

faint pink line

Your Guide to Unintended Pregnancy

Support and reflection during and after an
unintended pregnancy

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Introduction

If you've found yourself unexpectedly pregnant and feeling uncertain or conflicted, you're in the right place.



It's okay if you don't know what to do right now. **You may be feeling overwhelmed, confused, scared, or unsure how to feel**, and that's understandable. This space is here to help you process what you're experiencing, not to tell you what to do or push you toward a specific outcome.

An unexpected pregnancy can feel overwhelming because **who YOU are is complex**. This experience touches many parts of your life at once. It can affect how you feel emotionally, how you see yourself, how you relate to others, and what feels possible moving forward. When something this significant happens, it's normal to feel unsettled or thrown off balance.

Faint Pink Line was created to offer support during moments like this. Our hope is to provide a steady, respectful space where you can begin to feel less overwhelmed and more grounded as you move forward. We're here to walk with you through this, one step at a time.

It's not about leading you down a path, it's about giving you a map, so you can find your own way.

You're not Alone

- An unexpected pregnancy happens to so many of us
- Nearly half of all pregnancies are unintended
- 1 in 4 women will have an abortion by age 40

Faint Pink Line is

- Tools & resources to support your decision-making process
- Free to use
- Safe from political & religious agendas
- Based on professional counseling methods
- Highest level of privacy for your data and identity protection
- A no-judgment space

WHO FAINT PINK LINE IS FOR

Faint Pink Line is for women who are wrestling.

If you are feeling tension or uncertainty, caught between competing emotions or paths that all carry weight, you are in the right place.



This space is designed for moments when nothing feels simple or settled, and **you don't want to rush toward a decision that carries lifelong impacts**. FPL helps you slow down, work through what you're carrying, and move forward in a way that is grounded in reflection rather than pressure.

If you already feel clear and at peace with your decision, you may not need us right now. Still, FPL is here as you navigate an important season of life. Our framework helps you tend to the emotional and personal layers of this experience as *you move forward*.

OUR PROMISE

We'll be real with you

We won't make promises we can't keep. Our only promise to you is that we'll be real with you. We won't tell you that this will be easy, or that everything will feel clear by the end. **Making sense of something as complex as an unintended pregnancy takes time, honesty, and real inner work.**

This process is meant to help you thoughtfully work toward a decision by understanding the paths in front of you, what each would ask of you, and what support would be needed to move forward with integrity. You may leave this space having chosen a path, or with greater clarity about what you still need before taking that step. Both are meaningful places to be.

Who We Are

At Faint Pink Line, our mission is to support women facing the emotional weight of an unintended pregnancy.

We offer a steady, respectful space to help you process what you're carrying with honesty and care.

Our work is grounded in what we call the Whole Self Approach. We believe that moments like this affect more than just one part of you. Your relationships, practical needs, body, beliefs, and emotional world are all involved. Rather than focusing on only one piece, our framework helps you bring awareness to all of them, so nothing important gets overlooked.

Through guided reflection and thoughtful exploration, Faint Pink Line helps you approach what's ahead with clarity rather than pressure. The goal is not rushed answers, but a deeper understanding of yourself and what matters most, so you can continue forward with greater steadiness and your identity intact.

Whether you are doing this work on your own or alongside a partner, we hope this space helps you feel less alone, more connected to yourself, and better prepared to carry what comes next with steadiness and care.

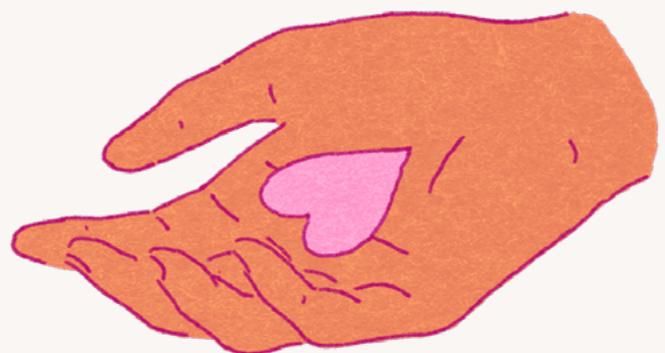
Our Ethos

At Faint Pink Line, our ethos is rooted in respect for complexity, dignity, and thoughtful discernment. We recognize that every woman's life and circumstances are different, and that an unintended pregnancy is not a problem to be rushed or reduced, but a profound life moment that touches every part of who a person is.

We acknowledge that real pressures exist. Gestational timelines, state laws, medical realities, personal safety, finances, and the availability of support all shape what is possible and what must be worked within. These constraints are real, and they matter. At the same time, we believe urgency should not be allowed to rush an important decision that can have lasting impact.

Our work is guided by the conviction that clarity comes from honest reflection rather than pressure, from being taken seriously rather than being steered, and from engaging the Whole Self rather than isolating one part of the experience. We do not seek to remove the weight of the decision, but to help women move forward without losing who they are in the process.

We aim to offer a calm, compassionate space where questions can be held with care, emotions can be acknowledged without judgment, and decisions can be approached with intention and alignment in what matters most.



Our Founder's Story

I've been where you are. When I was in college, I found out I was unexpectedly pregnant. Fear and shock set in as soon as I saw that faint, pink line on the home pregnancy test. Almost immediately, I realized I would have to make a decision—and I knew I didn't like ANY of the options.

I reached out to local support services, hoping to find understanding, but the guidance I received felt either medical or moral. What I was really looking for was someone who understood how it felt. I realized then that I wasn't even sure who I was anymore. I kept thinking, "I'm not the kind of girl who gets unintentionally pregnant"... or am I? My sense of identity felt shaken. I was lost and deeply alone.

That experience taught me that an unexpected pregnancy is not a single problem to solve. It is a layered reality that touches every part of who we are: how we feel, our relationships, our sense of self, our hopes, our beliefs, and what is practically possible. I knew there had to be a way to slow down and make space for all of that to co-exist in a meaningful way.

That is why I created Faint Pink Line and the 'Whole Self' approach. It is a framework that brings together the emotional, relational, practical, physical, and spiritual parts of our lives so we can move through this experience and decision thoughtfully, in a way that supports who we are now and who we are becoming. I wanted to offer the care and emotional support I wish I had found—support that truly understands how disruptive this experience can be.

Over time, that vision deepened. I've spent the past two decades developing Faint Pink Line through research, careful listening to women who have also faced unexpected pregnancies, and partnership with a counselor with over a decade of experience supporting women through unintended pregnancies. Together, we created a resource that blends lived experience, research, and established counseling approaches to support thoughtful reflection during an unexpected pregnancy.

Welcome to Faint Pink Line.
I am honored to walk alongside you.



Who We Are Not

In a tense climate where pregnancy decisions are often politicized and polarized, it can be hard to know who to trust. **We want to be very clear: we don't have any hidden agendas.** We are not here to persuade, pressure, or lead you toward a particular outcome. This work isn't about directing your choice. **It's about giving you a map, so you can orient, discern, and find your way forward.**

How This Space is Protected

We are **independently funded**, free from outside influence. That means we are not tied to any outcome, organization, or agenda. This independence exists to protect your ability to think clearly, engage honestly with what is at stake, and trust yourself as you move forward. You may never have expected to need this kind of support, but you don't have to carry this alone.

What to Expect

In this guide, we'll help you peel back the layers of your experience—like how an onion has layers, you do too. Every section will take you through different aspects of yourself and your pregnancy. We'll help you dig into those layers so you can sort out your feelings, build confidence, and become more empowered as you make your decision.

We'll walk you through self-discovery. Together, we'll explore what's behind your inner conflict and help you find clarity.

By the end, we hope you'll feel more grounded and ready to take the next step, when that step becomes clear.

