

Yarning about
Pregnancy

working through
your options



This is a resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for those who work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and services.

Content note

This booklet contains information about the adoption and fostering of children that may distress some readers.

Family Planning NSW would like to recognise the grievances caused and pay our respect to the Stolen Generations. Family Planning NSW recognises the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations and the laws and policies that have caused grief, pain and loss. We also pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities that it affects today.

We thank and acknowledge the dedicated community members and health care workers that provided expertise and advice on the resource.

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Yarning about pregnancy – working through your options

This booklet is for people who have an unintended pregnancy and are unsure about what to do. You may have heard some people in your community call this an 'unplanned' pregnancy.

This booklet:

- provides you with information about all of your options
- gives you an idea of what issues to think about
- lets you know where you can get support
- gives you useful tools to help with your decision

How will I know I am pregnant?

Signs of pregnancy can include missing a period, feeling dizzy and tired, feeling sick or vomiting and having sore or larger breasts.

Not all pregnant people experience these signs and symptoms. It is different for everyone. The best way to find out if you are pregnant is to take a pregnancy test or see your doctor.

Pregnancy tests

A pregnancy test can be used to confirm that you are pregnant.

You can buy a pregnancy test from a pharmacy or supermarket. The test will involve urinating on the test stick or catching your urine in a small cup.

You can also get a pregnancy test done at a Family Planning NSW clinic, an Aboriginal Medical Service, GP (general practitioner) or women's health centre. This may sometimes involve a blood test.

The sooner you find out for sure, the more time you have to think about your options.

Pregnancy options

It is important that you take the time you need to make a decision. Your decision will depend on a range of things including your personal circumstances, the support available to you from your family and community and how many weeks pregnant you are.

What are my options?

Continuing the pregnancy – choosing to parent

Continuing the pregnancy – adoption or foster care

Terminating the pregnancy – abortion

Having a yarn with someone can be helpful when thinking about your decision but it can sometimes be difficult to talk to someone close to you. If you need to yarn with someone, Family Planning NSW Talkline is available on 1300 658 886 or talkline@fpnsw.org.au

Talkline provides free and confidential advice and is staffed by experts in pregnancy and reproductive and sexual health.

Talkline is open 8.30am-5.00pm weekdays.

For more information visit www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

Choosing to parent – with or without a partner

What if I decide to become a parent with my partner?



No matter what the situation is, if you are married or de facto, living together or apart, making the commitment to have a child is a big one.

It's okay to feel emotional and worry about how you might cope. It can help to talk with your partner about these feelings and the changes to your relationship, income and lifestyle.

What if things aren't great in my relationship with the dad?



If you're not the type of couple that makes joint decisions or things are rocky, this part of your life may be difficult or overwhelming. You can always get support from your family or community if you need it.





What if I decide to do this on my own?

That's ok too. Lots of mums raise their family without a partner. It's good to ask your family, friends and community networks for support, whether you're living by yourself, at home or with a friend. It is important to yarn with someone you can trust, like me, an Aunt or an Elder.



Extra information

Family Planning NSW Talkline is available on 1300 658 886 or talkline@fpnsw.org.au

There is information about single parenting and successful families on the Raising Children website: <https://goo.gl/ASp3ID>

You may be eligible for financial assistance if you choose to continue the pregnancy. For information on the support offered by Department of Human Services go to <https://goo.gl/uBSfM8>

Some questions to think about

- Do I want to be a parent?
- Is it the right time for me/us to have a child?
- Am I/we financially and emotionally ready for a child?
- Do I/we have enough support to raise a child?
- Am I/we okay with having a long term, committed relationship?
- Would we stay together if there wasn't a pregnancy?
- How could we maintain the best interests of our child if we choose to separate (now or in the future)?

Someone to talk to

If you feel like there is nobody you can yarn with counsellors can help deal with the emotional and practical issues of raising a baby on your own or with a partner.

For more information about this you can contact Pregnancy, Birth and Baby on 1800 882 436 or visit their website: <http://goo.gl/kdlwNI>

It is important to talk to your doctor or nurse to discuss a care plan and any medications you are taking. They can also advise you about tests that check for any pregnancy problems.

