

# Forming Families

*Dr. Sana Khan of  
OKC Fertility:  
Single Parenthood  
and Fertility Care*

*Empowering  
Women on  
their Diverse  
Paths*

*The  
Importance  
of a Support  
System as a  
Single Parent*



*ARC Partner  
Practice  
Spotlight:  
Becoming a  
Solo Parent  
with OKC  
Fertility*

Welcome to the Summer 2024 quarterly edition of Forming Families, where we explore key themes in family formation and fertility medicine. ARC Fertility provides individuals, clinics, employers, and benefits administrators with current fertility information and support throughout a patient's journey to parenthood.

This edition dives deeper into the desire to become a single parent by choice. This decision, embraced by those from all backgrounds and orientations, represents a shift in our understanding of family dynamics. Particularly within the LGBTQ+ community, where the path to parenthood has historically been met with challenges, the option of single parenthood offers both hope and empowerment.

Many reasons influence the decision to pursue solo parenthood. From prioritizing career goals to not finding a suitable parenting partner, individuals are charting their unique paths to becoming parents with courage and determination. Yet, when choosing this journey, many are finding significant hurdles, including the emotional toll, financial strains, and the stigma that still exists around single parenthood. Support systems are more important than ever.

Employers play a vital role in helping employees build a family. By recognizing the needs of their workforce and implementing inclusive benefits, employers can create a nurturing atmosphere so employees don't have to choose between career and family.

Businesses can also retain and attract talent by offering fertility benefits and emotional support resources to their staff. Through compassion and offering fertility benefit packages, employers can help make anyone's dream of becoming a parent a reality, regardless of marital status or sexual orientation.

Sincerely,



**David Adamson, MD**  
Founder and CEO  
ARC Fertility

# Dr. Sana Khan on Supporting the Path to Single Parenthood

*Dr. Sana Khan, board-certified reproductive endocrinologist at Oklahoma City Fertility, discusses fertility procedures for single individuals while addressing challenges like donor selection and societal stigma when becoming a solo parent.*

## **What are some common fertility pathways for single individuals interested in parenthood?**

I'll start by talking about our female patients who want to become single parents. For them, fertility options include IUI and IVF with a donor sample that can be known or unknown. The simplest and most cost-effective is IUI, but that's not always an option for everyone. For male patients, it's a longer process because we need an egg donor and a gestational carrier. For our patients who are transitioning from their gender assigned at birth, it depends on where they're at in the process. If they're further along, it can change how they respond to medication and what their options are. There's also a personal preference when it comes to someone wanting to carry a pregnancy for females transitioning to males. Male patients transitioning to female will have to go through the same considerations with an egg donor and gestational carrier.

## **Discuss any challenges or considerations unique to individuals without a partner.**

Selecting a donor is a very complicated and personal process. My patients have noted that the process can be corporatized and commercialized. How the banks present the donor information can make it feel a bit strange. Also, the FDA is involved when dealing with donors or a third party. That means there may be extra steps in terms of testing, treatment, and reporting that we must be aware of. There's also the psychological component. Depending on where they are in the country, there's still a stigma about going through the process themselves. Patients are often nervous and ask if we see others going through similar situations.

## **How does your practice deal with these concerns?**

First, we reassure people and let them know they're in the right space. We've helped many patients through this and will help with whatever we can for them. The next step is helping with the donor selection process by guiding them on what to look for in a bank. Patients need clarification on how to order, how banks work, and how to ship samples to us. We break it all down, walking them through any extra steps that might be necessary, like



testing and treatments from an FDA standpoint. On the psychological side, we have specific fertility counselors available. We also try to figure out ways to help with stress reduction. We partner with an acupuncture clinic and massage therapist to help with stress management.

