

### **Non-Directive Counseling Guidelines for Clinics**

- I. **PURPOSE:** County Health Department (CHD) clinic staff are to offer pregnant women the opportunity to be provided with non-directive information and counseling for prenatal care and delivery, infant care, adoption and pregnancy termination options.
- II. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES (General Counseling Information):** Pregnancy counseling information disseminated through a clinic should:
- Be provided in a non-judgmental /non-directive manner;
  - Be spoken in a neutral manner containing factual information only (be aware of your tone of voice);
  - Be aware that some words may be judgmental words such as “unfortunately,” “I’m sorry but we don’t,” “I’d like to tell you but I can’t”;
  - Be aware of facial expressions and body language;
  - Be sensitive to differences with or in individual circumstances (i.e. age, culture, ethnicity, and sexual orientation);
  - Assess for signs of domestic violence and provide referral information; and
  - Respect the integrity and authority of the clients to make their own decisions about options.
- III. **TYPE OF STANDARD:** Service
- IV. **OUTCOME:** Provide general counseling and local resource information for prenatal care, adoption and pregnancy termination options.
- V. **PERSONNEL:** Medical Doctors (MDs), Doctors of Osteopathy (DOs), Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs), Physician’s Assistants (PAs), Registered Nurses (RNs), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and Aides/Techs, social workers, within constraints of their practice acts and protocols, nutritionists, health educators, and paraprofessionals who are trained on the dynamics, assessment and interventions involved in non-directive counseling for prenatal care, adoption and pregnancy termination options.
- VI. **COMPETENCIES:** Health care providers should demonstrate knowledge of the responsibilities related to non-directive counseling, according to the constraints of their individual practice acts and protocols. Health care providers should also demonstrate knowledge of assessment, interventions and community resources of non-directive counseling for prenatal and infant care, adoption and pregnancy termination. Professional personnel records should document training as appropriate for their individual practice acts.
- VII. **AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

**For all minors accessing services please refer to TA: FAMPLAN 4, Family Planning Services to Minors**

**A. Education/Counseling:**

**1. Education/Best Practices:**

- a. Individualize all counseling and education to be culturally, educationally, and linguistically appropriate.

- b. Provide information about dangers of prenatal tobacco exposure, alcohol, and other substance use and abuse. Refer for substance abuse treatment when abuse is noted or there is a concern that abuse may be present. The "Tell Us About Yourself Questionnaire" (DH 3131) is a useful tool for eliciting information about psychosocial concerns from clients.
- c. Counsel that domestic violence may increase during pregnancy and provide the hotline number 1(800) 500-1119.
- d. Provide the client with the Family Health Line number 1(800) 451-2229 as a resource to obtain information on family planning, pregnancy and parenting services.
- e. Provide information of the importance of HIV testing during pregnancy and provide the hotline number 1(800) FLA-AIDS.
- f. Provide information on depression and importance of seeking treatment if signs are present. Review symptoms of depression including history of recent weight gain or loss greater than seven pounds, getting less than six hours of sleep on average, loss of interest in activities, or suicidal or homicidal thoughts, or attempts in the last six months. If the person expresses suicidal or homicidal thoughts, consult with a mental health professional immediately.

**2. Counseling:**

- a. Positive Pregnancy Testing Counseling Guidance: (Refer to TA: FAMPLAN 16 for additional information on pregnancy testing and counseling.)
  - Provide neutral, factual information and non-directive pregnancy counseling on each of the options: prenatal care, adoption and pregnancy termination options.
  - Upon request, provide referral information.
- b. Prenatal Care (Refer to TA: MATERNAL 2 for additional information on prenatal care).
  - Inform client of the importance of good health practices during early pregnancy, i.e. good nutrition, folic acid recommendation, early entrance into prenatal care, avoidance of smoking, alcohol and other drugs, exposure to x-rays, toxoplasmosis, safer sex habits and HIV testing.
  - Provide referral information on the following if indicated (see Appendix II):
    - (1) WIC
    - (2) Medicaid
    - (3) List of prenatal care providers
    - (4) Healthy Start.
- c. Assess for signs of domestic violence and provide referral information. (Refer to TA: General 15)

**3. Infant Care/Adoption:**

- a. Inform client that the service is not available at the health department;
- b. Provide local provider information per client's request (see Appendix II);
- c. Refer client to 1 (800) 96-ADOPT for further adoption information;
- d. Inform client of A Safe Haven for Newborns 1(877) 767-BABY; and
- e. Refer client to prenatal care for healthy pregnancy information.

