



Children by Choice
Association Incorporated

Providing pro-choice counselling, information and education services on all unplanned pregnancy options – abortion, adoption and parenting

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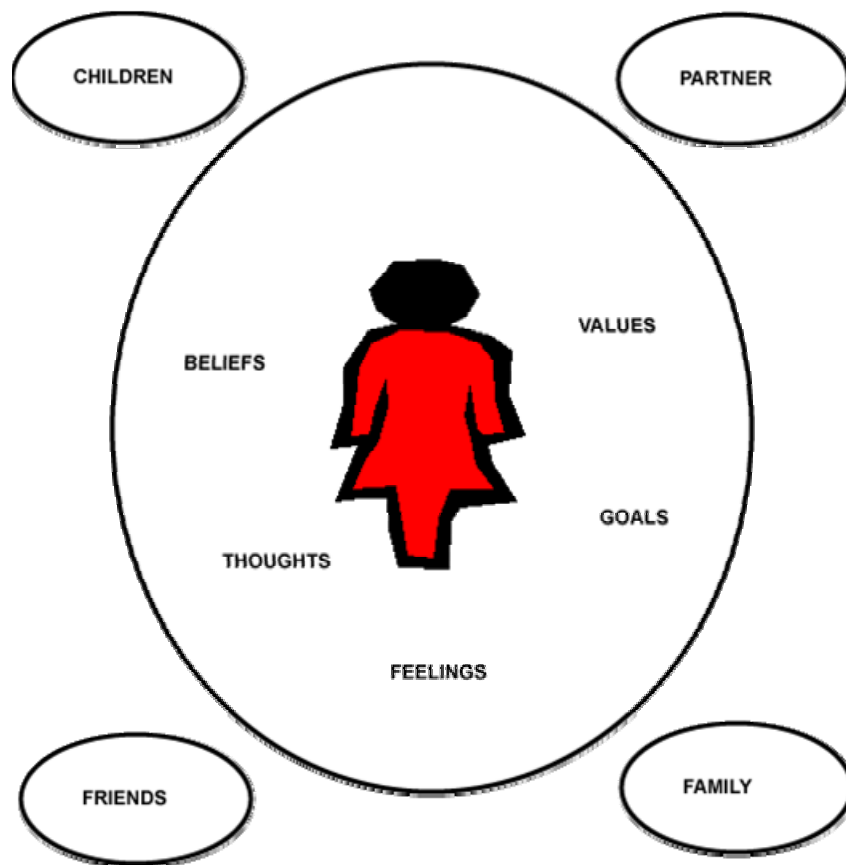
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Making a Decision... A woman centred approach to looking at pregnancy options

This approach focuses on you, the woman, by looking first at you and your needs, thoughts, feelings and beliefs in relation to the options available to you with an unplanned pregnancy. The reason that you need to focus on yourself first of all is that you are the most important person in this process of decision-making. This is not to say that others are not important, but that it is vital that you don't forget yourself and your own needs in making this decision.



How do I feel about this pregnancy?

Sometimes the first place to start is with how you feel about this 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 (or another baby) until you are financially able to support the child, *scared* because you don't know how to parent or *concerned* since your current relationship is not very stable. 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 fact that these feelings conflict with each other they are valid and need to be considered.

All my feelings ...

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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:

I am feeling ...

How do my values, beliefs, previous experiences or expectations around each of the options - abortion, adoption and parenting - affect how I feel?

Your values, beliefs, previous experiences or expectations about the three options available to you can also affect how you feel. The following are comments women often make in relation to the three options. As you read them you may like tick or just note which of them you agree or disagree with. You may also like to add to these lists as well. Once you have listed the values and beliefs you have, and thought about any previous experiences or expectations in relation to the three options, you may also need to consider if you will need to get more information to help you with your decision.

Parenting	Adoption	Abortion
I feel that every woman should have a child.	I don't think I could give up a baby after nine months of pregnancy.	My relationship is not stable enough to bring a child into it.
It is important to have the support of others around you when having a baby.	I'm against abortion but I don't want to parent.	Children need both a mother and a father.
I couldn't consider having a baby at my age.	There are a lot of great people who would like to have a baby but cannot.	My religious beliefs are opposed to abortion.
Having a child would be the best thing to happen to me.	The child might wonder where the biological parents are and why they did not want them.	I don't want to be a single mother.
My partner and I both want to have a baby.		I could be a parent later on in my life.
I believe single mothers struggle to support a baby.	I do not like the idea that someone else will care for my baby.	I am afraid I may not be able to get pregnant again.
		My partner and/or family is against abortion.