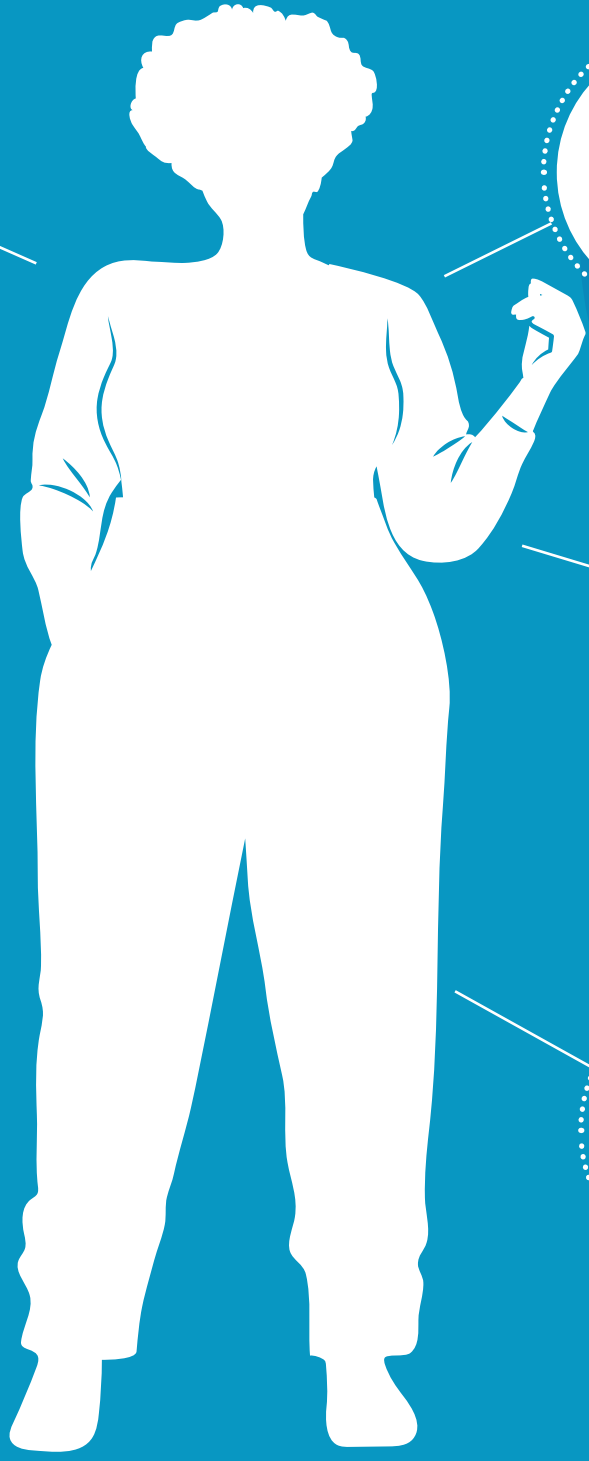
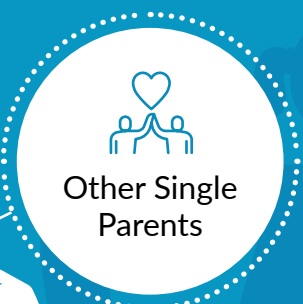
## **How does the experience of single parenthood differ for those in the LGBTQ+ community?**

Single parenthood is single parenthood. However, we're in the Midwest and know that discrimination occurs here. We try to mitigate that by being supportive and attentive through situations unique to our LGBTQ+ patients. It's a difficult process, and many people grapple with the decision to become a single parent due to the stigmatization. We want to support them in their journey and have individualized pathways for that.



# Creating a Support System as a Current or Future Single Parent

It takes a village to raise a child. Find your village and surround yourself with people who will care for you and your child equally. Here are a few places to start your search. Remember, the path to parenthood isn't easy for anyone, and especially so when you're doing it on your own. A proper support system can help relieve stress and lift you up on your journey.



# Employers Can Empower Women in their Solo Journey to Parenthood



*Whether it's putting their career first, not finding the ideal partner, or simply wanting to do it alone, women are choosing a solo path to parenthood more and more. Cryos International Sperm and Egg Bank reported that [54% of women](#) they have helped were single mothers-to-be. Choosing this route to motherhood is both empowering and daunting.*

However, women face a few hurdles, including financial and emotional strain plus societal perceptions. Balancing a demanding job doesn't help in the family-forming process. Employers have an opportunity to help their staff by offering support during a time that is both challenging and exciting.

Single parenthood by choice for a woman can look different for each individual going through it, but it starts with finding a local, trusted fertility clinic. Once there, the typical treatments recommended for getting pregnant are intrauterine insemination (IUI) or in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Both of these procedures come with a hefty price tag, with IUI being the most cost-effective at about [\\$300-\\$1,000 without health insurance](#). Women also have to choose a sperm donor (whether known or unknown) and potentially use a surrogate as well. Individuals who are transitioning also must factor in where they are in their transition before starting any treatments and deciding on donors.