Created by Women Who Care

Faint Pink Line was founded by a woman who personally experienced an unintended pregnancy. From the beginning, Faint Pink Line was developed in close collaboration with a researcher and a licensed counselor. We didn't start with answers. We didn't start with a solution. We started by listening - asking women what they truly needed during this experience. That listening ultimately shaped what Faint Pink Line has become.

What's helped us get here:

- Guidance from licensed counseling professionals
 - Interviews and focus groups centered on women's real experiences, alongside conversations with medical professionals
 - Counseling best practices and trauma-informed designs
-

What We Hope You'll Walk Away With

By the time you finish this experience, we hope you'll have:

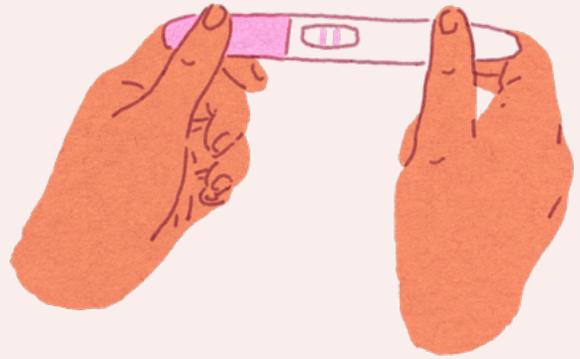
- A clearer understanding of why this feels so complicated
- A better understanding of yourself and your needs
- More confidence and empowerment through greater clarity and self-understanding
- Resilience to help you move forward in your life, as you face what comes next
- Language for your experience, so you feel less alone or disoriented.

You're not alone in this - we're here to walk with you through it. We're so glad you're here.

First Things First

Let's make sure you're really pregnant

Have you taken at least one pregnancy test, and was it positive?



If you haven't taken a test yet, that's the best way to know. If your period is late, you can take a test right now and know for sure. **These tests are over 99% accurate** when used correctly and taken after a missed period.

If you need an affordable and accurate test, you can often find them at your local dollar store.

Here's some tips to get accurate results:

- Wait until the day of your missed period or later (testing too early can lead to false negatives)
- Do it right when you get up in the morning (your first pee in the morning is best for accurate results)
- Follow the instructions exactly as they read
- If you get a positive result, it's very likely correct - false positives are rare
- If you are pregnant, come back to us - we'll walk with you all the way
- If the test is negative, but you still don't start your period, retest in a few days

What if you haven't missed your period yet?

If it's too early for you to take a test, like a week or more before your period should start, and you are worried you are pregnant, take a deep breath. We know how stressful waiting can be. It's completely understandable to feel anxious about even the possibility of an unexpected pregnancy.

There's still a very good chance that you're not pregnant. But if it turns out that you are pregnant, we'll be here for you if you need us.

If You Are Pregnant

Take a deep breath and keep reading. We are here for you. In this ebook, you'll find helpful information to guide you with taking the next step now that you know you are pregnant. We'll walk you through our Whole Self Approach to help you set aside the noisy external thoughts and opinions and really focus on what **you** need to move forward.

SIDE NOTE

What If You're Not Pregnant?

Take a deep breath—finding out you're not pregnant can be a huge relief, but the experience can still be pretty scary. If you want to avoid this stress in the future, it's a good idea to:

- Learn more about contraception to protect yourself from an unplanned pregnancy.
- Understand your body better—many of us don't learn much about our reproductive health growing up, but it's never too late to start!

Even if you're not pregnant, the topics we'll cover—like making hard decisions, building resilience, and understanding yourself—can be helpful in many other areas of life, so stay with us if you want!

FOR PARTNERS

Supporting Her Through This Experience

Are you her partner? You can use this guide, too. It might help you to understand what she's feeling and give you ideas on how to connect and offer support. It's normal for you to have your own feelings and worries—this is a big moment for both of you.

We know that partners can feel a lot of stress during this time. It's important to acknowledge your own emotions and not feel like you have to hide them. Oftentimes an unintended pregnancy can create relational conflict, but our research shows that what couples really want is connection, not tension. Try your best to be there to listen, understand, and support each other during this difficult season



CRISIS RESOURCES

Checking In on How You Are Doing

Before we dive any deeper, we want to make sure you're okay. It's important to check in on your physical, mental and emotional well-being. We want to make sure you are safe and well, with the resources you need.

Because you matter, regardless of the pregnancy. YOU matter.



Abuse

If someone is pressuring, hurting, or controlling you, that's not okay. You deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. If you feel unsafe in a relationship, at home, or with someone in your life, trust your instincts. Help is available, and you don't have to go through it alone.

[National Domestic Violence](#) →

1.800.700.SAFE (7233)

Mental Health

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you're feeling overwhelmed, numb, or hopeless, please don't carry it alone. Stress, anxiety, and depression can feel isolating, but support is out there. An unintended pregnancy can complicate these feelings further. Talking to someone you trust or a professional can make a difference.

[Crisis Text Line](#) →

Text HOME to 741741

988 – Text or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Mental Health National Helpline –

Call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for 24/7 confidential help and resources for mental health and substance use.

Want To Find A Counselor?

Sometimes it can be helpful to talk with a licensed counselor who is trained to support you through complex decisions and emotional stress. A counselor can offer a steady, confidential space to process what you're experiencing and think through next steps.

If you don't know where to find one in your area, there are online counseling platforms, such as Open Path Psychotherapy Collective, BetterHelp, and others that may allow you to access licensed counselors more quickly. Some platforms offer lower-cost options, sliding-scale fees, or financial assistance, which may be helpful if cost is a concern.

Faint Pink Line is not affiliated with these services and does not endorse any specific website, platform, or counselor. We encourage you to explore these options for yourself, ask questions, and choose support that aligns with your needs, values, and circumstances if that feels right for you.

If You Think You Were Raped or Sexually Assaulted

We are so, so sorry you're in this position. If you're wondering whether what happened to you was rape, it's important to know that **rape can take many forms**. It's any kind of sex where you didn't—or couldn't—fully give consent, whether you were pressured, threatened, forced, or too impaired to say “yes” freely. If that sounds like what happened to you, it is not your fault.

We want you to know that your experience doesn't define you, and was not a result of any decision you made. Rape is never okay, and you do not deserve to process this experience alone. While it may feel as though no one would understand, a large number of the people around you do. Please seek out someone who can help you heal emotionally and physically. We are still here if you need help processing a surprise pregnancy, but you may need extra support and care.

One thing you can do is reach out to RAINN's National Sexual Assault Hotline by phone, text, or their chat function. If you navigate to “hotline.rainn.org/online,” you can click on the “Go Chat” button to start talking to a trained support specialist. You can also text them by texting HOPE to 64673. You can also message RAINN on WhatsApp. However you feel comfortable, please reach out to their support specialists who can provide support, information, advice, or referrals. They are accessible 24 hours a day.

[RAINN](https://rainn.org) →

[1.800.656.HOPE \(4673\)](https://rainn.org)

We're here to walk with you through unintended pregnancy, but first, we want to make sure you have all the support you need if you're in an unsafe situation.



Unintended Pregnancy

What an Unintended Pregnancy Might Mean for You Right Now

So...You're Really Pregnant. Now What?

First and foremost, it's normal for your feelings to be all over the place.