Our Vision ...

All women have the knowledge and power to take control of their sexual health and reproductive choices.

I believe that it is very important to be financially ready when having a baby.	Even though I would always be the biological parent I would not have to parent the child.	I would like to have a child when I am better able to support a child.
I like my lifestyle too much to change for a child.	I might always wonder where the child is.	My partner doesn't want a baby, and I want to consider him in this decision.
My own parents were	Adopted children are not always treated well.	I had an abortion some time ago and I think I won't cope with another abortion.
Every child should have a mother and father.	The other family could give the child what I cannot.
.....	I (or someone I know) was adopted.
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What are my goals, plans or dreams?

My goals, plans, dreams:

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When making the decision as to which choice is best for you, something else to consider would be where the pregnancy fits with your goals, plans or dreams. The following questions may help you to look first of all at your goals, plans and dreams, but also where the pregnancy fits within these.

- What do I want out of life for myself?
- What do I think is important?
- In the next five or ten years I hope to have achieved ...
- How would having a child now help/hinder achieving these?
- How would adopting the child out help/hinder achieving these?
- How would having an abortion help/hinder achieving these?
- In five years time I am planning to be ...
- How would having a child now change these plans?
- How would adopting the child out change these plans?

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- Do I have the energy to raise another child?
- Who would support me if I have another child now?
- How would having another child now affect my health and wellbeing?
- Would having another child change my educational or career plans?
- Could I handle another child considering my current workload?
- How would my child/ren deal with another child?
- What would my child/ren gain if I had another child?

Future Children

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Future Children

Sometimes women are concerned about the risks associated with an abortion and if having an abortion will affect their ability to have children in the future. A review of the medical evidence shows that there is no increased risk of infertility from having an abortion in Australia, where abortion is provided safely and lawfully by a skilled doctor. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has stated that "abortion is safer than carrying a pregnancy to term and that complications are uncommon." However, the surgical abortion procedure does carry some risks, such as infection and perforation of the uterus, and it is very important that you understand these fully if you do opt to have an abortion.

Thinking about my partner

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Partner

This section is for those women who want to include the man involved in the pregnancy in the decision-making process. It is important to remember that the final decision rests with you, the pregnant woman.

- Does my partner want to have a child? Another child?
- Have we talked about our reasons for wanting/not wanting a child? Another child?
- Is our relationship a happy and strong one, which would give a child a good home?
- Could we share the work of looking after a child? Another child?
- How well do we know each other – especially in relation to our views on parenting?
- Could we share our love with a child or with more than one child without being jealous?

Children by Choice
Association Incorporated

Support us ...

Make a donation today and ensure that we can continue to make a positive difference for women.

Membership of the association is open to all who agree with our aims.

Call us to explore opportunities to volunteer.

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Disclaimer:
This information is intended as a general guide only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, we accept no responsibility for errors or omissions. This information is no substitute for independent professional advice.

Making a decision about whether to continue a pregnancy or not can be extremely stressful for all involved in that decision. The shock of an unplanned pregnancy or a pregnancy that has had medical complications can greatly add to this stress. This may be placing an enormous strain on you and those around you and making it difficult for everybody to act as understanding, considerate and supportive friends to one another.

Remember, seek out people who will be supportive and understanding of you, without pressuring you to make one decision or another.

Can I make a decision now

Now that you have considered and explored your choices and feelings, values and beliefs, expectations and previous experiences regarding all of the options, and obtained more information, you may be ready to make a decision which is best for you.

Throughout your decision making process, know that many women have decided for and against abortion, adoption and parenting. An abortion, adoption or parenting decision does not put you into a world of simple good and bad. However you reach your decision, whatever choice you make may leave you with some qualms and uncertainty. Therefore, although you may believe you have made the best decision for you, it still may feel that it is not perfect decision. It is natural to continue to have some mixed feelings. What you will have to do in this case is ask yourself, "Can I live with this decision?" and maybe "What can I do to manage these feelings?"

If you are as yet undecided, you may like to explore the information on our website or you may like to call Children by Choice to discuss the situation further. Take your time, while remembering that it is important for your health to decide as soon as you can – to access pre-natal care if you are continuing or to access an earlier termination.

Remember, you have considered this decision and you have done your best. Despite the fact that others around you may be trying to make the decision for you, the decision is yours and you will make the best decision possible.