

PRESENTING ADOPTION

A GUIDE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

There are many effective and positive ways to present adoption to your clients. Below are suggestions for you to adapt to your personal style and needs:

LEAD-INS...

- "Have you thought about adoption?"
- "Did you know adoption has changed?"
- "A lot has changed, you have choices you may not know you have."
- "More young women are considering adoption as a way to have their child raised."
- "It's important to have all of the information that's available."
- "I would like you to be able to look back in ten years and feel that I gave you enough information about all of your options."
- "You sound very sure about your decision, and you may continue to feel the way you do now. However, things can always change and I'd like to feel that you have all the information you might need."
- "It's my job / responsibility to tell you about all of your options."
- "You can always use this information for a friend."

SUGGESTIONS...

- Be brief unless you are asked for more details.
- Inform, don't try to persuade.
- Give the three-point definition of open adoption: the birthparents *choose* the adopting parents, meet and get to know them and have the *opportunity* for ongoing contact.
- Be positive. Avoid using negative images. Adoption is ONE loving and responsible option; it is not the ONLY loving and responsible option!
- Acknowledge that adoption is not the best option for everyone but that, for some, open adoption is just right.
- Speak in the 3rd person – "*birthmothers* can choose the parents" or "*women who choose adoption* often decide to stay in touch over the years," not "*you* could place your child." "You" statements can make a woman who is weighing her options feel pressured.
- Share an adoption story.
- Include adoption information / brochure as the rule, for all of your clients – not just in "special" cases. In other words, don't make an adoption decision for your client before she can weigh all the options for herself!

Listed below are some key facts about adoption which you may want to include in your discussion with a client when she asks for more information about adoption:

1. Adoption has changed.
2. Birthmoms can select the parents for their baby and can meet and get to know them.
3. Birthmoms can spend time with their babies at the hospital if they wish.
4. Birthmoms can develop a relationship with the adopting family that allows for ongoing contact with them and the baby.
5. The baby can go directly home from the hospital with the adopting couple without going into foster care.
6. No final adoption decision can be made until after the baby is born. A woman considering placing her child for adoption needs to have the room to weigh her decision and even to rethink it, if necessary.

A truly successful adoption is one in which everyone involved emerges with a sense of peace. Birthmothers never say that adoption was easy; but they often say that their adoption decision was the most powerful, ultimately rewarding experience of their life.

7. Seeking information or counseling from an adoption counselor does not commit someone to choosing adoption.
8. Birthmothers may receive financial assistance for pregnancy-related expenses.
9. An adoption plan can be made at any time during the pregnancy or even after the baby is born.
10. The birthfather will probably need to be notified about the adoption plan, and his cooperation is both encouraged and welcomed. However, there may be situations when his involvement is not possible. It is best for a woman considering adoption to consult an adoption counselor about her own individual set of circumstances.
11. Adoption counseling is free of cost and is available to the entire family.
12. Just because an adoption is considered "open" doesn't mean that a woman's decision is not confidential and private – it is. She alone has the right to decide who, among her friends and family, will know about her plan.



INDEPENDENT ADOPTION CENTER
www.adoptionhelp.org • (800) 877-OPEN (6736)

A nonprofit, licensed agency providing open adoption services, no-cost professional counseling, open adoption planning, and birthparent peer support.

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PresentingAdoption_4/24/07