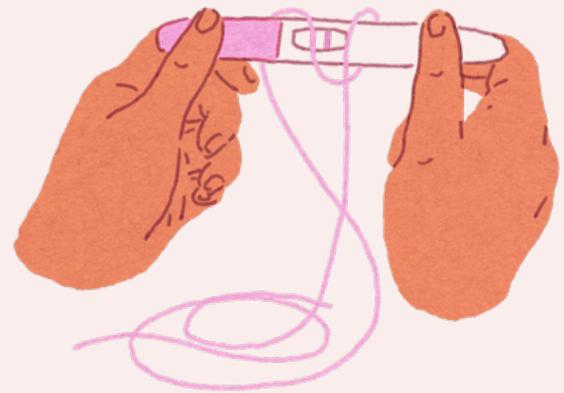
We know this is a really hard moment, but we want you to hear this loud and clear: you are not alone. Many women have been right where you are—almost half of all pregnancies in America are unexpected (*according to the Guttmacher Institute and CDC).

We've been there, too. And we've had so many conversations with women who've walked this path. While each experience is unique, there are common threads we hear over and over. It's okay if you're feeling things that seem confusing or even contradictory.

Right now, your mind might be racing with thoughts about how this could change your relationships, your body, your future... everything. Like a pendulum swinging from one side to the next, we remember feeling like our fears and emotions were vacillating wildly, one moment questioning all that's happening inside you and the next moment worrying about your own dreams and plans.

You may feel pressure from others, or from within yourself, to make a quick decision, and that can be so overwhelming. You might wish you could stop time—pause the pendulum that's swinging back and forth—or hit rewind for a do-over. Or maybe, you just want to pull the covers over your head and disappear for a while. Whatever you're thinking and feeling is both totally normal and totally okay. Give yourself permission to feel however you do.

Everyone's experience with this is their own - but many women also share similar thoughts and feelings. Do any of these sound like what you're experiencing?



- Feels like my life just took a sharp turn I didn't see coming and I'm thinking, "What do I do now?"
- The conversations I need to have feel pretty difficult.
- Crazy stuff is going on with my body.
- My emotions are swirling - I feel pulled in a hundred different directions.
- I gotta figure a lot of stuff out - money, job, school, a place to live...
- I know I have three options (parenting, abortion, adoption), but I don't like any of them.
- This is not what I wanted for myself or who I wanted to be.
- Despite everything, I am determined to have a great future.

You have time. You have options. And you have the strength to move forward, no matter what that looks like for you.

And most importantly, remember: this experience doesn't define who you are. It's a part of your story, but **it's not the end of your story**. It doesn't change your worth or the dreams you have for yourself. This moment is a chapter—a big and important chapter—but there's so much more ahead.

So what should you do right now? Hang with us. We'll keep walking this path together.

How to Think About your Whole Self

The Emotional, Relational, Practical, Physical & Spiritual Parts of You.



The Five Dimensions of You

There are five big parts of who we are that keep us grounded, even during tough times. Each of these plays a part in how you feel about yourself and your life. And when something big happens—like an unexpected pregnancy—all five can feel a little out of sync. Here's what each dimension is about and why it matters right now:



Emotional

Your emotions are how you feel, and they might be all over the place—happy, sad, angry, scared, maybe even excited. That's totally normal and okay! We'll help you find ways to make sense of all those feelings, so they don't feel quite so overwhelming.



Relational

Relationships can get tricky during times like this. You might feel closer to some people and further from others. Or maybe you're trying to figure out how to talk about this with people who matter to you. We'll look at ways to get the support you need and stay connected with safe people.



Practical

Real life doesn't stop just because you're unexpectedly pregnant. Things like money, work, school, or where you live might suddenly feel more complicated. We'll walk through some steps to help you handle these practical parts so they don't add to your stress.



Physical

An unexpected pregnancy can be a stressful situation, and your body feels that. Your sleep may be disrupted, your appetite may be less than normal. Not to mention, your body is changing, and that alone can be a lot to process. We'll talk about how to give yourself the care you need to feel as strong and healthy as possible.



Spiritual

This reflects how you understand meaning, purpose, and the deeper questions stirred by this season. For some, this is shaped by faith or religious belief. For others, it may involve conscience, values, or a sense of what matters most. We make space to notice how this is present for you and how it may offer grounding, perspective, or hope as you move forward.

Emotional Needs - All the Feels

The Many Feelings You Might Have Right Now

You might be experiencing emotions that feel like they're clashing with each other. One moment you're overwhelmed, the next you're angry or sad, or perhaps even curious. All of that is normal.



Here are some common feelings women share with us in moments like this:

- I feel a deep sense of **loss** of something I can't quite put words to.
- I'm desperate for a **do-over**.
- I feel kind of **hopeful** about what the future could look like.
- I feel **scared**—like the ground has disappeared under my feet.
- I feel curious about what this could become.
- Everything feels **out of control**.
- I'm so **freaked out** and I don't know who to turn to.
- I feel so **alone**.

Whatever you're feeling—there's no “wrong” way to react.

Feelings are not good or bad: they are just part of being human. Some are more comfortable than others, but stay with them. Pushing them away can make it harder to deal with them in the future. Even the toughest feelings don't last forever.

It can feel confusing, but remember, you're a complex person with many dimensions, so it's natural for you to have a lot of mixed feelings about something this big.

Each part of your life—the emotional, practical, relational, physical, and spiritual—might be reacting differently to the news, and that's okay. For example: maybe you feel this might strengthen your relationship but worry it could strain your finances.

Thoughts Come First

Most of the time, a thought comes before a feeling—even if we don't notice it right away. What we tell ourselves in a moment shapes how we feel and how we respond. That's why it helps to slow down and notice what you're thinking when emotions start to rise—your thoughts can give you clues about what's really going on inside. When things feel overwhelming, pause and ask, “*What am I saying to myself right now?*” Often, there's fear, shame, or self-doubt beneath the surface. Once you spot those thoughts, you can gently speak truth to them. Not every thought is true, and you don't have to believe everything your mind says. Be honest, but also be kind—to your thoughts, and to yourself.

Feelings Have a Job to Do

Emotions aren't random—they reveal our needs, values, and desires, and they help us connect, stay safe, and make sense of our experiences. That's why they matter, especially during big decisions like pregnancy. **But feelings aren't always reliable guides, since they change over time.** Pay attention to what your feelings are trying to tell you, but remember, you're the one in the driver's seat.

You Are More Than This Moment

Even if it doesn't feel like it right now, this experience does not define you. It is one chapter in your story, not the whole book. You are still you, and you are worthy of care as you move through this.

We are shaped over time by real experiences, relationships, and values. Some seasons leave a mark, and some choices carry weight, but they do not erase your personhood or reduce you to a single moment. You can face what is in front of you with honesty, take your next steps thoughtfully, and continue becoming more steady and whole.

If your feelings are scaring you or starting to feel out of control, that's a sign you might need a little extra support.

Talking to someone trained to help you sort through these emotions can be a big relief. Remember, you don't have to carry this alone.

[Check our Crisis Resources](#)

THE BIG THREE

Shame, Grief, and Fear

During an unintended pregnancy, certain feelings like shame, grief and fear tend to show up more often. Through talking with many women, we've found these to be the most common emotions, and they can be hard to carry, as they can feel big and heavy. In the next sections, we're going to talk about each of these more deeply so you can understand them better and maybe feel a little lighter if you are feeling them, too.



Reframing Shame

How Do We Fight Shame?

We fight shame with self-compassion, empathy, and vulnerability. You do not have to be defined by anyone's expectations. You can decide for yourself who you are and how you want to show up in the world. Here's how to change the narrative of shame.

Talk about it:

Shame thrives in silence. Share your feelings with someone you trust.

Don't reframe your identity:

One experience does not define you. You're still you! Think of this as a chapter in your story, not your whole story...because it's not!

Be kind to yourself.

Start by acknowledging the feeling without judgment. Shame might say, "I am bad," but that's not true. Self-compassion would say, "Mistakes happen; circumstances don't define us."

Challenge negative thoughts.

