

## Telling Someone... I'm Pregnant!

Experiencing an unplanned pregnancy as a young woman can be a time of great uncertainty and confusion. It can also be a lonely time but the good news is that you do not have to face it alone. This information sheet is designed to guide you through the next steps and to support you in telling those who play a significant role in your life, such as your parents or guardian.

It is important to remember that no contraceptive method is 100% effective and unfortunately unplanned pregnancy is a reality for many women, not just young women.

### Your feelings about the pregnancy

Sometimes the best place to start is with how you feel about the pregnancy. Often an unplanned pregnancy raises a lot of different and sometimes confusing feelings and thoughts. These feelings are confusing as they often conflict with each other. For example, you may feel *anxious* since you cannot possibly consider having a baby until you are financially able to support the child, *scared* because you don't know how to parent or *concerned* as you are still a teenager...while at the same time you may also be *overjoyed* because this is what you always wanted and be *excited* since this may be a new opportunity for you. Despite the conflicting nature of these emotions, they are all valid and need to be considered.

One way that may help you to address these different feelings is to write them down. Take some time right now to write down all the different feelings you are currently experiencing.

### Who do I talk to first?

Once you get over the initial shock of finding out you are pregnant, it can really help to talk to somebody about it. If you feel that you can't tell your parents straight away then that is ok - there are many other people you can talk to to get some support. The most important thing is for the person you tell to be someone you feel you can trust and feel comfortable talking to. This person could be:

- The man involved
- A friend
- Your sister or brother
- Your aunt or uncle
- A friend's mum or dad
- A youth worker or youth support coordinator
- The school based youth health nurse
- A counsellor from Children by Choice
- The school guidance officer or chaplain

Once you've told someone else you may feel some relief and also it may make it easier to discuss it with your parents or guardian, if and when you decide to do this.

## Be prepared!

The next step as a young woman is telling those who play a significant role in your life that you are pregnant. This is often going to be your parent/s, guardian or other family members. Telling them may be the hardest part of your experience of an unplanned pregnancy because you may not know how they will react. This is very normal. To prepare for 'the talk', it is helpful to think about what you hope to get out of telling them and what you need from them. Some examples of questions you may like to ask yourself beforehand are:

- Do you want help with decision making and exploring your options?
- Do you just want them to listen and support you?
- Have you made your decisions and want their support?

They may react in many different ways and you need to remember that, like you, they may also be in shock. It is important to be prepared for the possibility of them reacting in an upset or angry way - they may need some time to think before they are able to provide the support and help that you need. However, their reaction could be supportive and understanding from the outset. Every situation and relationship is different, so try to be prepared for whatever response you receive, but keep in mind that this is difficult for them too.

## Breaking the news...

Finding a 'good time' to tell them that you're pregnant may be difficult but the time and place are important. You may want to consider the following:

- Do you have their complete attention?
- Are they about to leave for work?
- Are they preparing meals or caring for your siblings?
- Is there a quiet space to talk?
- Do you have privacy?
- Will you be interrupted?
- Is it a safe and comfortable space for you?

You may find it helpful to practice what you'll say before you let them know, or perhaps even write it down. Starting the conversation can be tricky. Here are a few possible starting points:

- "I need to talk to you about something important..."
- "Can we sit down later, there's something I need to speak to you about"
- "I have something on my mind that I need some support with"
- "I've just found out that I'm pregnant and I really need your support"
- "I need your help with something and I really need you to listen to what I'm about to say"

### IMPORTANT!

If you are concerned that you may receive an abusive reaction to the news or get 'kicked out' then it may not be the best idea to break the news. Nobody has the right to be abusive and if there is a genuine concern that this may happen, you should seek support and advice from a youth counsellor or make a plan to go somewhere safe. If you need to talk to someone about family issues, you can call Lifeline on 131 144 or visit [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

You should also know the rules of the state you live in about young people getting reproductive healthcare without a parent or guardian's consent. The rules differ for each state. The Lawstuff website ([www.lawstuff.org.au](http://www.lawstuff.org.au)) can help you to understand the laws where you live.

## Dealing with the reaction...

People can react to big news in different ways. Some may be very calm, some may be silent and shocked or others may be angry and cry. This is all normal. At this stage, it would be helpful for you to be able to discuss with them your feelings about the pregnancy and the support you need from them. If their reaction is very emotional they may need a little time to take in the news and think about their feelings about the pregnancy. If this is the case, perhaps you can talk again later, once they have had time to do this.

Often, taking some time away from each other and then coming back to discuss the matter later is useful. This will give them a chance to process the information and calm down.

## What happens next?

The big step for you now is to make your decision about the pregnancy. The support you receive will, to some extent, depend on the reaction from those important to you. However, in the decision making process you need to focus on yourself, as you are the most important person in this process. This is not to say that others are not important, but it is vital that you don't forget yourself and your own needs in making this decision.

To ensure that you cope effectively with an unplanned pregnancy, it is important that you have access to correct information and non-directive support about your options; parenting, adoption and abortion. Seek out people who will be supportive and understanding of you, without pressuring you to make one decision or another. Please see contacts below for information on where to go for more help.

**REMEMBER:** There is no right or wrong decision but only the best decision for you now.

## Help & Support

**Children by Choice** - Information and counselling on all unplanned pregnancy options – abortion, adoption and parenting. Call 07 3357 5377 or Free call 1800 177 725 (outside Brisbane)  
[www.childrenbychoice.org.au](http://www.childrenbychoice.org.au)

**Kids Help Line**- 24 hour telephone and online counselling service for children and young people in Australia. FREECALL 1800 551 800. [www.kidshelp.com.au](http://www.kidshelp.com.au)

**Lifeline** - 24 hour telephone counselling and information service for anyone, at anytime and from anywhere in Australia for just the cost of a local call. Lifeline also works to help prevent suicide. Call 131 114. [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**Marie Stopes International** - For details of centres in Australia, contraception, STI check-ups and abortion help & advice. FREECALL 1800 003 707 (24/7) [www.mariestopes.com.au](http://www.mariestopes.com.au)

**Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia**. A website that provides interesting sexual health information, including fact sheets that can be downloaded. [www.fpa.net.au](http://www.fpa.net.au)



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