

Pregnancy options & decision making

Patient Information

Te Mahoe Pregnancy Counselling & Support Service, Wellington Hospital

With an unplanned or unexpected pregnancy you may find it difficult to decide what to do. We can offer you, and your whanau, pregnancy option counselling support which can assist you with your possible choices.

With an unplanned pregnancy, or a pregnancy about which you are undecided, you may have three possible choices:

- **Adoption/Guardianship**

Adoption is a legal process where the rights and responsibilities of parenting are transferred from the birth parents to the adoptive parents

Guardianship is a legal arrangement to decide who has the custody and responsibility for raising your child.

- **Keeping and parenting the baby**

You may wish to care for the child yourself, or share the responsibility of looking after your child with your partner or family

- **Having an abortion**

An abortion is a procedure where your pregnancy is terminated (ended). Depending on you meeting the legal requirements, Te Mahoe provides access to a legal and safe abortion service

How do I decide?

A helpful place to start when deciding is to look at your entire situation. The following are some questions that may assist you in making your decision:

- What are your feelings and thoughts regarding your choices i.e. adoption / guardianship, parenting and keeping the baby and abortion?
- Which of the alternatives have you already thought about?
- Do you need more information about any of your possible options?

- What would you stand to gain or lose in your life if you chose adoption / guardianship, keeping the pregnancy or abortion?
- Have you looked at the medical issues that this decision may present?

Considering the positives and negatives

Use your head and your heart to think about the positive and negatives of your three possible choices. You may find writing down or talking to a support person about the potential positive and negative outcomes to be helpful.

Think how you would probably feel and how you would cope as time went by. Weigh up your options carefully.

Significant others & decision making

The decision about your pregnancy is yours to make. However there are times when other people may affect your decision. When thinking about your options who is important to you? You may want to involve your partner, parents, whanau or friends. Who have you told and what are their reactions? What support will you need from them, are you likely to get it and how might they respond?

Exploring Conflict

There may be times where your thoughts and feelings are in conflict. It may be that your values and beliefs around each option are in conflict or you are in conflict with your religious beliefs.

Sometimes there may be conflict with what you want and what your partner or family want and this is causing you to feel unsure about your decision. The more attached you feel towards the person that opposes your choice the more painful it may be to make up your mind.

Sometimes fear of the medical procedure and the possible risks can also hide as conflict and

Page 1 of 2

this may make you unsure of your decision.

You may have feelings of sadness during this time. Remember sadness only tells you that a decision is sad. It does not tell you whether the decision is right or wrong. Sad decisions are sometimes also the right decisions.

No matter how frightening the possible results or how difficult the process you have a choice. Remember that you are the best person to make this choice.

The best decision may not always be the perfect decision. Remember you are not alone at this time. At Te Mahoe we are here to listen, explore your choices and provide support to you and your whanau.

Where can I find further information?

You may find helpful pre-decision information on the following resources and websites.

Baker, Anne, 1995. Abortion and Option Counselling; A Comprehensive Reference. The Hope Clinic for Women, Illinois, USA.

<http://www.pregnancyoptions.info/>

www.familyplanning.org.nz/

You can also contact the Te Mahoe staff for further help and information.

Contact details

Women's Clinics - Te Mahoe
Level 3 North
Wellington Regional Hospital
Riddiford St, Newtown
Wellington 6242

Phone (04) 8060 761 8am to 4.30 pm

Tuesday – Friday (excluding Public Holidays)