

# PREGNANT ! ? ! ? !



## ***WHAT IS YOUR NEXT MOVE?***

An unexpected pregnancy can lead to a lot of unanticipated questions:

What am I going to do?

Who can I turn to for help?

How do I take care of a child?

We will help you sort out your feelings, and work with you as you sort through the steps and choices of parenting or adoption, whichever is appropriate for you.

## **PREGNANCY COUNSELING**

At Catholic Charities, we offer FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, CARING, AND PROFESSIONAL PREGNANCY COUNSELING to anyone who is troubled by an unexpected pregnancy, regardless of race, ethnic/national origin, religious or marital status.

Most people think talking about their unplanned pregnancy is going to be uncomfortable. And then they meet our staff. When it comes to listening to your concerns, to what you're going through, there's no one better at giving you unconditional support. We know you're facing a huge decision. And our only goal is to help you through it. Whatever decision you make.

Everything you tell us is confidential and private. So you know it's just between us. If you're uncomfortable coming to our office, we will be happy to meet you at a restaurant or a park. Wherever you want. For as long as you want. Our only goal is to give you the support you need.

It is our aim to facilitate the decision making process by listening to your concerns and needs, assisting you in finding answers to your questions, and helping you to make the best decision for you and your baby. Pregnancy Counseling can help you understand more about your self, your pregnancy, the new life developing inside you, and help you create a positive plan for you and your child's future.

Services are available for women and men of all ages to assist them in deciding whether to parent their child or make an adoption plan. An untimely pregnancy affects more than the pregnant woman alone; therefore others may be involved in counseling, including the child's father, a spouse or significant other, and other family members or friends.

Contact us at – [www.adoptiowa.org](http://www.adoptiowa.org) or Call 1-800-CARE-002 or 1-515-237-5082

### Parenting or Adoption? You Decide!

We acknowledge that there is no easy or perfect outcome to an unplanned pregnancy. Our goal is to assist clients in making educated and conscious decisions about what is best for them and the child. We assist you in making and implementing a permanent plan for the future for your child. If you chooses to parent we will help you find the resources you will need to care for your child's needs. If you decide that you cannot parent this child we will help you create an open adoption plan which allows you to choose and know the adoptive family and your child. Your pregnancy counselor will also help you understand the legal aspects of adoption and will address the emotional and psychological needs that may arise.

**What services are available?** This program offers professional, unbiased counseling on pregnancy-related issues, referrals to other agencies or resources as needed, and adoption services if the client chooses to release her child for adoption.

- Pregnancy counseling for you and your extended family before and after birth
- Practical information and support for those preparing to parent
- Adoption planning and placement services – If you can not parent you will be encouraged to consider open adoption which provides fully disclosed, ongoing, relationship based, adoption information to birth parents, adopted person's, and adoptive families
- Referrals for housing, food, clothing, and medical services
- Hospital visitation and coordination of services with hospital staff
- Direct placement of infant into adoptive family. Interim care for the child, if desired
- Assistance with the legal process of adoption including taking the birthparent release of custody and arranging for the legal termination of parental rights allowing the baby to be eligible for adoption
- Birthparent support services and post-adoption counseling

**How are services provided?** Counselors respect the rights and responsibilities of birthparents to plan for their child; we believe this involves a careful process of considering the decision, anticipating probable outcomes, and becoming aware of emotions associated with each choice. Counselors discuss with clients any pregnancy-related services they may need, and assist them in obtaining these services through the existing support system, by referral to appropriate resources, or by acting as advocate and liaison within the agency or community.

**How do I make an adoption plan?** For those considering or choosing adoption, counselors provide information about the adoption process, assistance with creating an adoption plan which includes selecting a family, meeting the family and working together to plan for the child's future, placement of the child into the adoptive home, and post placement support.

### Can I choose a family for my baby?

Yes! Catholic Charities has many different families you can choose from. These families have received extensive training about adoption and have completed the homestudy process allowing them to receive a child into their home for the purposes of adoption.

- Meet families waiting to adopt.

**Where is counseling offered?**

Counseling services are normally offered at the Catholic Charities office in downtown Des Moines, but clients from other communities may be seen in their area whenever necessary. We will arrange to meet with you in a safe, relaxed, environment where you feel comfortable addressing your issues.

**What does this service cost?** There is no charge to clients for pregnancy counseling services offered by this program.

**Who do I call?** Contact us at – [www.adoptiowa.org](http://www.adoptiowa.org) or Call 1-800-CARE-002 or 1-515-237-5082

***Catholic Charities encourages you to choose options  
that you and your baby can live with.***

**YOU MAKE THE DECISIONS**

You have several options: some you and your baby can live with, some you can't. The decisions are yours. It can be important to have unbiased information and support when making these decisions, and pregnancy counseling can often assist in the process.