Employers can alleviate the various financial burdens by offering their employees fertility health benefits. These benefit packages include coverage for treatments and assistance with the cost of medications and other related expenses. Providing this type of support demonstrates a

commitment to the well-being of single parents-to-be.

Without this financial help, employees often look for new roles outside their current organization with fertility benefits as part of their health packages, potentially leading to the loss of top talent.

On the emotional front, becoming a solo parent can sometimes be overwhelming without the aid of a partner. There is still a societal stigma surrounding single parenthood that can make individuals choosing this route feel judged or ashamed, impacting their self-esteem and self-worth. Employers can also help with this by offering their staff several resources through fertility benefits organizations to help with these complex and valid emotions.

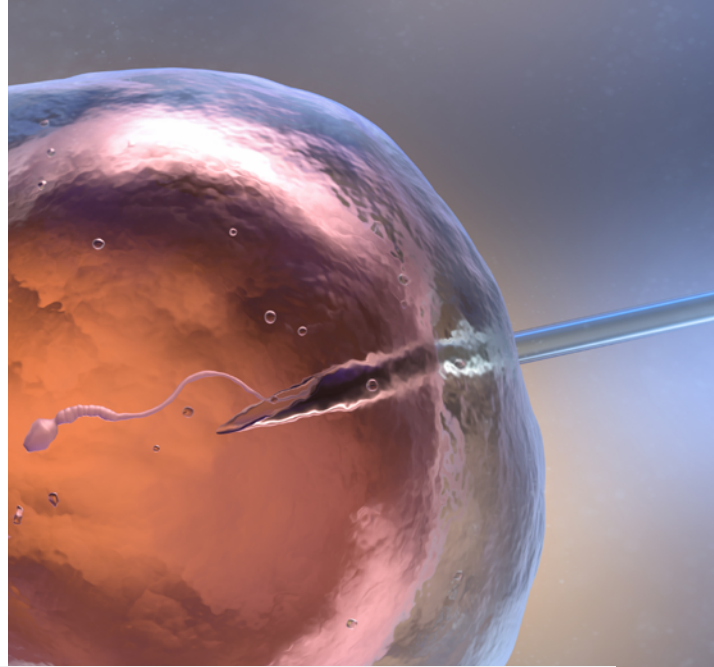
Aside from finding a supportive fertility clinic, employees can seek other services, like counseling, acupuncture, massage therapy, and yoga. Community group forums and associations like [Single Mothers by Choice \(SMC\)](#) are also available to offer guidance and encouragement.

As women continue to choose single parenthood, society as a whole must recognize and support this decision. Businesses can make an impact by fostering a work environment that embraces diverse family structures while offering practical and emotional assistance. Through empathy, understanding, and tangible support, employers can ensure that every individual feels empowered and valued on their road to forming a family, regardless of their chosen journey.

# Choosing to Become a Single Parent Can Be Overwhelming

ARC Partner OKC Fertility Makes It Possible

ARC Fertility works with board-certified fertility clinics across the United States. These professionals understand the desire to become a single parent and will support and reassure you through the process, so you never feel alone.



## Lois Smith

Medical Assistant

Lois is a dedicated Medical Assistant at OKC Fertility with over 17 years of experience in phlebotomy. She was born and raised in the OKC metro area. Although new to the field of fertility, she has quickly developed a passion for supporting couples on their family-building journey. Her extensive background in phlebotomy ensures a high level of care and precision in her work. Lois is committed to making each patient's experience as comfortable and positive as possible.



## Kayla Clawson

IVF Coordinator

Kayla is an IVF Coordinator at OKC Fertility with over 4 years of experience in fertility and 7 years as an RN. Born and raised in the OKC Metro, she is passionate about fertility, having experienced the journey herself. She holds the patient experience in high regard and is dedicated to working hard for her patients. Kayla appreciates working with ARC Fertility because they assist patients in accessing essential treatments.



## Tacie Sterling

Financial Director

Tacie, born in Texas and raised in Oklahoma, is a passionate patient advocate with over 10 years of experience in fertility, specializing in navigating the financial aspects of the fertility journey. She has worked both in clinical practices and the fertility benefit space. Now, Tacie has returned to her roots in the practice setting to help patients of OKC Fertility. She is excited to work alongside Dr. Khan and Dr. Williams in serving the metro community. She loves working with the ARC Fertility team to help patients secure the funds they need to access fertility treatments and achieve their family dreams.