

EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES IN PREGNANCY OPTIONS COUNSELING

- **USE POSITIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE** – The word adoption in the past has had a negative connotation. It's no wonder with words like "give up, release, get rid of..." so commonly used. Adoption is a positive, loving way to handle an untimely pregnancy and build a family. The language we use can help take the negativity out of such a positive option.
- **USE THIRD PERSON** – Instead of saying, "you would choose the couple" or "you would have ongoing contact," say "a birthmother would choose the couple or "she would have ongoing contact." This makes the conversation less threatening and non-pressuring.
- **ACTIVE LISTENING** – If she says, "I could never do that," actively respond by saying, "Sounds like you have strong feelings... what specifically...?" Listen to the responses. Confirm and validate her views and fears.
- **GIVE HER CONTROL** – These young women are typically in a powerless situation. Let them have control over the direction of the conversation if they need it. Come back to active listening when they've got what they came for.
- **COACH YOUR RESPONSES AS A WAY TO HELP YOU HELP HER** – "Sounds like you feel pretty clear about your decision, but you could help me do my job better if you'd share with me some of the reasoning that went into your decision."
- **ADMIT YOUR OWN DISCOMFORT** – Allow her discomfort, while opening the matter up for conversation and exploration; "I'm not sure what I would do, either, in your situation. I don't know if I could choose adoption or not, it's really hard." Pause, give her the opportunity to share her thoughts. If she doesn't jump in, you can add, "I do know that I've admired the women I've worked with who have chosen adoption. They've been [thoughtful, loving, courageous – whatever description fits best]." This will either encourage more exploration with you or at least leave her with a positive image and the knowledge that you won't secretly judge her if she chooses another adoption plan.



INDEPENDENT ADOPTION CENTER
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