Harsh self-judgment often stems from fears, doubts, or past wounds. Notice when you're judging yourself and replace those thoughts with ones that are kind and true. Ask, "Is this really true?" Replace harsh words with truthful, gentle ones.

Practice empathy.

If a friend came to you with these feelings, how would you respond? Try offering yourself that same grace and kindness.

What Shame Feels & Sounds Like

Shame is one of the hardest, most uncomfortable feelings we face. It's that painful, sinking sense that we're flawed and unworthy of love or connection. Brené Brown, a researcher who focuses on shame, describes it as a "web of conflicting, impossible expectations about who we're supposed to be." It's that feeling like you've failed in a way that makes you feel unworthy.

For many women, an unintended pregnancy can bring up deep feelings of shame. This often stems from societal, familial, religious, or internal expectations about who we "should" be. That voice of shame can be heavy, but it's not the truth. It may feel true, but the real truth is, you are human, multifaceted, and constantly changing. Only you get to decide who you are and who you want to be.

Our research revealed that many women feel irresponsible, foolish, or unworthy during this experience, so it's especially important to remember that almost half of all pregnancies in the US are unexpected. Even with birth control, pregnancy can still happen. So go easy on yourself with the shame game right now and remember you are just a human.

Brené Brown explains, "Guilt says, 'I did something bad,' whereas shame says, 'I am bad.'" You may feel like you made a mistake, and it's okay to wrestle with guilt, but shame is different—it's about your identity and it's hurtful. If you can, try to replace shame-based thoughts with truth and compassion. Remember, many women have felt this way—and many have come through it stronger. The most powerful words you can hear might just be, "Me too".

Why It's Important to Understand How Shame Affects Us

Shame can hit hard—it's like a sledgehammer to our sense of self, making us feel isolated and anxious. It can lead to negative self-talk, damaging relationships, or pushing us to hide. Perhaps worst of all, it isolates us, making it hard to see our own value. Shame makes it difficult to feel connected to others because we fear judgment. So, how do we fight these feelings?

Shame and Judgment

Shame grows when we keep it secret. When we open up about our feelings and struggles, we build connection instead of isolation. Being vulnerable means sharing honestly, even when it feels risky.

Opening up can be hard. Fear of rejection is real. But shame loses power when we name it and bring it into the light. You may not feel worthy of love right now, but you are.

In the next chapters, we'll talk about how to have hard conversations and find safe people to share with.

Shame and Vulnerability

Shame thrives in secrecy. Brené Brown believes that embracing vulnerability—by sharing our feelings, experiences, and struggles—creates connection and belonging. Vulnerability is the willingness to open up emotionally and share your true thoughts, even when there's a risk of judgment or hurt. It involves being honest about your fears, struggles, and uncertainties.

Opening up is not easy, but it's crucial. You'll need to find courage, despite your fear of rejection. We fight that fear by believing we are worth love and connection. Remember: feelings are important, but they're not always reliable. You may not feel worthy of love and connection right now, but as a human being, you are.

One way to fight shame is by bringing it into the light—talk about it and name it for what it is. When we do that, shame begins to lose its power. In the chapters ahead, we will explore how to have difficult conversations with your loved ones and find safe people to talk to.

TRY IT OUT

Transforming Shame Statements

If you find yourself thinking, "I'm a bad person because I'm in this situation," try reframing it. Here are examples of how to shift those thoughts:

"I'm a failure because I made a mistake." → "Everyone makes mistakes, and I can learn from this."

"I should have been more responsible. I've ruined my life." → "This is hard, but many people face unplanned pregnancies. I'm not alone."

"I've let everyone down." → "I feel confused and scared, but I deserve kindness and care right now."

"I'm bad and shameful." → "I feel shame because I hold myself to a high standard, but I'm human."

"I should have done better." → "I did the best I could with what I knew at the time."

STEP 1

Write Your Shame Statements

Be honest. Put down the critical thoughts you have about yourself (e.g., "I've failed," "I'm a bad person," "I've let everyone down.")

No judgment—just get them on paper.

STEP 2

Reframe Your Statements

Look at each shame statement and try to say something kinder and more realistic in response.

For example:

"I'm a failure" → "Everyone makes mistakes. I can learn and grow."

"I've ruined my life" → "This is hard, but I'm not alone. Others have overcome this too."

"I'm bad and shameful" → "I feel shame right now, but that doesn't define who I am."

The Truth About Shame

When we start to understand how shame damages the idea we have of who we are, we can challenge those thoughts by thinking of ourselves with kindness and compassion. We can choose to be vulnerable, and choose to see our vulnerability as a strength rather than something to be embarrassed about. Doing this helps us to understand the expectations we place on ourselves--many of which conflict with one another! This understanding can lead us to make sense of our fears and our desire to handle this situation alone.

You are not defined by this experience or decision. You are complex, resilient, and more than your mistakes. This work is not easy, but it is transformative, and it's worth it.

Your Intrinsic Worth

You are worth it. Every person has inherent worth simply by being human. You have unique qualities, experiences, and perspectives that contribute to the world. You have the capacity for growth—the ability to learn and change. Each experience, whether good or bad, shapes you and gives you compassion for others—and for yourself.

Ultimately, your worth is not defined by external circumstances or others' opinions—it's intrinsic and unchanging. You matter just as you are.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Shame says, “I am bad.” The truth is, you're a human who is facing a hard situation.

You do not have to be defined by anyone's expectations. You can decide for yourself who you are and how you want to show up in the world.

This is a chapter in your story, not your whole story.

You matter. You deserve compassion and care.

You are doing a hard thing. Keep it up! We're so glad you're here.

Overcoming Grief

What Grief Really Is

Grief is often thought of as something we only feel after the death of a loved one, but it can be a deep sadness that comes with **any kind of loss**.

When you're facing an unexpected pregnancy, you might find yourself grieving things like the life you imagined for yourself, the person you thought you were, or the future you had planned. Some people say they even grieved what felt like their innocence. We want to tell you that it's okay to feel all of that; it's okay to grieve what feels like "the end" of something.

The Grief Cycle

Grief can feel like a rollercoaster, with common emotional "stops" along the way.



Denial & Shock: Feeling numb or in denial protects you from intense pain and feeling overwhelmed as you process the loss.

Bargaining, Anger & Depression: Sadness, anger, bargaining for a 'do-over,' guilt, or anxiety may hit in waves and feel overwhelming.

Acceptance: If you feel like you let yourself down, offering yourself forgiveness is a powerful step towards growth & acceptance.

Adjustment: Eventually, you will begin to adjust to a new way of life. This doesn't mean forgetting; rather, it involves finding a new way to live while honoring the memory of what was lost.

These stages are normal and part of the healing process.

Grief isn't only about death. It's the deep sadness that can come from losing something that matters to you.



How Grief Shows Up in the Body

- Crying
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Fatigue and low energy
- Aches, pains, and tension
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety or worry
- Detachment or numbness
- Questions about life or your beliefs
- Feelings of guilt or anger

Grief can take a toll physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. It's as if every part of you is feeling the weight of this loss in one way or another. So if you're feeling "off" in any of these areas, know that it's a natural response to what you're going through.

TRY IT OUT

Reflection Journaling Exercise

Journaling can be a really helpful way to process all you are thinking and feeling. If journaling is not your thing, these can also be great discussion questions for you and your partner, or as conversation starters with a trusted friend.

How to Use This Journaling Exercise

- Find a quiet, comfortable place where you can reflect without distractions.
- Write freely—there's no "right" way to do this. Whatever you feel is valid.
- Take breaks if it feels like too much. You don't need to complete everything in one sitting.
- Return to these prompts as often as you need to.

STEP 1

Understanding Your Grief

Take a moment to acknowledge your feelings. Grief is a natural response to loss and change.