Termination of pregnancy – abortion



Aunty, what does abortion mean?



An abortion is the termination or end of a pregnancy. It's a procedure done by a trained doctor or with medication that you can take at home.



So there are two types available in Australia?



That's right. The two options are surgical and medical. **Surgical** abortion involves an operation and **medical** abortion involves taking medications by mouth. Let's give Talkline a call to get more info...



Welcome to Talkline, how can I help you?

I was after some information on abortion of pregnancy.



Happy to help. There are two types of abortions, also called terminations. **Surgical abortion** is available in NSW at private clinics and in some circumstances public hospitals. You don't need a referral from a doctor which means you can call the clinic directly for an appointment and for more information. Some clinics only perform surgical abortions up to 12 weeks of pregnancy while others will perform them up to 20 weeks.



More information

If you decide to have an abortion you should consider these things before making an appointment:

- It is important to know how many weeks pregnant you are. This can be done with an ultrasound
- It is usually best to wait until you are six or seven weeks pregnant before having a surgical abortion

Surgical abortion involves the removal of the lining and contents of the uterus by applying gentle suction to the inside of the uterus with a small plastic tube.

This procedure is:

- performed under light sedation
- safe, simple and low risk when performed by an experienced doctor
- completed in about 15 minutes, with aftercare taking about four hours

After 16 weeks of pregnancy a different procedure is used which can be more complicated and expensive.



What is the other type of abortion?



The other type is **medical abortion**. This is available through private clinics, specialists, trained GPs or via a telemedicine abortion service. Medical abortion is performed at less than nine weeks of pregnancy and usually in your own home.

More information

There are two medications in tablet form. After both are taken the experience is similar to a miscarriage. Most women experience bleeding (may continue for two or more weeks) and cramping (can last about 24 hours). Taking pain relief tablets and having a support person available is recommended.

Other side effects include:

- fever
- chills
- nausea (sick in stomach)
- vomiting

Aftercare support contacts will be given to you by your doctor or clinic. A second visit will need to be made about two weeks later. An ultrasound may be needed to check the medical abortion was complete.



Things to consider

There are many reasons why you might choose to continue the pregnancy or have an abortion, or choose between a surgical or medical abortion. These can include how far along the pregnancy is, your feelings about surgical abortion or having a medical abortion at home and access to services and support.

Cost

The cost will vary across clinics. You should contact clinics directly to find out the costs. Many clinics will include the Medicare rebate.

Other issues that might impact the cost include:

- whether you have a health care card
- how many weeks pregnant you are
- whether you choose a surgical or medical abortion

The cost of a surgical abortion will rise after 13 weeks and become significantly more expensive beyond 15 weeks.

Legal information

Abortion is allowed in all states and territories of Australia under certain circumstances and when carried out by a registered doctor.

You must have enough information to be able to understand and make your own decision.

Your family or partner cannot decide if you should have an abortion or not, although it can be helpful to make the decision together.

For more information you can visit the Children by Choice website: www.childrenbychoice.org.au

Continuing the pregnancy and intrafamily adoption, adoption or foster care

Aunty, I haven't heard much about adoption as an option.



It's not as common but does still happen. Family and Community Services is the government agency that looks after adoption services. Both the birth mum and dad must consent to the adoption. Once the legal process happens all the legal rights and responsibilities of being a parent are removed from the child's birth parents and given to the adoptive parents.



What if the child grows up and wants to find their birth parents?



All adopted children have the legal right to know about their birth family. An adoption caseworker works with the adoptive parents to form a plan that outlines the agreement and how it will be maintained. Sometimes family members will adopt within their own family.



What does it mean to put your child in foster care?



Foster care is where your child is looked after by another family. There are two types of foster care, **temporary** and **long term**.

You can put your child in **temporary foster care** while you sort out accommodation, financial or personal problems. You will remain the child's legal guardian and can see the child.

Long term foster care means you will lose legal guardianship and custody but will still be the legal parent.

Children often become emotionally attached to their foster family.



