

## **Facing a crisis pregnancy**

Deciding what to do about an unplanned pregnancy can be very difficult.

If you think you may be pregnant, the first step is to take a pregnancy test. Women whose home pregnancy tests show they are pregnant often go to a health care provider to have the results confirmed.

If you are pregnant, you have three options to think about — abortion, adoption and parenting. Reading and learning about each one will help you get the facts and may help you decide. It may also help to weigh the benefits and risks of each one. Think about which benefits and risks are most important to you.

### 1. Abortion

Every woman's situation is different, and only you can decide what is best in your case. If you're trying to decide if abortion is the right option for you, you may find it helpful to list the advantages and disadvantages. Think about what advantages or disadvantages are most important to you. Consider how you feel and what you think about abortion, what you want for your life and for your family or future family.

#### Some Things to Ask Yourself If You Are Thinking About Abortion

- Am I ready to become a parent?
- Can I afford to have a child?
- Can I afford to have an abortion?
- What would it mean for my future and my family's future if I had a child now?
- Would I consider putting the child up for adoption?
- Do I have strong religious beliefs about abortion?
- How do I feel about other women who have abortions?
- How important is it to me what other people will think about my decision?
- Can I handle the experience of having an abortion?
- Is anyone pressuring me to have an abortion? Am I being pressured not to have an abortion?
- Would I be willing to tell a parent or go before a judge if my state requires it?

Think about what your answers mean to you. You may want to discuss your answers with your partner, someone in your family, a friend, a trusted religious adviser, or a counselor.

## 2. Adoption

The most common reasons a woman chooses adoption are

- She is not ready to be a parent.
- She cannot afford to raise a baby.
- She feels that raising a baby now would make it too difficult to work or go to school.
- She doesn't want to be a single parent.
- She feels too young or too immature to raise a child.
- She believes adoption is the best chance for her child to be well-cared for financially and emotionally.

Some Things to Ask Yourself If You Are Thinking About Adoption

- Am I ready to be a parent?
- Can I afford to be a parent now?
- What would it mean for my future if I had a child now?
- Can I accept not being my child's primary parent?
- Does adoption feel like what I should do, not what I want to do?
- Would I consider abortion?
- Is someone pressuring me to choose adoption?
- Am I prepared to go through pregnancy and childbirth?
- Will I be able to cope with the feeling of loss that I may have?
- Do I have people in my life who will help me through the pregnancy and adoption process?
- How do I feel about other women who choose to place their children for adoption?
- How important is it to me what other people will think about my decision?

Think about what your answers mean to you. You may want to discuss your answers with your partner, someone in your family, a friend, a trusted religious adviser, or a counselor.

## 3. Parenting

Though parenting is hard work, it brings many rewards. Being a parent can be exciting and deeply rewarding. It can help you grow, understand yourself better, and enhance your life. Parents can feel delight at their child's accomplishments and the love and bond they share.

Many people say that parenting brings great happiness and a deeper understanding of themselves.

But parents often give up a lot for their children. Meeting a child's needs can be very challenging. Parents deal with less sleep and less time to do the things they need and want to do. Having a baby is expensive, and many people find it hard to support their children. Having children can also put a parent's school plans or career on hold.

#### Some Things to Ask Yourself If You Are Thinking About Raising a Child

- Am I ready to help a child feel wanted and loved?
- Am I ready to cope with a tighter budget, less time for myself, and more stress?
- Do I have the support of family and friends?
- Am I ready to accept responsibility for all my child's needs?
- Would I prefer to have a child at another time?
- Is anyone pressuring me to continue or end the pregnancy?
- How do I feel about other women who have children from unplanned pregnancies?
- Can I afford to have a child?
- What would it mean for my future and my family's future if I had a child now?
- How important is it to me what other people will think about my decision?
- Can I handle the experience of pregnancy and raising a child?

If you are already a parent, ask yourself how bringing another child into your family will affect your other children.

Think about what your answers mean to you. You may want to discuss your answers with your partner, someone in your family, a friend, a trusted religious adviser, or a counselor.