PROMPT 1

What dreams or plans for your future feel different now, if any?

How has your image of yourself changed, if at all? Are you thinking differently about yourself? If so, how so?

STEP 2

Exploring Your Emotions

Grief can bring up a mix of emotions—sadness, anger, guilt, confusion, or even numbness. This step is about recognizing what you're feeling and allowing yourself to experience it without judgment.

PROMPT 2

Take a moment to list the emotions you're feeling right now. Write them down, no matter how big or small. For each emotion, ask yourself:

"Why might I be feeling this way?"

"What is this emotion trying to tell me?"

Example: "I feel sad because I've lost the future I imagined. This sadness tells me that what I had planned mattered to me."

STEP 3

Looking Ahead with Self-Compassion

Grief shifts over time, and healing begins when we are kind to ourselves.

PROMPT 3

We tend to be much stronger and more equipped than we give ourselves credit for. Make a list of all your strengths, gifts, and the things you like about yourself. Imagine yourself a year or two from now. You have made it through a really hard time and grown stronger and more compassionate with yourself. Write about how life might look and how you are feeling about yourself.

Point out all the gifts and strengths that have helped you accomplish this future picture of you.

Start with: "Dear [My Name], I want you to know it's okay to feel everything you're feeling. You are strong, even when you don't feel like it. Here's what I want to remind you as you go through this..."

What might you choose to believe about yourself now that can help this picture become a reality?

Coping with Grief

Grieving is a normal response to any loss, even if it's a loss of who you thought you were or where you thought life was going. Here are some ways to be gentle with yourself through this:

Allow yourself to feel. Give yourself permission to feel sadness, anger, and all the emotions that come up. There's no "right" way to grieve, so let yourself be exactly where you are.

Be patient with yourself. Grief doesn't follow a schedule. Some days will feel better than others, and that's okay. Try to remember it's a journey with ups and downs.

Take it moment by moment. Instead of putting pressure on yourself to "move on" or "get over it," try focusing on just getting through each moment. Grief is an experience, not a problem to solve, and it's okay to take it slow.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Remember, grief is a way your heart is processing change and loss.

It's a sign that you deeply care about your life and your future. As difficult as it is, this grief will shift and soften over time, and you'll find strength on the other side. As time passes, the intensity of grief often lessens. You may carry the memory of your loss with you, but with healing, eventually it won't dominate your feelings.

Facing Fear

Feeling Afraid? That's Normal.

Fear is one of the biggest, most immediate emotions when facing an unexpected pregnancy and it touches virtually every dimension of your life: relationships, finances, your future, your body...Suddenly, life can feel full of unknowns and "what if's." The questions and uncertainty is overwhelming, but please know that feeling this way is completely normal and won't last forever.

Do any of these sound familiar?

- When I think about the future, I feel anxious about what lies ahead.
- What if people judge me?
- I'm concerned my relationships will change or end.
- I'm scared of being abandoned.
- What if I don't have what I need to support myself?
- I feel like I'm losing control over my life, my body, my plans.
- How will I ever make this decision when I don't like any of the options?
- How will this affect my health or my body?

If you're feeling any of these (or all of them!), you're not alone. We've been there, and so have so many other women just like you.

How Fear Gets in the Way of Our Thinking

Fear is normal, but it can sometimes twist things in our minds, making problems seem bigger or outcomes seem more hopeless than they really are. This happens because our fears often create irrational thoughts, or what therapists call "thinking errors." These are ways of thinking that exaggerate the situation and make us feel worse.



Here are some common thinking errors

- **Catastrophizing** - expecting the absolute worst outcome. (e.g., "My life is over.")
- **Black & White Thinking** - seeing only extremes, with no middle ground. (e.g., "There's only one right decision, and if I mess up, it's over.")
- **Overgeneralization** - making broad conclusions from one experience. (e.g., "My partner isn't supporting me now, so I can't count on anyone, ever.")
- **Jumping to Conclusions** - assuming you know what others think. (e.g., "Everyone thinks I'm stupid for getting pregnant.")
- **Fortune Telling** - predicting a negative future without evidence. (e.g., "This will ruin me financially forever.")
- **Emotional Reasoning** - assuming that because you feel something, it must be true. (e.g., "I feel so overwhelmed that {so} there must be no good option for me.")
- **"Should" Statements** - setting impossible standards for yourself. (e.g., "I should have had my life figured out by now.")

TRY IT OUT

How to Challenge Fearful Thoughts

Thinking errors” can quietly shape how we see ourselves, our options, and the future. Learning to examine unhelpful thinking with reason can reduce fear and open up clearer choices.

Here is one way to practice.

1. Name the thought

For example: “Everyone thinks I’m stupid for getting pregnant.”

2. Identify the thinking error

This is “Jumping to conclusions”.

3. Test the thought with questions

- What evidence do I actually have that everyone thinks this?
- Who specifically has said or done something that supports this thought?
- Are there people who have responded with care or neutrality instead?

4. Separate fact from assumption

- **Fact:** I feel ashamed and afraid of judgment.
- **Assumption:** Everyone is judging me.

5. Rework the thought into something more balanced

- “I’m feeling afraid of judgment, but I don’t actually know what everyone thinks. Some people may judge, and others may not.”

6. Notice the emotional shift

- Fear or shame may still be present, but often with less intensity and more steadiness.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Remember, Fear is Rooted in the Unknown

Fear often stems from what we don’t know or from uncertainty. When you feel it rising, take a moment to ask yourself if there’s a real, present situation to deal with, or if it’s just fear whispering “what ifs.” Try not to assume. If you can get answers, get them! Even if it means having an awkward conversation. Real information helps you make empowered decisions. If it’s real, then it’s worth taking steps to address it. But if it’s just fear, remember: you can overcome it. You have the power to face what’s real, with resilience, truth, and courage.

Relational Needs - Your People

What Women Say They Really Need



Emotional Support

When you are unexpectedly pregnant, it can feel terrifying to talk to anyone about it while also feeling unbearably lonely. You might be afraid of rejection or shame. (That's a valid concern.) Or you might be hoping the pregnancy would just go away. (Unfortunately, miscarriage is unlikely and happens in only 10-20% of pregnancies.) Keeping it a secret can be tempting, but it just isolates you.

It can be good to take some time to process. But when you're ready, it's really important to reach out to someone safe, someone who can just be there with you. Women consistently report that having emotional support is among their top needs when facing an unintended pregnancy. Finding a trusted friend, family member, or even a counselor can make a huge difference.

Why Being Connected Matters

One of the hardest things about going through an unexpected pregnancy can be feeling alone. Sometimes, when we're navigating an unexpected situation that brings up a lot of fear, shame and grief, we have the normal tendency to pull away from people. It's okay to take time and space to process. When you're ready, you can try reaching out to someone safe, someone who can just be there with you. Finding a trusted friend, family member, or even a counselor can make a huge difference. Remember, half of pregnancies are unexpected*, so there are women out there who can understand. We have included some helpful tips on figuring out who would be safe to talk to below.

Who's Safe to Reach Out To?

- Not everyone is emotionally safe, which is why it's important to define what "safe" is.
- A safe person listens with compassion, honors your boundaries, keeps your confidence, and respects that the decision is yours.
- An unsafe person pressures you, dismisses your feelings, shares your pregnancy without permission, or tries to make the decision for you, (even if they mean well).
- Write down the names of people who exhibit these qualities: friends, family, mentors, or a counselor.
- If you're not sure, think about who has been supportive of you in the past or who might understand.

NOTE

Seeking counsel is different. Counsel offers perspective and asks thoughtful questions while leaving ownership of the decision with you.

If you're realizing that there truly isn't anyone in your life who feels safe to talk to right now, that's important to acknowledge. In situations like this, seeking confidential support from a counselor, healthcare provider, or trusted professional can offer perspective and stability while you take your next steps.

