

Support with making a decision about a pregnancy

 Information for patients



In hospital and in the community

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Introduction

It can understandably be difficult to decide if you want to continue with a pregnancy or have a termination (abortion). This booklet has some ideas of ways to help you make this decision. It is possible that when you first read this booklet you may feel upset. This is a normal reaction under the circumstances. If you feel that you are getting too upset, put the booklet down and distract yourself. You can always come back to reading it later.

If you think you need further support in making this decision, you can ask to be referred to the Counselling Service on G1 by talking to a member of staff on G1 or contacting the service on:

- **0114 226 8590**

You can see someone from the Counselling Service even if you have already had an appointment.

Your options

Your options regarding your pregnancy are:

- Having an abortion,
- Adoption, or
- Continuing with the pregnancy.

The 'tools' below are designed to help you in the process of deciding between these.

There are different types of abortion (called 'medical' and 'surgical' abortion) and these will be discussed with you at your pre-abortion assessment appointment with a nurse. You can ask the nurse any questions you have about these different methods and they can also give you an information sheet to read and take with you if this would be helpful.

Decision-making tools

a) Pros and cons list

Write down the pros (positives) and cons (negatives) of each of your options in a table like the one below. Seeing your thoughts and feelings on paper can help you weigh up both sides of the decision. It isn't always about how many things are in each list but what they are that can help you decide.

Options	Pros	Cons
Abortion		
Adoption		
Continue with the pregnancy		

b) Your future life imagined

Really try to picture the three possible options. Perhaps think about how it might be 1 year from now, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years etc. What do these look like in your mind? How do you **feel** when imagining them? What about the **practicalities**? Here are some things that can be helpful to consider:

- Consider your financial situation. Are you able to afford having a baby and bringing it up?
- Think about your personal beliefs about abortion and adoption.
- Think about your health – how do you think having a baby, having an abortion, or adoption would affect your physical and mental health?
- Think about your support network – who could support you with having a baby, having an abortion, or with adoption?
- Which option do you think you would be able to cope with the best?

c) Notice your instinctive reaction

Sometimes coming quickly face-to-face with one of the options can reveal your feelings about it. One way of doing this is by using a coin: decide which side of the coin is which option (e.g. continuing with the pregnancy or having an abortion). Flip the coin and notice your reaction at whatever side it lands on. This is not about letting the coin decide what you do, but seeing how you think and feel about which side the coin lands on can give you helpful information about what you are thinking about your decision.

d) Talk to other people

Some women can feel alone when trying to decide what to do about a pregnancy. It can be helpful to share your thoughts and feelings with other people, such as a partner, friends, family, or healthcare professionals (e.g. staff on G1 and your GP). However, whatever decision you make is **your choice** and not somebody else's.

e) Wise other

Think about the wisest person you know – someone who understands that this can be a difficult decision to make and who wants the best for you, both now and in the future. This wise person could be someone you know in real life, a celebrity, or a character from TV/film/books. It could even be an animal or object that you see as being very wise (an example of this might be a wise owl or an old tree). Pick someone or something that you see as compassionate (which includes having wisdom, strength and warmth, and being non-judgemental). What would this 'wise other' say to you? What would they want for you? How does this make you think and feel about your decision?

For more information about compassion, please see:

<http://compassionatemind.co.uk/individuals>

f) Look at the Abortion Act

It can be helpful to consider the law around abortions and think about how it applies to you and your thoughts and feelings about the pregnancy. It is a legal requirement that two doctors agree to an abortion. In practice this means that two doctors will look at your notes and review your case before an abortion continues.

If you would like more information about the Abortion Act, please see:
www.reproductivereview.org/images/uploads/Britains_abortion_law.pdf

g) A little more time

The time you have to make this decision can depend on your circumstances and the gestation of the pregnancy, but sometimes it can help women to give themselves a couple more days to consider their options. You can use the tools suggested in this booklet during this time, but also try to get on with day-to-day life and not concentrate solely on the pregnancy decision. Sometimes the answer can 'unfold' or become clear to you with a little more time.

h) Other resources

- **www.fpa.org.uk/unplanned-pregnancy-and-abortion/pregnant-and-dont-know-what-do**
- Leaflet 'Pregnant and don't know what to do':
www.fpa.org.uk/sites/default/files/pregnant-and-dont-know-what-to-do.pdf
- **<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/pregnancy/pregnant-now-what/thinking-about-abortion>**
(**note:** this is an American organisation so some of the information is specific to the US, but some is also relevant to women in the UK)

What should I do if I have any further questions?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this booklet with someone, please ask a member of staff on G1 either face-to-face or by contacting us on:

- **0114 226 8590**



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