

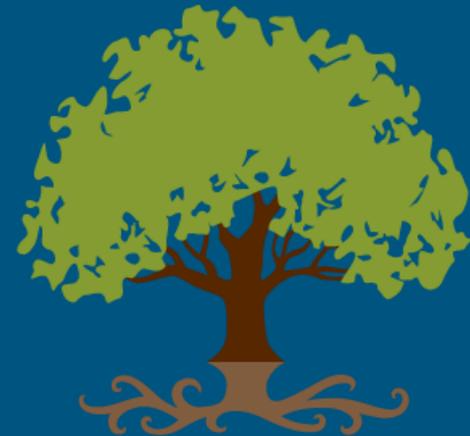
A photograph of a dirt path in a forest, with a blue and yellow gradient overlay. The path is in the foreground, leading into a dense forest of trees. The overlay is a large, semi-transparent rectangle that covers most of the image. The text is white and centered within the blue part of the overlay.

Empowering Expectant Parents: PREGNANCY OPTIONS COUNSELING

OPEN ADOPTION & FAMILY SERVICES

About Open Adoption & Family Services

- Non-profit agency
- Licensed in Oregon and Washington
- In the past 34 years, we have placed over 1,500 children in open adoptions
- We've become the experts in open adoption in the NW, and spokespeople nationwide
- Unique in providing all-options pregnancy counseling
- Birthparent led Board of Directors
- We welcome diversity



**Open Adoption
& Family Services**

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Bill of Rights in an Unintended Pregnancy



- Have access to information about all of your options.
- Freely explore your options without pressure or judgment.
- Receive respect, compassion and acceptance.
- Receive unbiased, non-directive pregnancy options counseling from qualified counselors.
- Have your choice honored, regardless of what it is.

Values Exploration on a Personal and Professional Level

- What are your values regarding pregnancy options (parenting, abortion and adoption)?
- Do you have personal experience with these choices?
- What were you raised to believe? Do you feel differently now?
- How do you think your personal values and beliefs may (consciously or unconsciously) influence your work with expectant parents?



Personal Values Exercise

Imagine...

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Beliefs Activity



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Exploring All Pregnancy Options



- Making an informed decision
- Avoiding assumptions
- The power of language in framing the conversation
- Creating an emotionally safe place
- Importance of feeling understood, cared for, empowered, informed, and not judged
- Letting go of any investment in her decision

Engaging Expectant Fathers

- It is important to engage interested fathers using the same techniques used to engage others: treating them with dignity and respect.
- Why engage the father?
- How do I engage the father?

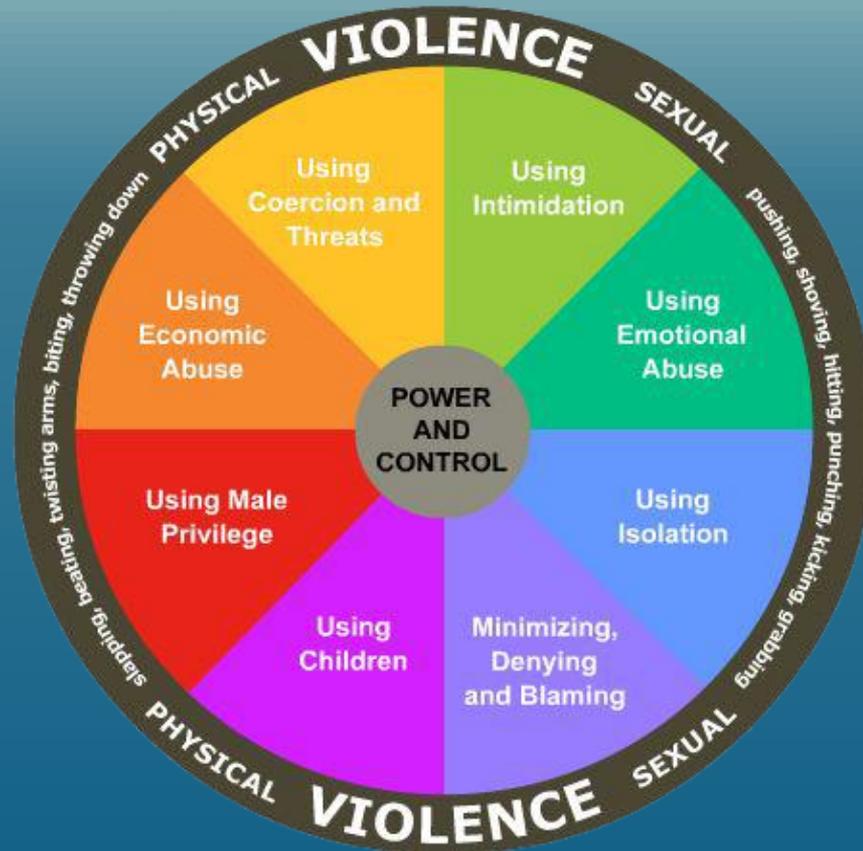


Domestic Violence and Pregnancy

- As a helping professional you are in a position to provide a domestic violence assessment for the mom.
- You can assess if domestic violence is an issue and if it is influencing a mom's decision.



Domestic Violence Wheel



Parenting



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When the Choice is Parenting

- Counselors connect clients to resources. 211info.org has a comprehensive list:
 - Healthy Families, Oregon
Mother's Care, Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start
 - Housing assistance
 - Public assistance
 - Parenting support organizations



Abortion



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Difficult Questions/Statements

- What would you do if you were in my place?
- I feel like having an abortion would be really selfish.
- My mom/dad will be so angry with me.



Adoption



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Why do I need to know about adoption?

