



Unplanned pregnancy: options counselling

Counselling gives you the opportunity to talk to a trained health professional in a safe and confidential environment. This may be helpful if you would like some independent support in deciding what to do about your unplanned pregnancy.

What is counselling?

It allows you to explore your feelings, thoughts, and behaviour about the difficult issues in your life.

Talking to a counsellor does not mean that you are 'crazy' or 'weak' or 'not coping'. It is an important early step in empowering you to take control of your life.

What is pregnancy options counselling?

Pregnancy options counselling is usually a single session counselling service that acknowledges the urgency of the situation and aims to support you through what can be a difficult period.

It will focus on your unplanned pregnancy and support you to make decisions that are right for you. Sessions are available over the phone or face-to-face. Counselling empowers you to choose what to do about your pregnancy.

Unplanned pregnancy counselling:

- is optional
- should be neutral, unbiased and supportive of your choices
- gives you practical information and explores all options including abortion, adoption and parenting
- provides a confidential space for you to talk through your options
- provides you with support if you think you have made up your mind but still have some feelings of concern

- helps you with your decision-making (but does not make the decision for you)
- looks at the relevant parts of your life affecting your decision such as:
 - family, relationships, safety, experiences of violence and controlling behaviour in relationships, past experiences around pregnancy and parenting, emotional wellbeing, financial situation, health, community and culture, religious and/or spiritual beliefs
- is short-term
- can refer you to other supports and services if you need them.

An unplanned pregnancy counsellor will:

- be guided by you
- see you as the expert in your own life and help you explore all your pregnancy options
- be confidential, discreet and sensitive to your needs.

An unplanned pregnancy counsellor will not:

- persuade you that any particular decision is best, or try and talk you out of your decision
- pressure you to make a decision by the end of the session
- make a diagnosis of you or 'your problems' (but they can refer you to other services if needed).

Warning

Counselling services can vary depending on the theories, beliefs and approaches used by the counsellor. Not all counselling is unbiased. Some organisations that offer 'pregnancy counselling' do not aim to discuss all of the pregnancy options in an unbiased way. Some pregnancy options counsellors may advise you against abortion because of their own beliefs. It's a good idea to ask questions over the phone before making an appointment so you can get an idea if they will be neutral, unbiased, and support your choices.

How to find a counselling service?

1800 My Options

A confidential and free phone line and online service offering information about contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health. They can also help you find a counselling service that suits your needs.

1800 696 784
(Monday to Friday 10am-4pm)
1800myoptions.org.au

Do you need an interpreter?



If you need an interpreter remember you can ask for one.

1800 My Options and counselling services can arrange for an interpreter to help if you need it.

Related information on the Women's website

- Unplanned pregnancy: Deciding what to do
- Unplanned pregnancy in violent and abusive relationships

thewomens.org.au

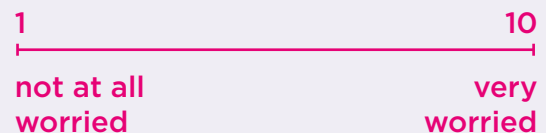
Before your pregnancy options counselling

To help you prepare for your pregnancy option counselling session take some time out to consider some of the following:

NOTE: It might be useful to have a pen and paper on hand so that you can jot down your thoughts.

- What are the main issues or concerns you have about your unplanned pregnancy?
- How upset or worried are you about these issues?

Rate your feelings on a scale of 1 to 10:



- What are the main things you have already done to cope with these issues?
- What are the main things you would like to ask your counsellor?
- What are the things that are worrying you the most?
- What are the things you have been unable to talk to anyone else about?
- What are some of the strengths you see in yourself which will help you to make a decision about your unplanned pregnancy?

Disclaimer This fact sheet provides general information only. For specific advice about your healthcare needs, you should seek advice from your health professional. The Royal Women's Hospital does not accept any responsibility for loss or damage arising from your reliance on this fact sheet instead of seeing a health professional. If you require urgent medical attention, please contact your nearest emergency department.
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