More information

Family and Community Services provide a range of adoption services. You can contact them on 02 9716 3000 or adoption@community.nsw.gov.au or visit their website: <http://goo.gl/pHei8y>

The following resources provide more information about intrafamily adoption:

Intrafamily adoption fact sheet: <http://goo.gl/vfbHLI>

Aboriginal intrafamily adoption factsheet: <http://goo.gl/v1eFWa>

Torres Strait Islander intrafamily adoption factsheet: <http://goo.gl/Qerdn8>

Find and Connect website: <https://goo.gl/eFBH0Z>

Contraception

Contraception is what a woman and man use if they want to have sex together but don't want to make a baby. Contraception works in different ways to stop the woman's egg and the man's sperm from joining together. If you use contraception you can have sex but you are unlikely to get pregnant.

Whether you decide to continue the pregnancy or have an abortion, it is good to consider your contraception options for the future.

Contraception can be started after birth or an abortion. There are many methods available and the long acting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods are the most effective.

For more information visit www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets or call the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 to yarn with a nurse. Talkline is confidential and anonymous.



You can also download or order a copy of the 'What suits me' booklet at: <https://goo.gl/WMkbG5>

Information for men



Hey Uncle, is it up to my girlfriend to ask me when making a decision about pregnancy?

That's a good question. It's your girlfriend's choice and it can also depend on your relationship. The pregnant person is the only person who can choose to have an abortion. No one else can make that decision for her.



More information

How men take part in making the decision will depend on the circumstances. Going to counselling or talking to an Uncle or Elder about your feelings might help.

If you need more information or to yarn with someone you can contact:

MensLine Australia: 1300 78 99 78 or www.mensline.org.au

Family Planning NSW Talkline: 1300 658 886 or www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

Making a decision

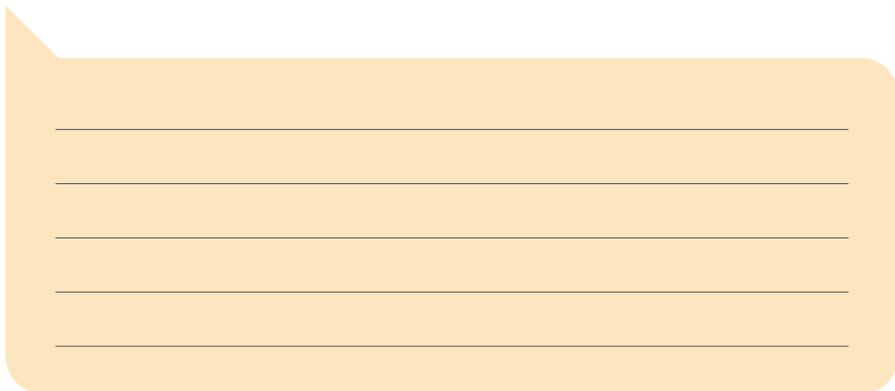
Some people know what they want to do and some are unsure. Whatever you think or feel, you are not alone. You can record your thoughts and feelings in a diary or in the section below to help 'make sense' of what to do.

Things to consider:

- Take the time available to process your options and decision
- Your feelings about the options and decision may change from day to day
- The support networks you have nearby. This can be your family, friends and community
- It can be helpful to talk to a counsellor or trusted health worker
- Look after yourself physically, mentally and spiritually

You might want to write down or think about your current circumstances. It might be helpful to keep a journal of your decision-making process to help map out and record your feelings at the time.

How did you feel when you found out you were pregnant?



How do I feel about...

