

I'm pregnant— WHAT DO I DO NOW?!

Take your time. If you're pregnant and it wasn't quite planned, take a deep breath and try not to panic. Even though you're not the first person this has happened to (and won't be the last), the fact that it's your life makes it a big deal, right? Just don't rush into a decision.

You can't change what has happened, but you can carefully consider your next step. You may feel pressure to make a quick decision. Instead, give yourself some time. Where you go from here will have a significant impact on your life. You have options, so make an *informed* decision.

SHARE THE NEWS

Revealing your unplanned pregnancy to those closest to you can be difficult. But it's important to let them know so you won't have to deal with everything alone. Family members and friends may react in different ways, but open and honest communication is vital. Those who have been through a similar situation can often provide valuable support. So make a list of people you need to tell about your pregnancy.

TIMING IS IMPORTANT

When is the best time to break the news? How will you tell them—in person? In a handwritten note? Will you go alone or take someone with you? Where will you tell them—at the kitchen table? In your living room? At someone else's home? Think through the details in advance. Plan to tell your family when everyone has time to sit down and talk without interruption. If possible, avoid starting the discussion late at night or early in the morning when everyone is leaving for work or school. It may take some time for your family to process this news.



PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THEIR REACTIONS

You may think you know how your family will respond, but you also might be surprised. It probably took you some time for the reality to sink in, so give them time, too. If they react with judgmental or condemning words, remind them that this is a difficult time for you and you need their support. If they try to pressure you into making a quick decision about parenting, adoption or abortion, ask them to give you time to carefully consider all your options.

I'M FEELING PRESSURED...

Stand strong if others are pressuring you. This is your decision—one that you will live with for the rest of your life. You owe it to yourself to get the facts. No one can force you into a decision, so carefully consider all your options. Ask God to give you strength and wisdom during this challenging time. Seek His help. He cares about you and your future.

ASK YOURSELF:

- "Who in my life genuinely cares about me?"
- "How do I really feel about each of my options—abortion, adoption, parenting?"
- "How did I feel about each option before I found out I was pregnant?"
- "How will my choice affect my health? My body? My future?"
- "How will I feel about my decision one year from now? Ten years from now?"

I'M REALLY NERVOUS...

It is normal to be nervous about how your family might react to the news of your unplanned pregnancy. If you are concerned for your safety or think someone might try to harm you, you should seek a safe environment. Surround yourself with people you trust—those who love you and care about your well-being.

WHERE YOU GO FROM HERE MATTERS.

You can come through this a stronger woman. You owe it to yourself to take time and get the facts. This is your life, your pregnancy and your future.

YOU CAN DO IT.

FACE IT TOGETHER

Many people will offer advice, but it's important to seek the wisdom and counsel of those who understand the unique dynamics of an unplanned pregnancy. Contact your local pregnancy medical clinic or pregnancy resource center for confidential and compassionate care.

each other's need for time and space. A family crisis has the ability to drive family What you are going through is not easy. There are no simple answers. Face this situation together. Talk with each other openly and honestly, but also respect members apart or draw them together.

It's not easy—BUT IT'S POSSIBLE

If you need further guidance and encouragement, Focus on the Family has a staff of licensed, professional Christian counselors available to talk with you at no charge. Just call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459).

FCUS PREAMILY

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she's pregnant.
NOW
WHAT?

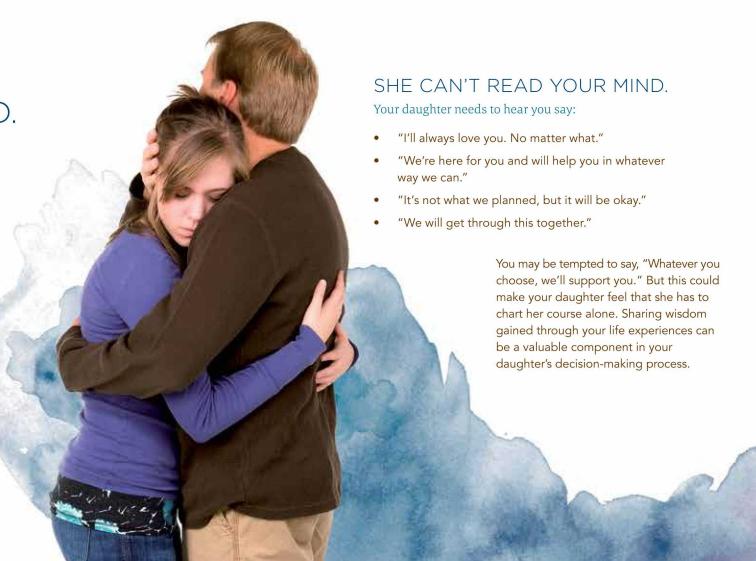
by Holly M. Duncan, M.Ed., LPC

She's pregnant.
YOU'RE SHOCKED.

When your daughter breaks the news to you, try not to overreact! Your initial response will have a significant impact on your future relationship with your daughter. If you have already blown it, it is not too late to show her that you care.

Yes, it is normal to feel shocked and disappointed. But remember that she, too, is facing an overwhelming situation. Put yourself in her shoes and try to understand her fears.

Bottom line. Remain calm. Don't burn bridges by saying something today that you might regret tomorrow. More than likely, your family is facing a future none of you had planned. However, that does not mean your world is coming to an end. Though it's hard to imagine right this minute, good can come from this. Live one moment at a time.



SHE NEEDS YOU NOW MORE THAN EVER

• Reassure her of your unconditional love and concern.

• Affirm your confidence in her.

• Avoid blaming or having a condemning attitude.

Help your daughter make a pros/cons list of her options.

Trust God wholeheartedly.

YOU CAN BE HER ADVOCATE

Create a non-threatening atmosphere.

• Listen as she talks about her feelings and plans.

• Encourage her to make rational, thoughtful decisions.

• Respect her feelings about the baby's father.

Understand her need for time and privacy.

Support your daughter by offering to tell close family members about her pregnancy. They may have suggestions you did not think of, and they might offer additional love, support and resources. Siblings may offer your daughter unique sympathy because they are closer in age.



As others hear the news, you will receive varied reactions and opinions. However, you are not obligated to act on every suggestion made by others. Concentrate on your family's future and well-being. Many parents would say that while the timing of their daughter's pregnancy was not what they had wished, they found great comfort in knowing that they helped her plan a safe and secure future for her child—their grandchild. Work together to support one another and create a plan that will strengthen your relationship.

Even though your lives have been catapulted into unknown territory, remember that God is big enough to handle your fears, doubts and questions. Pain can be a catalyst for personal growth. Rest in the fact that His love is everlasting and unconditional.

Although this news may come as a surprise, be encouraged—many families have successfully navigated these turbulent waters and come out stronger on the other side.

YOU CAN GET THROUGH THIS.