

Trying

By Avital Lubin

You desperately want a child but it's not so easy. Obstacles have made it difficult for you so far but you've decided to take action and keep trying for a child. In the midst of this difficult time, you talk about your challenges openly with your partner(s) and others facing similar fertility issues as you. *Trying* is a game that explores fertility and the complex emotions of people who want to have children but are having difficulty achieving their desire.

Number of Players: 1-10+

Length of Time: 1.5 hours - 2 hours

Setup:

- 5 eggs per player: 4 raw, 1 hard boiled
For example, if there are 6 players, the game would need 24 raw eggs and 6 hard boiled eggs.
- 3 bowls: 1 Main large bowl filled with raw eggs, 1 small bowl filled with hard boiled eggs, 1 large empty bowl
- Nametags

Safety:

This game may have high bleed for some players, so safety is of utmost importance.

- The door is always open. Especially after character creation, please ask, "Would any players like to leave the game?" Given the content and types of questions that will be asked during play, some players may not feel this game is right for them.
- Cut and Slow Down will be utilized if a player feels uncomfortable around certain topics.
- If you see another player struggling, please check in with them to make sure they're ok.

Character Creation: (30 minutes)

All characters want to have children.

Players should choose to play one of the following character archetypes to form their group:

- Single person (1 players)
- Duo (2 players)
- Polyamorous Triad/Co-parenting Unit (3 players)

People who want to play similar character archetypes, should be paired up into the same group.

Answer the following questions with your group going around and sharing (or if you're the single person, answer these questions yourself or with another single person):

For each individual character:

- What is your name? Write your name on a nametag.
- How old are you?
- Do you have the physical capacity to carry a baby?
- What is your career? How might having a child affect your career?
- What do you love most about children?
- What part of having a child do you fear the most?

As a group:

- For single player: Have you had past relationships? Why have they ended? Describe the moment you decided to have a child/children on your own.
- For 2+ player relationships: What is your relationship to each other? Describe the first time you met.
- How many children do you want?
- What is your socioeconomic status?
- Why do you want to start trying to have kids now?
- When playing with multiple groups: How do you know another group playing? What is your relationship with the other group? *Make sure that all groups have a relationship with another group.*

Play:

Play will take place in Four Acts. Each Act should last 15-30 minutes. Each scene within the Act will last 3-5 minutes.

Act One: (3-5 minutes)

Scene One: You Decide to Try for a Child

You were just at a Holiday party with family and you received the question multiple times: "So when are you going to have a child?" You dreaded the looks and the stares. You heard babies crying in the other room -- you were so jealous.

Act out the scene with your group after the party ends and you've gone home and decide to try for a child.

Act Two: (10-15 minutes)

Scene One: First Attempt for a Child

Obstacle: You are ready to have children. What obstacle do you face?

Some examples of obstacles your group may face:

Infertility, Age, Need Sperm, Need Egg, Cost, Career, Religion, Genetics, Health, Stress, etc.

Decision: Act out the scene where your group decides how to overcome the obstacle. What is the likelihood of success?

Some examples of options to overcome obstacles:

Keep trying naturally, Fertility Drugs, intrauterine insemination, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF): Use your own sperm and egg if available, Ask a friend to donate egg/sperm or Purchase egg/sperm from clinic; Adoption, Hire a Surrogate, etc.

Result: Once your group has decided how to overcome the obstacle, take an egg out of the Main large bowl. Crack it open into the large empty bowl. If your egg is hard boiled, you succeed in getting a child. If your egg is raw, you did not succeed.

Scene Two: Consequences

Act out the scene where you react to the outcome. What happened? How do you feel?

Some examples of consequences:

Miscarriage, Low Embryo Quality, Low Sperm Quality, Age of Eggs, Stillbirth, Embryo didn't implant, Surrogate didn't work out, etc.

Scene Three (only if there's multiple groups playing): Group Conversations

Act out the scene where the groups may meet and chat. *For example, the waiting room of a fertility clinic, fertility support group, doctor's office waiting room, community center, etc.* What do you discuss? Do you disclose your obstacles, decisions and consequences?

Setup for Act Three:

Add all of the hard boiled eggs from the small bowl into the Main large bowl with the raw eggs. Carefully mix the eggs so that the hard boiled eggs are randomly distributed throughout the bowl.

Act Three: (10-15 minutes)

Scene One: Second Attempt for a Child

Obstacle: You are ready to try again to have a child. Are there any new obstacles?

Decision: Act out the scene where your group decides how to proceed and overcome the same obstacle or a new additional obstacle. What is the likelihood of success?

Some examples of options to overcome obstacles:

Keep trying naturally, Fertility Drugs, intrauterine insemination, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF): Use your own sperm and egg if available, Ask a friend to donate egg/sperm or Purchase egg/sperm from clinic; Adoption, Hire a Surrogate, Give Up Trying, etc.

Result: Once your group has decided how to overcome the obstacle, take an egg out of the Main large bowl. Crack it open into the large empty bowl. If your egg is hard boiled, you succeed in getting a child. If your egg is raw, you did not succeed.

Scene Two: Consequences

Act out the scene where you react to the outcome. What happened? How do you feel?

Some examples of consequences:

Miscarriage, Low Embryo Quality, Low Sperm Quality, Age of Eggs, Stillbirth, Embryo didn't implant, Surrogate didn't work out, etc.

Scene Three (only if there's multiple groups playing): Group Conversations

Act out the scene where the groups may meet and chat. *For example, the waiting room of a fertility clinic, fertility support group, doctor's office waiting room, community center, etc.* What do you discuss? Do you disclose your obstacles, decisions and consequences?

Before Starting Act Four, answer the following question:

- If you already successfully had a child, do you want to try for another child? If "no" and playing with other groups, proceed to Act Four, Scene Three when other groups are ready. If "no" and there are no other groups, proceed to Epilogue. If "yes", proceed to Act Four, Scene One.

Act Four: (10-15 minutes)

Scene One: Third Attempt for a Child

Obstacle: You are ready to try again to have a child. Are there any new obstacles?

Decision: Act out the scene where your group decides how to proceed and overcome the same obstacle or a new obstacle. What is the likelihood of success?

Some examples of options to overcome obstacles:

Keep trying naturally, Fertility Drugs, intrauterine insemination, In Vitro Fertilization (IVF): Use your own sperm and egg if available, Ask a friend to donate egg/sperm or Purchase egg/sperm from clinic; Adoption, Hire a Surrogate, Give Up Trying, etc.

Result: Once your group has decided how to overcome the obstacle, take an egg out of the Main large bowl. Crack it open into the large empty bowl. If your egg is hard boiled, you succeed in getting a child. If your egg is raw, you did not succeed.

Scene Two: Consequences

Act out the scene where you react to the outcome. What happened? How do you feel?

Some examples of consequences:

Miscarriage, Low Embryo Quality, Low Sperm Quality, Age of Eggs, Stillbirth, Embryo didn't implant, Surrogate didn't work out, etc.

Scene Three (only if there's multiple groups playing): Group Conversations

Act out the scene where the groups may meet and chat. *For example, the waiting room of a fertility clinic, fertility support group, doctor's office waiting room, community center, etc.* What do you discuss? Do you disclose your obstacles, decisions and consequences?

Epilogue: (10 minutes)

- Where is your group in 5 years?
- Are you still trying to have children?
- How do you feel with how your family structure ended up?

Debrief: (15 minutes)

- Go around and say how you are like your character or not like your character as you rip off your nametag.
- Go around and give a compliment to one other player on something positive that you noticed they did during game play. Make sure that every single player receives a positive compliment.