PARENTING

I feel this way because _____

Where would I go from here? _____

ABORTION

I feel this way because _____

Where would I go from here? _____

ADOPTION / FOSTER CARE

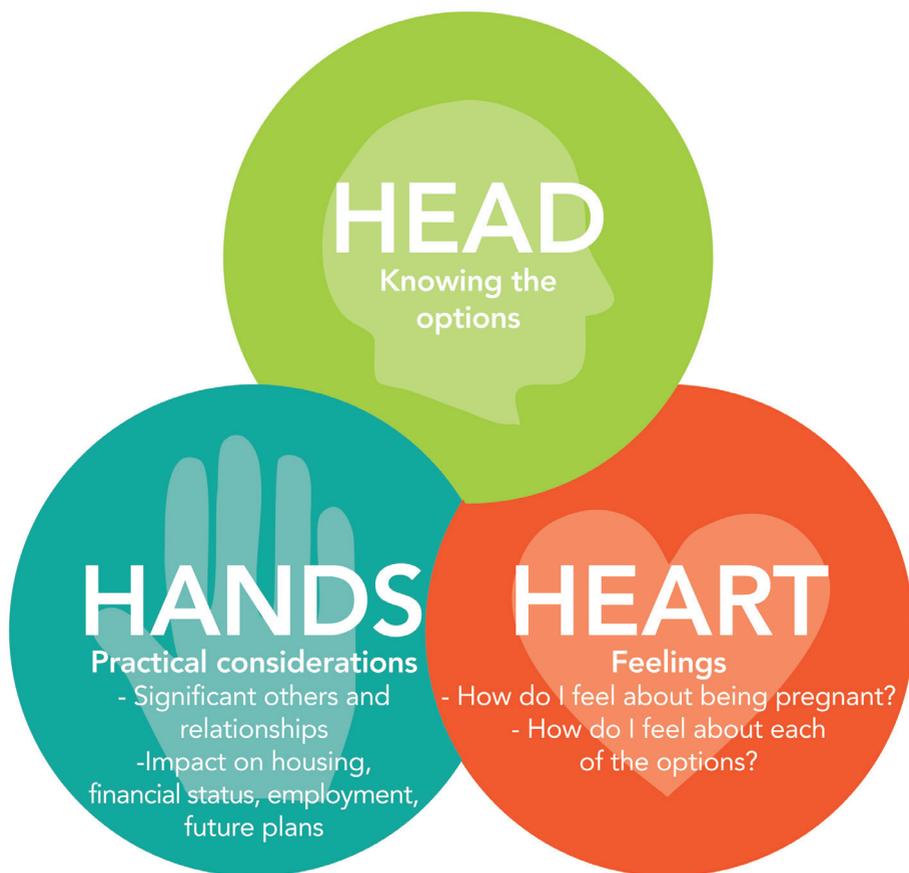
I feel this way because _____

Where would I go from here? _____



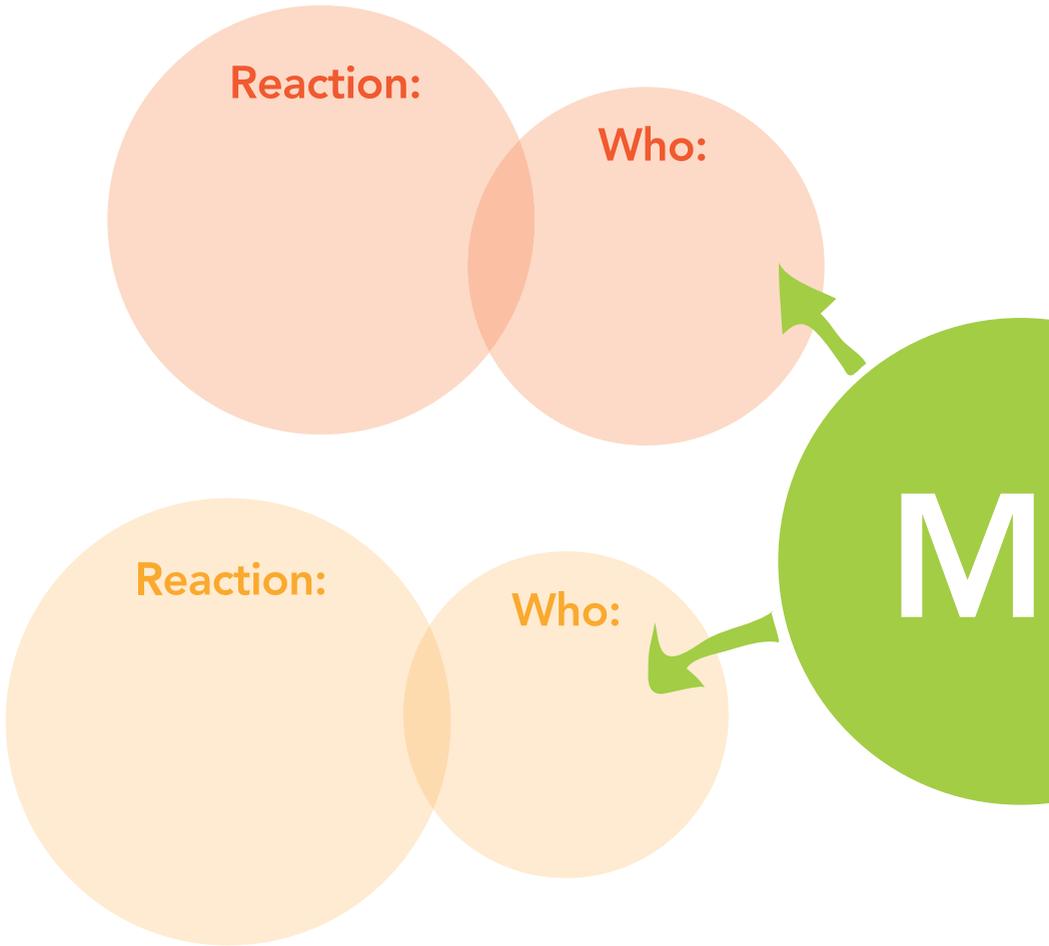
Head, hands and heart

There may be factors in your life that influence your decision-making.