- “Adoption never considered.”
- “Moms are already parenting.”
- “Culture isn’t supportive of adoption.”



Choosing Parents



- In depth options counseling
- Adoptive parents are carefully screened
- We welcome diversity
- Right to information
- Adoptive parents genuinely seeking an open adoption relationship

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Adoption Planning and Counseling



- Choose, meet, and begin Relationship
- Ongoing counseling
- Services for birth family
- Legally enforceable agreement for ongoing visits

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Birth Plans & Placement



- Birth and hospital plan, we follow her wishes
- Counselor there to support all parties
- Sign legal consents only when she's ready
- Entrustment Ceremony
- Older children placements
- Disruptions

Relationship Building & Lifelong Services



- We have 34 years of relationship building expertise.
- We provide free:
 - Lifelong counseling
 - Relationship guidance
 - Annual birthmother retreat
 - Thriving open adoption community

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Open Adoption as an Alternative to State Adoption



- Collaborative relationship with DHS.
- Proactively plan an open adoption as an alternative to foster care and state adoption.
- Provides a voice in their adoption, hand-select the family and an ongoing relationship with their child.

Benefits of OAFS' Alternative to State Adoptions

- Moms at risk of state intervention see this open adoption process as an empowering choice.
- If adoption is likely to be in her future, she deserves choices as to what that adoption looks like.



Video: Open Adoption Alternative to DHS Intervention



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All Options Pregnancy Counseling: Non-coercive Techniques



- Express empathy for her situation.
- Use open ended questions/statements.
- Dispel misconceptions by normalizing.
- Scaling.
- Summarize for understanding.

All Options Pregnancy Counseling: An Empowerment Model

- Tools for Your Agency

Tools for Your Agency: Providing Information on All Pregnancy Options
(This handout intended for service providers)

Take time to explore how the following elements affect expectant parents' decision about the pregnancy:

- Knowledge and feelings of each pregnancy outcome
- Values, including personal, religious, spiritual, and cultural
- Expectations from family and community
- Goals and future planning (high school, college, vocational programs, and career planning)
- Financial situation and access to resources
- Who is in their support system, and what support do they offer (realistically)
- Past experiences with pregnancies, parenting or adoption, either personally or among close family and friends
- Gestational age of pregnancy
- Relationship with the birth father/current partner(s)
- Explore prenatal care, access to insurance
- Access to housing, employment

When addressing the option(s) that they are not willing to consider:

- What do they know about this option?
- Is there anything more would they like to learn about this option before ruling it out?
- Assure them that you need not discuss this option further at this time, but that they can always come back to it as needed

When addressing the option(s) that they are ambivalent about:

- What additional information would they like about this option?
- What would be the pros and cons of choosing this option?

1-800-775-1133 Fax: 604-671-1889-6742 www.openadoption.org



All Options Pregnancy Counseling: An Empowerment Model

- Values, including personal, religious, spiritual, and cultural
- Expectations from family and community
- Who is in their support system, and what support can they offer?
- Past pregnancies
- Financial situation and availability of resources



Culturally Responsive Services

- Aware and respectful.
- See the mom as an individual first.
- Being sincerely open about lack of knowledge of cultural specifics.
- Respecting role of family and friends in decision-making.
- Knowing that there is diversity within cultures- each individual is unique.



All Options Pregnancy Counseling: An Empowerment Model

- Outline for Options Counseling

Outline for Options Counseling

Beginning the Session: My name is _____ and I'm a _____ at _____ (agency name). I'm here to create a safe, non-judgmental space for you to explore all of your pregnancy options. Everything we talk about will be confidential, however, if you share that you are harming yourself or another, I will need to report that to ensure you and those around you are safe. We will have _____ (length of time) _____ together today. As we begin, I want to remind you that you do not need to make a decision today. This is a very personal choice and there aren't any right or wrong answers. By exploring each choice thoroughly, you will gain clarity about what choice feels best to you.

Questions (select questions you feel are most appropriate for the circumstances):

- How did you feel when you first found out you were pregnant?
- What do you see as your pregnancy options?
- Before you were pregnant, what were your impressions of adoption/abortion/parenting based on your values, cultural and religious beliefs?
- What additional information would you like to have about adoption/abortion/parenting?
- What are the pros and cons of choosing adoption/abortion/parenting?
- How might you feel after making this decision?
- How do you envision integrating this decision into your identity?
- Is there anyone you can talk to about the decision you are trying to make?
- What are the expectations of your family and community?
- What does it feel like to not be totally sure what the best option is for you?
- Is there a specific time each day that you can set aside to journal, talk to someone, or think about each of your options?
- What is your relationship like with the father? Will he be involved? If so, in what ways?
- What do you hope your life looks like in five years?

Specific Questions Related to Each Option

- **Adoption:** Do you know what open adoption is? What qualities would you be seeking in an adoptive family? What would you want your relationship with them to look like?
- **Abortion:** Do you have information about the types of abortion, including the procedures and costs?
- **Parenting:** What resources do you envision needing after making this choice (including financial, housing, baby items, childcare)?

Questions you would like to Add:

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Small Group Role Play

A light blue silhouette of a tree with a rounded canopy, positioned on the left side of the slide.

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Debrief and Take Away

- Do you feel more prepared to provide pregnancy options counseling?
- What new tools, ideas or materials will you take with you today?



Next Steps

- Call OA&FS with any questions, 1-800-772-1115
- Staff a case
- Meet with expectant parent to provide in depth options counseling and/or open adoption services
- Call or email us at info@openadopt.org for more packets, brochures, video links and materials



Thank You!

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