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Where can pregnant women get adoption information? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

A dear friend is pregnant and would like to talk to somebody about adoption. In searching the web, I have consistently found all suggestions regarding adoption to be restricted and vague, usually along the lines of an admonition to speak with a "health care professional." Where exactly do pregnant women turn for counseling on adoption? Is there an adoption-orientated clinic like Planned Parenthood (I could find nothing about adoption on PP's web site)? Is there a network of any kind available to women who are considering adoption but haven't made up their minds? Does PP offer adoption counseling? Any specific guidance you could provide would be most appreciated. My friend does not have an established relationship with a doctor and is very much in need of counseling from women who have "been there." Time is an issue, obviously, and the sooner she can see somebody, the better. Please respond quickly!

Answer

Dear Reader,

As you've found through your research about adoption options, it's often suggested to speak with a health care professional. Pregnant women can talk with an OB/GYN, nurse practitioner, or other health care provider. Other women — such as your friend who doesn't have an established relationship with a health care provider — can contact the following resources, including Planned Parenthood, which does have adoption-related information:

Planned Parenthood or other Family Planning Clinics

Aside from offering birth control information and pregnancy testing, Planned Parenthood and other clinics typically discuss pregnancy options and offer information concerning places that can work with a pregnant woman if she decides to place her child for adoption. You can be connected to your local [Planned Parenthood](#) ^[2] by calling **1.800.230.PLAN (-7526)**. For more information about adoption, Planned Parenthood's [Adoption](#) ^[3] page.

Adoption Agencies

These agencies are helpful for women who have already made the decision to place their child for adoption. They may also be helpful for women who may want to find out more information about the adoption process. The [Independent Adoption Center](#) ^[4] at **1.800.877.6736** provides

information about open adoptions. This means that the birth and adoptive parents have some degree of contact. For referrals that provide closed adoptions — the birth and adoptive parents' names are kept secret — contact the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) [5], the government's information clearinghouse on adoption and child welfare information.

A good counselor provides unbiased information to help make a decision that is in the best interest of those involved. Counselors are just like the rest of us and may have strong personal beliefs about what options are "right" and "wrong." The difference is that their beliefs must not become part of the counseling session. It is also good to note that some family planning clinics, crisis pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, or other adoption services believe that adoption is the only option for a woman who is pregnant, and are not willing to include a discussion of pregnancy termination procedures. Adoption experts suggest asking the following questions of the counselor to be sure that s/he is meeting the client's needs. Pass these questions on to your friend so that she can find out how her counselor will support her:

- If I feel I cannot carry my pregnancy to term, how will you help me?
- If I decide to take care of my baby myself, how will you help me do that?
- If I want to place my baby for adoption, will you help me find an adoption agency or attorney who will listen to what I think is right for us?

If she's uncomfortable with the answers, she may want to seek another counselor's guidance.

Some who consider adoption find it helpful to contact birth parent support groups to speak with couples who have "been there." These groups are often pillars of support for those who choose to place their child for adoption, and often provide insight into this critical decision. Encourage your friend to talk with her partner or trusted clergy for additional support.

As a public service, the [National Foster Care & Adoption Directory](#) [6] provides a state specific list including adoption specialists, local private adoption agencies, public agencies, and support groups. They provide comprehensive information on adoption, including the fact sheet, "[Are you Pregnant and Thinking about Adoption?](#)" [7]. Hope this information helps your friend find support to guide her with the decision that's best for her situation.

Alice!

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