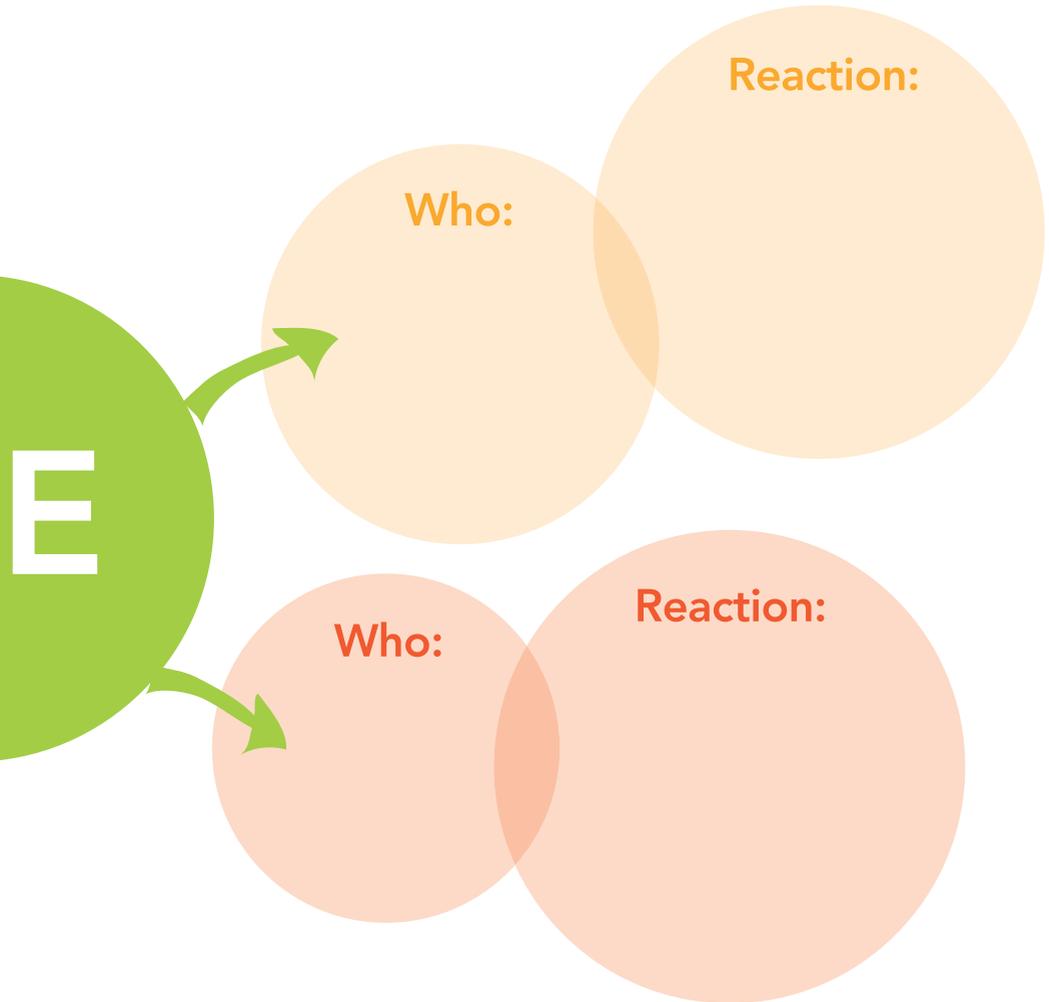


Relationship, kinship and support networks

The decision about what to do when you have an unintended pregnancy is yours.



You might find there are people you would like to ask to take part in the decision-making process. You might want to ask a partner, a relative or friend who you can count on to support you no matter what you decide.



Weighting it all up

When making a decision it is a good idea to think about how you might feel in the future. How will you feel in 12 weeks' time, one year or five years from now?

THE GOOD THINGS ABOUT:

	In the next 12 weeks	One year from now	Five years from now	In general
Parenting				
Abortion				
Adoption / Foster care				

THE DIFFICULT THINGS ABOUT:

	In the next 12 weeks	One year from now	Five years from now	In general
Parenting				
Abortion				
Adoption / foster care				

There is a lot of information provided in this booklet, which can be overwhelming and might seem a bit scary. If you feel you need more information, here's a list of services and websites that can help you make your decision.



Family Planning NSW Talkline 1300 658 886 (8.30am to 5pm weekdays)

A confidential telephone and online service staffed by experts in reproductive and sexual health. More information is also available at www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline

Family Planning NSW clinics

Five fixed clinics (Ashfield, Fairfield, Penrith, Newcastle and Dubbo) where you can seek advice and support about pregnancy options. You can make an appointment by calling Talkline or at www.fpnsw.org.au/clinics

Ashfield

328-336 Liverpool Rd
Ashfield NSW 2131
P: (02) 8752 4316
F: (02) 8752 4392

Dubbo

2B/155 Macquarie St
Dubbo NSW 2830
P: (02) 6885 1544
F: (02) 6882 3666

Fairfield

24-26 Nelson St
Fairfield NSW 2165
P: (02) 9754 1322
F: (02) 9723 0922

Hunter

Ground floor
384 Hunter Street
Newcastle NSW 2300
P: (02) 4929 4485
F: (02) 4926 2029

Penrith

13 Reserve Street
Penrith NSW 2750
P: (02) 4749 0500
F: (02) 4731 6787

For more information about pregnancy options