**4. Pregnancy Termination:**

- a. Inform client that the service is not available at the health department;

- b. Inform client that the Florida Statutes forbid the termination of pregnancy in the third trimester of pregnancy unless it is necessary to save or to preserve the life of the pregnant woman.
- c. Provide local provider information or direct to local phone book per client's request (see Appendix II);
- d. Inform client of the need to speak with a provider for additional information and counseling concerning terminating the pregnancy.

**5. Confrontational Situations:**

If the client challenges the information you are providing, or is irate, it is best to:

- Reiterate the neutral role of the clinic and the department;
- Provide factual information;
- Do not get emotional or defensive;
- Report the incident to your supervisor; and
- Document all appropriate information.

## APPENDIX I

### **Possible Questions Regarding Pregnancy Termination and Other Subjects**

#### **How far in my pregnancy can I get an abortion?**

In the state of Florida, the law permits abortions up to the third trimester of pregnancy.

#### **How are abortions performed?**

You will need to contact a provider for additional information concerning the procedures.

#### **How much do abortions cost?**

The health department does not provide this service. You will need to contact a provider for this information. You can look in the yellow pages under abortion services for provider information.

#### **How soon can I get an abortion?**

The health department does not provide this service. You will need to contact a provider for this information.

#### **How effective are abortions?**

This is a complicated question. The health department does not provide this service. Please discuss this with a provider.

#### **What are the risks of having an abortion?**

There are many possible risks to any surgical procedure, including abortion. It is important that you discuss this with the provider performing the abortion.

#### **How will I feel after the procedure?**

The post-abortion experience varies from woman to woman. You will need to discuss this topic with a provider.

#### **How soon can I get pregnant after the procedure?**

Fertility is a complex issue and related to many different factors. You will need to discuss this information with a provider and discuss options for preventing any future unwanted pregnancy.

**APPENDIX II**

**Resource List**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Hotline</b>	<b>Internet Site</b>
Adoption	1 (800) 96-ADOPT	<a href="http://www.adoptflorida.com">http://www.adoptflorida.com</a>
A Safe Haven for Newborns	1 (877) 767-BABY	<a href="http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com">http://www.asafehavenfornewborns.com</a>
Domestic Violence	1 (800) 500-1119	<a href="http://www.fcadv.org">http://www.fcadv.org</a>
Sexual Violence	1 (888) 956-7273	<a href="http://www.fcasv.org">http://www.fcasv.org</a>
HIV / AIDS	800-FLA-AIDS (352-2437) English 800-545-SIDA (545-7432) Spanish 800-AIDS-101 (243-7101) Creole 888-503-7118 TTY	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/hiv/index.htm">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/hiv/index.htm</a> <a href="http://www.myflorida.com/disease_ctrl/aids/index.html">http://www.myflorida.com/disease_ctrl/aids/index.html</a>
Family Health Hotline	1 (800) 451-2229,	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/familyhealth/index.htm">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/familyhealth/index.htm</a>
Substance Abuse Helpline	2-1-1 or 850-224-NEED 850-921-4020 TTY	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/substanceabuse/index.htm">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/substanceabuse/index.htm</a>
Suicide Prevention	2-1-1 or 850-224-NEED 850-921-4020 TTY	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/substanceabuse/index.htm">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/substanceabuse/index.htm</a>
Parent Helpline	1(800) FLA-LOVE	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/parent/">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/parent/</a>
Phone Friend for Children	2-1-1 or (850) 222-1141	<a href="http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/phonefriend/index.htm">http://211bigbend.org/hotlines/phonefriend/index.htm</a>
Breast and Cervical Cancer	1 (800) 451-2229	<a href="http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/bcc/index.html">http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/bcc/index.html</a>
Planned Parenthood	1 (800) 230-PLAN	<a href="http://www.plannedparenthood.org">http://www.plannedparenthood.org</a>