Fear of Losing People

One of the hardest fears during an unexpected pregnancy is the fear of losing people you care about. You may worry that a partner, friend, or family member will judge you, pull away, try to control you, or see you differently. That fear is understandable. Wanting to stay connected and secure in your relationships is deeply human, and it simply means you care a lot about that person.

Sometimes the fear of losing someone is about what might happen. Other times, it's about what already has. Whether this fear is rooted in uncertainty or lived experience, it matters and deserves care.

If the fear is about what might happen, it can help to slow down and **notice what you're assuming versus what you know**. When it feels appropriate and safe, honest conversation can sometimes bring clarity or reassurance. If the fear is based on something that has already happened, the loss can feel devastating. While the loss of an important relationship is real and painful, it does not define your worth or determine your future. **Another person's reaction reflects their own limits, not your value.**

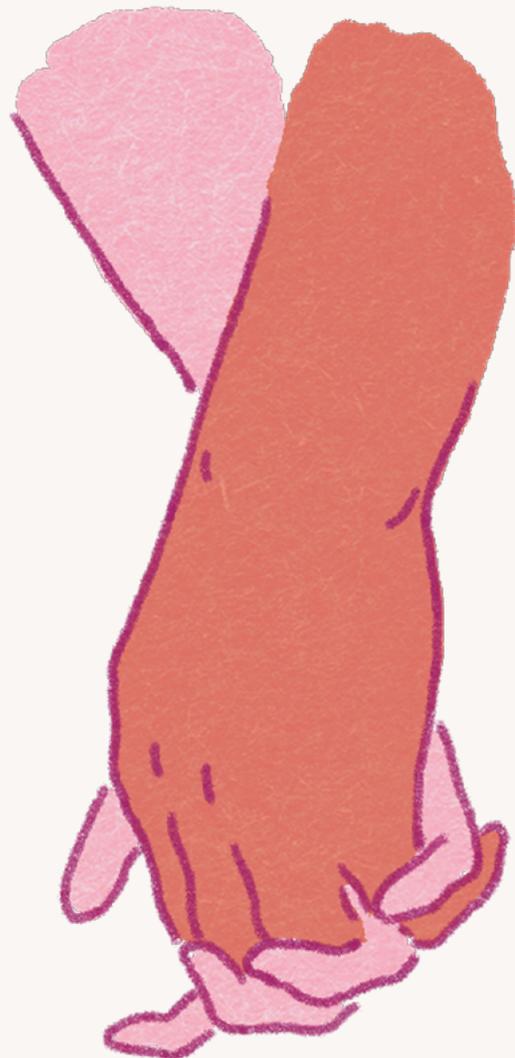
If you're facing this kind of loss, allowing yourself to grieve an important relationship is a necessary part of healing. Seeking support from others who are safe, or from a counselor, can help you steady yourself during a season that feels uncertain. You are allowed to care for your heart while you take your next steps.

Dealing with Pressure

You might feel pressure right now—from other people or even from yourself. It's okay to set boundaries if you need to. This is your situation, and it's okay to protect yourself. You can't control what others think or how they react, but you can decide what you need and how you respond. And remember, people's first reactions aren't always their final thoughts. Just like you, they might need time to process and self-reflect, too.

If Your Partner Is Involved

If your partner is involved, allowing time for the initial shock to pass can make it easier to talk together about what this unintended pregnancy means for each of you, including your values, concerns, and what matters most. Allow each person a chance to put their hopes and fears on the table. Seeing where you each stand can help you understand each other better and find common ground. You don't have to agree on everything, but starting from a place of listening and understanding can make these conversations feel more connected and less overwhelming.



TRY IT OUT

How to Tell Your People You are Unexpectedly Pregnant

Some conversations are necessary even if they're uncomfortable. Preparing ahead of time can help you feel more grounded and clear about what you need. Some of these conversations may involve unequal power or strong emotions, which can make preparation especially important.

1. **Decide who needs to know** - Consider who is directly affected or important to tell, such as a partner, parents, or someone you rely on for support.
2. **Choose the right moment** - If possible, find a time when you won't be rushed or interrupted. Feeling unhurried can make a difficult conversation feel more manageable.
3. **Clarify your goal** - Before you talk, ask yourself what you need most right now. This might be sharing information, asking for support, or simply being heard.
4. **Share from your own experience** - Using "I" statements can help you express how you're feeling without assuming how the other person will respond. For example, saying "I'm feeling really nervous" can open space for understanding.
5. **Be clear about boundaries and needs** - You're allowed to say what kind of support you want. You might say, "I'm not looking for advice right now," or, if you want input, let them know that too. Being upfront can help prevent misunderstandings.
6. **Decide what you will and won't share** - You don't have to explain everything at once. It's okay to share what feels appropriate now and keep other details private.
7. **Prepare for different reactions** - People may respond with support, fear, confusion, or strong emotions. They may need a little time for the shock to wear off. If this pregnancy affects them too, they may be experiencing their own emotions, like shame, grief and fear, too. It can help to remember that their initial reaction belongs to them. You can notice it, but you don't have to fix it, absorb it, or have all the answers. Even if someone reacts poorly at first, their response does not define your worth or determine your future.
8. **Plan support afterward** - Hard conversations can be emotionally draining. Think ahead about who you might check in with afterward to help you feel steadied.

The first conversation about a pregnancy is about communication, not agreement or decision-making. It's okay to allow time for emotions to settle and information to be gathered before working through next steps.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You Don't Have to Do This Alone

The people who care about you—friends, family, and trusted others—want to be there for you. Reaching out to even one person you trust can make a big difference. Remember, you're not in this alone.

Practical Needs

Real Life Stuff

This dimension invites you to reflect on your current circumstances, available resources, and the practical realities you are navigating.



What Do You Actually Need?

When facing an unexpected pregnancy, it's normal for your mind to go into overdrive thinking about all of the practical concerns. Studies show that the two biggest issues which often make a pregnancy decision especially hard for women are



Lack of Practical Needs

Meeting basic needs like housing, income, and healthcare is key, and lacking those can make things feel impossible.



Lack of Emotional Support

Having supportive people around you makes a huge difference, but sometimes it feels like that support isn't there.

We can't solve everything here, but we do want to acknowledge what you're carrying and remind you that you're not alone in feeling concerned. Navigating an unintended pregnancy can feel incredibly hard.

A surprise pregnancy can bring real concerns about money, work or school, healthcare, housing, privacy, and stability. If you already feel stretched thin, it makes sense that this could feel overwhelming.

Every option carries practical realities. Parenting, adoption, and abortion each involve different medical, emotional, financial, and logistical needs. Understanding the pressures you're under can help you see this moment more clearly.

TRY IT OUT

When Everything Feels Like Too Much

This exercise is meant to reduce the noise, notice what's pressing, and focus on one small next step.

1. What feels loudest right now?

- When you think about the practical side of this situation, what concern feels the loudest or most urgent? These could include finances, living situation, access to medical care, etc. Write it down.

2. What kind of pressure is this? Is this pressure coming mostly from:

- something you don't have right now, or
- something you don't know yet?

If it's something you don't know, gathering basic information may help.

If it's something you don't have, support may matter more than information.

3. What can wait, and what can't? To help protect your energy, finish these two sentences:

- One practical thing I can handle right now is:
- One practical thing that needs to wait is:

This can feel scary and uncertain, even impossible at times. **Clarity usually comes in fragments, not all at once.** Let's keep going... one small step at a time.

*NOTE OF CAUTION

Unintended pregnancy is often a polarizing issue, and some organizations may have deep biases and agendas. You can be selective about who you choose to engage with based on what's right for you.