Children by Choice (Qld)

1800 177 725 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday)

Free and confidential support and counselling covering all options for an unintended pregnancy. Children by Choice is a pro-choice and women centred service providing non-judgemental and respectful advice. More information is available at: www.childrenbychoice.org.au

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby

1800 882 436 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Phone and online service providing information, advice and counselling for women, their partners, friends and relatives about pregnancy, childbirth and a baby's first year. More information is available at: <http://goo.gl/cWJMJV>

Women's Health NSW

(02) 9560 0866

Medical, clinical and counselling services available at a range of locations across NSW. Visit their website to find your local Women's Health Centre: www.whnsw.asn.au

Counselling and support

Lifeline

13 11 14 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Telephone counselling and online chat service for crisis support, suicide prevention and mental health support. More information is available at: www.lifeline.org.au

Beyondblue

1300 22 4636 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Telephone service providing support and advice around depression and anxiety for men and women. Online webchat is available 3pm-12am, 7 days a week. More information is available at: www.beyondblue.org.au

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Free and confidential counselling service for young people aged 5-25 years. Counselling is offered by telephone and over their website: www.kidshelp.com.au

MensLine Australia

1300 78 99 78 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Telephone and online support, information and referral service. More information is available at: www.mensline.org.au

MS Health Medical Abortion After-care Line

1300 515 883 (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

Nurse after-care telephone service.

