak with your supervisor or HR. You don't have to share details unless you feel comfortable — but if you choose to disclose your situation, doing so may open up more flexible options.

3. Access Emotional Support

Fertility treatment can take a toll on your mental wellbeing, and it's okay to not be okay. Check for any in-company or external counselling, employee assistance programmes, and support groups available in Singapore.

Don't hesitate to seek help—it's a sign of strength, not weakness.

4. Set Boundaries and Honour Your Needs

Set expectations and seek understanding from your supervisor regarding your situation. Consider rescheduling meetings on treatment days, saying no when needed, or asking for help without guilt.

Sample email template

We know that sharing about your fertility situation can be daunting. Consider using the following message that is professional, and respectful to inform your manager about starting fertility treatment.

New Message

Subject: Request for Flexibility Due to Medical Treatment

Dear **[Manager's Name]**,

I hope you're well. I am writing to share something personal that may require some adjustments to my work schedule in the coming weeks.

I will be starting fertility treatment soon, which involves a series of medical appointments and procedures over a period of time.

While I will do my best to minimise any disruption to work, there may be days when I need to attend time-sensitive appointments or take short periods of leave at short notice due to the nature of the treatment schedule.

I wanted to inform you proactively and assure you that I remain committed to managing my responsibilities and communicating any adjustments early. I am also happy to explore how best to coordinate with the team to ensure continuity.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss any necessary flexibility or arrangements in a way that works for both the team and my treatment. Please let me know a suitable time to have a quick conversation.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]



I wish for more

awareness

of infertility at the workplace

author's note

When I first set out to write this guidebook, I didn't just want to create another HR document. I wanted to give voice to something too often left unspoken—the real, raw, and deeply personal journeys that many employees face when trying to build a family.

Throughout this process, I have heard stories of strength, silence, heartbreak, and quiet hope. I have heard how the absence of support at work can make an already difficult journey feel even heavier. I have also heard of the power of a simple kind gesture – a flexible workday, an understanding manager, that can uplift a struggling couple.

This guidebook is a reflection of those voices.

It is my sincere hope that this guidebook empowers HR teams, leaders, and managers to take practical steps forward. Whether it begins with one conversation, one policy change, or one show of support, every action sends a powerful message:

You are not alone. We see you. We support you.

Thank you for reading it with an open mind and heart. Let this guidebook not be the end of the conversation — but the beginning of meaningful change.

A Call to Lead with Empathy and Action



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 www.fertilitysupport.sg

 www.instagram.com/fertilitysupport.sg

 www.facebook.com/fertilitysupport.sg

This workplace guide and related advocacy activities has been put together on behalf of Fertility Support SG by the following:

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