When You're Feeling Overwhelmed

It's common to feel overwhelmed when practical needs feel uncertain or out of reach. You may feel unsure about every option, or pulled in a particular direction without seeing how the practical pieces could work. When basic needs feel shaky, fear can grow quickly and make everything feel more urgent than it actually is.

Support does exist for many practical needs, including medical care, abortion-related care, food, housing, childcare, and financial assistance. Finding that support can take time and energy, which is hard when you're already stretched thin. Still, knowing what options and resources exist can sometimes reduce pressure and make it easier to think clearly about what comes next.

If you choose to **explore resources**, a private online search related to your specific needs and location can be a helpful starting point. Simple searches can sometimes uncover support you weren't aware of. **If privacy is a concern, using private or incognito browsing** and a search engine like DuckDuckGo may help you feel more secure as you gather information.

Sample search terms to get you started (use with your city or ZIP code)

You don't need to search all of these. One or two that match your situation is enough.

- pregnancy support services near me [Your City/State]
- women's healthcare clinic [Your City/State]
- abortion options and healthcare [Your City/State]
- low-cost medical care [Your City/State]
- pregnancy medical care without insurance
- housing assistance for women [Your City/State]
- emergency housing assistance [Your City/State]
- food assistance programs [Your City/State]
- childcare assistance programs [Your City/State]
- financial assistance for women [Your City/State]
- counseling or mental health support [Your City/State]

Getting as Much Information as You Can

If you can, try to gather real information instead of making assumptions about what support might be out there. Sometimes, it helps to speak with someone in social services, a healthcare provider, local churches, a school counselor or family resource center, or even a trusted friend or family member who can point you toward resources.

This might feel big and hard right now, so take it step by step. The practical realities can feel heavy, and we're not going to pretend they aren't. As you consider abortion, adoption, or parenting, know that support and resources exist for each path. There is information available, and there are people who can help you understand your options and navigate what comes next. You're not alone in facing these questions, and you deserve steady support as you move forward.



Physical Needs

Your Body Right Now



Take Care of Yourself

Right now, your body is going through a lot. Hormones are shifting, and you might feel physically and emotionally drained. It's important to take time for yourself.

First, confirm your pregnancy with an at-home pregnancy test—symptoms alone can be misleading. Pregnancy symptoms can appear quickly, sometimes within weeks, and if this is your first time experiencing them, they may feel overwhelming. While you might not be visibly pregnant yet, changes are happening inside your body.

Physical Changes You Might Notice

Every pregnancy is different, so your experience will be unique to you. You might feel:

- Feeling unwell or “off”
- Fatigue and low energy
- Nausea or morning sickness
- Tender breasts
- Sensitivity to smells
- Food cravings or aversions
- Headaches and mood swings
- Frequent urination
- Dizziness

You might feel all, some, or none of these things. Whatever you're feeling is normal, and it's okay to take breaks, cancel plans, or do whatever you need to manage things. Take it one day at a time.

Balancing Physical and Emotional Health

The way you feel physically is closely connected to how you feel emotionally. Pregnancy impacts your body so if it feels “off,” know that it's natural for your emotions to feel a bit shaky, too. Take things at your own pace, and give yourself the freedom to rest when you need it. Even something as simple as staying hydrated and eating when you're hungry can make a difference.

Keeping Your Pregnancy Private

You might find yourself in situations where others expect you to do things you're not comfortable with right now, like drinking or staying out late. If you don't feel ready to share your news, it's totally okay to make up a reason for why you're sitting this one out—maybe you're “on allergy meds” or “not feeling your best.”

Handling Questions About Drinking and Activities

Before you're ready to share, you may need to navigate social situations carefully. Here are some ways to respond:

Nausea & Food Aversions:

“I think I ate something off.” / “I’m just not that hungry.”

Fatigue & Low Energy:

“I haven’t been sleeping well.” / “Just feeling a little off today.”

Avoiding Alcohol:

“I’m on medication.” / “I have an early morning.” / “I’m doing a health reset.”

Mood Swings & Feeling Distracted:

“I have a lot on my mind.”

This is your business, and you get to choose what you share and with whom. If you'd rather not lie, canceling plans is okay too. Protecting your space and energy right now is a form of self-care.

What About Food and Drink?

When it comes to what you're eating or drinking, it's okay to go easy on yourself. A craving for chips and soda won't make or break anything right now. But if you're drinking alcohol or using substances, consider setting those aside until you make a decision about the pregnancy. This can feel tricky if you usually drink with friends or family, but there are ways to handle it without sharing everything if you're not ready.

Bloating & Body Changes: “Hormones are messing with me.” / “I think I’m retaining water.”

Plan for Absence and Appointments: Schedule medical appointments early or late in the day to minimize disruption and, if questioned, mention “routine checkups” or “personal errands.”

Get Ahead of Absences or Tardies: If you're missing a lot of school or work due to nausea & fatigue, it can be helpful to set expectations early with your teachers or boss. Let them know before absences pile up that you've been dealing with a health issue. Frame it as temporary

but unpredictable, so they expect some inconsistency. Use a recurring, non-suspicious illness that aligns with your symptoms. [Some ideas: a digestive issue such as a stomach bug or food poisoning or trouble sleeping lately. Remember that you usually do not need to explain yourself; these are only examples if you are required to give a medical excuse. You are allowed to keep your health information private.]

Your Changing Body

It's okay to feel uneasy about the changes happening to your body. You might grieve the changes or wish things were different. But remember:

- Your body is strong and resilient.
- These feelings and symptoms won't last forever.
- Your body will return to what feels normal again.





Spiritual Needs

Heart & Soul

So far, we've looked at how this experience impacts different parts of you—your relationships, your practical needs, your physical self, and your emotions. Now, let's take a moment to explore one more piece of who you are: your spiritual side.

What Does It Mean to You?

Spirituality means different things to different people. For some, it is a relationship with God or a higher power. For others, it is a sense of meaning, inner values, or feeling connected to something larger than themselves. However you understand it, this part of you can affect how you experience an unplanned pregnancy and how you think about your next steps.

It's Okay to Wrestle

For some, deciding what to do about a pregnancy brings up deeper questions about meaning, values, and what fits with your deepest held beliefs. This can be a difficult place to sit, especially when time feels short. If you're wrestling here, know that this is a normal part of taking something important seriously, not a sign that you're doing anything wrong.

What Beliefs Shape Your Thinking?

If you grew up in a religious tradition, it may shape how this moment feels for you, sometimes in ways that feel supportive and sometimes in ways that feel complicated. And if your spirituality isn't connected to a religion, you may still be feeling pulled between different values or ideas about what feels right. It can be meaningful to think through how these beliefs, wherever they come from, affect you, so you can move forward with more clarity and steadiness as you decide what comes next.

Which of These Best Describes How You Think about Spirituality?

Part 1: Orienting Yourself

Begin by noticing where you are starting from spiritually. You don't need to fit perfectly into one category, and this may shift over time.

- A. **My religious faith and spiritual beliefs are a cornerstone of my life and shape my daily decisions.**
 - When faith is central, it can be a steady place to return to in moments like this.
 - **Consider:** How can the core teachings and practices of my faith guide me as I consider my options?
- B. **I have some religious or spiritual beliefs, but they don't usually guide my everyday life or major decisions.**
 - Even if spirituality isn't a big part of your life, you might notice certain beliefs or gut feelings showing up during times like this.
 - **Consider:** In what ways, if any, do my spiritual beliefs or inner feelings influence how I think about this decision?
- C. **I'm uncertain about religious faith or spirituality. I'm exploring.**
 - Even while exploring, questions and values can still shape how you think about this.
 - **Consider:** What questions or values feel most important as I think about this decision?
- D. **I'm not religious and don't consider myself spiritual. I have values that guide what matter to me.**
 - Values can offer a strong sense of direction, especially when decisions feel weighty.
 - **Consider:** How do my core values and sense of purpose shape how I want to approach this decision?