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277 (NSW)

Relationship support service for individuals, families and communities providing services including family dispute resolution and individual, couple and family counselling. Call or visit the website to find your local service: www.relationships.org.au

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist services

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services

An incorporated Aboriginal organisation, initiated by and based in a local Aboriginal community, that delivers a holistic and culturally appropriate health service to the community that controls it. There are a range of services across NSW and details can be found at their website: <http://goo.gl/xjRBPM>

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277

Provides support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, individuals, couples and communities. More information is available at: <https://goo.gl/C4iNYn>

Australian Indigenous Health/InfoNet

Comprehensive, up-to-date information on varying topic areas accessible to people interested in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is available at: <http://goo.gl/tGqkXe>

Disability specialist services

People With Disability Australia (PWDA)

1800 422 015

TTY: 02 9318 2138

Promotes the rights of disabled members of the Australian community. More information is available at: <http://goo.gl/J555uA>

Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)

1800 66 6611

Services include legal advice, casework, advocacy, parenting help and education and training. More information is available at: www.idrs.org.au

The Guardianship Division

1300 006 228

Conducts hearings regarding decision making processes, for adults with intellectual disability. More information is available at: <https://goo.gl/XUC26v>

Family Planning NSW disability resource fact sheets

Provides easy to read fact sheets, for people with intellectual disability. Topics include pregnancy planning and choices, birth and contraception. More information is available at: www.fpnsw.org.au/disability

Healthy Start

healthystart@parentingrc.org.au

Aims to support parents with learning difficulties and their children by improving health and wellbeing outcomes through working with policy makers, practitioners and researchers. More information is available at: www.healthystart.net.au

Men

Beyond Blue - Man Therapy (24 Hours, 7 days a week)

1300 22 2638

Telephone and website service for men's mental health support. More information is available at: www.mantherapy.org.au

Practical support and information

Department of Human Services (Centrelink)

1800 136 380

Provides information about the range of payments available if you choose to continue the pregnancy. This information is available at their website: <http://goo.gl/pXboLp>

Family Referral Services (FRS)

Provides information, support and access to services for families who are in financial distress and face challenges accessing services and support. Please visit this link to find the phone number for your nearest service: <http://www.familyreferralservice.com.au>

Family Relationship Advice Line and Centres (Mon to Fri 8am-8pm and Sat 10am-4pm)

1800 050 321

Provides family dispute resolution (mediation) and advice to enable people to achieve workable parenting arrangements outside the court system. More information is available at: <http://goo.gl/SJqlz6>

Adoption and Permanent Care Services

(02) 9716 3000 or adoption@community.nsw.gov.au

Information about the adoption process and alternatives can be found at: <http://goo.gl/sGL15t>

For young people

Body Talk

Information for young people about puberty, the body, relationships and sex is available at: BodyTalk.org.au

ReachOut

Online forums and information about sex, relationships, mental health and wellbeing for young people is available at: <http://au.reachout.com>

Talking Realities

(02) 9794 2370

Collaborative support program working with parents aged 24 years and under, and their children. To make a booking and talk with their staff call or visit: www.talkingrealities.karitane.com.au/about.php

Yfoundations – Youth Accommodation

(02) 8306 7900

Provides information and contacts for pregnancy and parenting accommodation services. More information is available at: <http://yfoundations.org.au>

Raise Organisation: Bump Program

0426 972 473 or info@raise.org.au

Free program for young pregnant and parenting girls aged between 13 and 23, including weekly mentoring and workshops. More information is available at: <http://www.raise.org.au>

eheadspace

1800 650 890

Confidential online chat and telephone support for youth between the ages of 12-25. Offering advice around general health, mental health, counselling, education, employment and alcohol and drug services. There are also a number of contact centres where you can access face-to-face support. More information is available at: www.eheadspace.org.au

Youth health centres

Offer a range of programs and services including health checks, sexual health and counselling. Call Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 to find your local youth health centre.

To provide feedback or find out more about this resource please visit www.fpnsw.org.au



www.fpnsw.org.au | talkline 1300 658 886

clinical services & information | education & training | research | international development

Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health