**Issues that should be considered are:**

- ❖ The impact of all options on your life, both now and in the future.
- ❖ Your relationships with other people involved e.g. partner, parents, family, and friends.
- ❖ Your own personal beliefs and values.

**If you choose to raise your child,** your pregnancy counselor will help to arrange services and make referrals that help prepare you for your new role as a parent.

**If you choose to place your child for adoption,** your pregnancy counselor will help you prepare an adoption plan. In doing so, you will be encouraged to consider open adoption. In open adoption you select your child's family, you meet the family, and you and the family share fully disclosed information allowing you both to provide your child with support and information as he grows and develops.

**OPTIONS YOU CAN LIVE WITH**

We discuss your options and help you decide what is best for you and your baby. Whether you choose to parent your child or place your child in an open adoption we will be there to support your decision during your pregnancy and after your child is born.



## *Choosing Parenting.*

Having a baby is a major life event.

Many life changes usually follow the birth of a baby. If you choose to parent it may mean that much of your current lifestyle will need to change.

- You may need to make changes to your current plan for your career or education.
- You may have concerns regarding financial matters. You may need to establish a realistic budget evaluating your income and expenses.
- You may be concerned about your relationships with your partner, family or friends. For some women, how, when or if to tell others may be the biggest hurdle, and what others might think or say is worrying. It is not unusual for partners or family members to be shocked, disappointed or even angry at first, but after some time they may be quite supportive. Telling someone can be a great relief.
- You may have concerns about the physical and emotional changes which occur during pregnancy and have questions about the health care you will need.
- You may wish to seek information about the birth and find out how best to prepare for having a baby.
- You may be overwhelmed by the responsibility of bringing up a child. You may wish to explore the availability of childbirth classes, parenting classes, parent support groups and child care services in your area.

In essence we are here to help you explore your individual concerns about parenting. We want you to be successful and we will help you evaluate what you will need as a parent in order to provide for your child. We will also provide educational resources about parenting issues, as well as information and referral about resources available to you that will help you meet the essential needs of your child. Finally, we will challenge you to explore your values and create a plan that enriches your child's life as well as your own.

- We are able to help you explore your individual concerns about how parenting will affect your life and the emotions you are having.
- We will help you identify your needs and find community resources to help prepare you for your role as parent.
- We can assist you in learning about pregnancy, pre-natal care, birth, newborn infant care, and child development.
- Whether you are an adolescent or an adult, we can refer you to parenting classes within your community that will to assist you as you prepare for your parenting responsibilities.

### ***1.1.1 Teens Tell About Parenting***



## Choosing Adoption.

- You have hopes and dreams for yourself and for this child. When you have taken a serious look at yourself and your life, you may decide to place your child for adoption.
- You will receive counseling to help you explore your feelings about your decision and to prepare you for what to expect as you make plans for your child's future.
- We offer adoption services, so you do not have to talk with another professional about this personal decision.
- Our open adoption services help you create your own personal adoption plan. You make the decisions. You chose your child's family. You meet them. You have the option to remain active in your child's life through an open adoption.
- You decide how much contact you will have with the adoptive family before and after your child's birth and placement.
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### **1.1.2 Meet our waiting families**

(adoptive family profiles – Sandy and Ann will create this file)



## Adoption

Carefully considering all your options is the responsible thing to do. If you decide you are not able to provide the life you want for your child, adoption may be an option to consider.

You may have concerns about how you and others close to you would cope if you decide to place your baby for adoption.

- You may have questions about who will care for your child and how the adoptive parents are chosen.
- You may wonder about the part you can play in choosing adoptive parents.

- You may have questions about the process of adoption.
- You may want to know about future contact with your child.

Catholic Charities will help you find answers to your questions. We will help you create your own unique adoption plan.

**Other adoption resources –**

- 1.1.2 Meet our waiting families (adoptive family profiles – Sandy and Ann will create this file)***
- 1.1.3 Open Adoption Discussion***
- 1.1.4 Definition and Benefits of Adoption***
- 1.1.5 A Birthmother's Story***
- 1.1.6 Birthparent Rights***
- 1.1.7 Adoption and Abortion Similarities and Differences***
- 1.1.8 Adoption and Parenting Similarities and Differences***
- 1.1.9 Iowa Adoption Law***
- 1.1.10 Myths and Facts about Open Adoption***
- 1.1.11 Birthmother letter to birth son***
- 1.1.12 Adoptive Family Letter to Birthparent***
- 1.1.13 Poem – Legacy of Child in an Open Adoption***
- 1.1.14 Grief Issues and Adoption***

**Parenting or Adoption? You Decide!**

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Other sites to check out –

<http://standupgirl.com/site/index.php>

<http://www.optionline.org>

<http://www.heartlink.org>

<http://naic.acf.hhs.gov>

<http://www.birthmombuds.com>

<http://www.r2press.com/lifegiver.htm>