TRY IT OUT

Reflection Journaling Exercise

Many of us don't spend much time thinking about the moral or spiritual side of unintended pregnancy—until we find ourselves here. It's normal not to have thought this through before. But now that you're in this experience, you may be reflecting on these questions more deeply or more intentionally than ever before. That makes sense.

There are no right or wrong answers in this reflection. The goal is just to reflect so you can better understand what you believe and where those beliefs come from.

Take your time. Write honestly. You don't have to have everything figured out.

1. What have you been taught?

Think about the ideas, expectations, or judgments you've learned—both directly and indirectly—about unplanned pregnancy and the choices women may make.

- What messages stand out to you?
- Were these messages spoken clearly, or picked up quietly over time?
- Where did they come from? (Family, religion, culture, friends, media, personal experiences)

2. What do you believe?

Now pause and turn inward.

- What do you actually think or feel about the moral or spiritual side of unexpected pregnancy?
- What feels true to you right now—setting aside what others expect or believe?

3. How aligned do these feel?

Compare what you've been taught with what you believe.

- Where do they line up?
- Where do they feel different or in tension?
- What feelings come up when you notice those differences?

4. How important is alignment for you?

Finally, reflect on what matters most to you moving forward.

- How important is it for you to agree with what your family, faith, or culture has taught?
- What kind of alignment would help you feel most steady as you move ahead?

FINAL THOUGHTS

Finding Grace and Compassion for Yourself

If you're feeling torn, it may help to remember that many spiritual paths value kindness and compassion, especially in hard moments. You are worthy of care and respect as you think through this decision.

However you understand spirituality, this is a moment to listen closely to what's true for you. As you do, be gentle with yourself. You can move forward without certainty, but with more steadiness.

Frequently Asked Questions

Exploring Your Options

This section offers guidance on some of the most common questions and concerns during an unexpected pregnancy. Whether you're navigating physical changes, considering options, or seeking support, it's important to seek out reputable resources to help you feel *informed* and *empowered*.



Thinking About Pregnancy?

A positive test often brings many questions. People commonly wonder what comes next, how pregnancy may affect their life, and what support is available.

It's normal to wonder about:

- What happens next?
- How might pregnancy affect my body and emotions?
- How will this impact work, school, or finances?
- Who should I talk to for support?
- What options do I have?
- How do I take care of myself right now?

Everyone's Experience Is Different - And That's Normal

There is no single "right" way to experience pregnancy. Some people feel connected and hopeful. Others feel anxious, tired, scared or unsure. Many feel a mix of emotions that change over time. All of these responses are normal.

Support Matters During Pregnancy

Pregnancy can be easier to navigate when you have support. That support might come from a partner, family, friends, community programs, or medical professionals. Learning what support is available to you can help you understand what pregnancy might look like in your life.

Finding Reliable Information About Pregnancy

Not all pregnancy information is helpful or neutral. Some sources can feel overwhelming, judgmental, or incomplete. As you look for information, it can help to notice whether a source:

- Explains things clearly and honestly
- Respects different situations and values
- Encourages support, not pressure
- Helps you feel more informed, not more confused
- You're allowed to move on from information that doesn't feel right for you.

Here are some search terms that may help you find practical information and support:

- What to expect during pregnancy
- Unexpected pregnancy support
- Working while pregnant
- Emotional support during pregnancy
- Pregnancy support near me [Your City/State]

Giving Yourself Space

Pregnancy decisions often come with real timelines. Even so, you deserve space to pause, gather information, and think clearly. Giving yourself moments to breathe, learn, and reflect can help you feel more grounded as you move forward.

Thinking About Abortion?

Thinking about abortion can bring up strong and often conflicting emotions. You may be feeling fear, relief, sadness, confusion, anger, or a mix of all of these. Some people feel certain. Others feel torn. There is no single “right” way to feel when facing this decision.

You also might have questions that come up - this is also normal and natural. Many women have questions like these and so many more:

- How will an abortion affect my body and emotions?
- What is the experience like?
- When can you get an abortion?
- How should I think about this given my current life circumstances?
- What kind of support will I need before and after?
- How can I find accurate, trustworthy information?

Finding Reliable Information

Because abortion involves health, legal, and personal considerations, it’s important to rely on accurate information from real, licensed healthcare providers and reproductive health organizations. These sources can help explain what options may be available and what access looks like where you live.

A qualified healthcare provider can also help you understand where you are in the pregnancy, which may affect what options are available. If you are thinking abortion may be the best choice for you, don’t delay seeing a healthcare provider.

But not all abortion information is neutral or complete. Some sources focus only on facts or rules, while others push a specific viewpoint. Some organizations present themselves as nonjudgmental while promoting a specific agenda. You can be selective about which sources you trust.

As you look for information or support, it can help to notice whether a resource:

- Explains options clearly, without pressure
- Is open about limits or restrictions
- Respects your right to decide for yourself
- Acknowledges that this decision can bring up emotions
- Offers support, not judgment or fear

Trustworthy sources recognize that abortion decisions are not only practical, but also personal. It’s okay to move on from sources that ignore the emotional side or make you feel rushed or judged.

Here are some search terms that may help you identify reliable sources of information:

- Nonjudgmental unintended pregnancy support [Your City/State]
- Neutral pregnancy counseling services [Your City/State]
- Abortion finder [Your City/State]
- Local women’s health services [Your City/State]
- Financial assistance for abortion services

You Deserve Support, Whatever You Are Considering

Unplanned pregnancy decisions don’t happen in a vacuum. Your relationships, finances, health, values, and future plans may all be part of what you’re holding. Talking with someone who is nonjudgmental and informed—whether a counselor, healthcare provider, or trusted support person—can help you feel less alone as you sort through what feels right for you.

It’s also important to consider your emotional well-being. Some individuals may experience a range of feelings after an abortion, and counseling or support services can be beneficial.

Thinking About Parenting?

Thinking about parenting can bring up a lot of questions. Here are the kinds of questions people often have. You might be asking some of these yourself, or even more:

- What would daily life with a child really be like?
- How would parenting affect work, school, or finances?
- What kind of support would I have—or need?
- How might parenting change my relationships?
- What if I don't feel ready yet?
- How do I know if parenting is right for me right now?

It's Okay If You Don't Feel Ready Yet

Many parents say they didn't feel fully prepared when they started. Feeling unsure doesn't mean you wouldn't be a caring or capable parent. Readiness can grow over time, especially when people have access to support, information, and help from others.

Support Can Make A Big Difference

Parenting is not meant to be done alone. Support can come from many places—family, friends, community programs, childcare resources, or parenting groups. Learning what kinds of support are available to you can help you better understand what parenting might look like in your situation.

Getting Reliable Information Matters

Parenting information can feel overwhelming, and not all sources are neutral or helpful. Some focus only on challenges, while others make parenting sound easier than it is. Looking for balanced, realistic information can help you understand what parenting might look like in your life.

As you search for information, it can help to look for sources that:

- Talk honestly about both joys and challenges
- Respect different family situations and values
- Offer practical support, not pressure or judgment
- Acknowledge that support systems matter

These search terms may help you find information and support online that fits your situation and is available in your community:

- What is parenting really like for first-time parents
- Support for new parents near me [Your City/State]
- Unexpected pregnancy and parenting
- Parenting support programs near me [Your City/State]
- Help for single parents
- Balancing work and parenting
- Emotional support for new parents

Take Your Time

You don't have to have everything figured out at once. Even within a limited timeframe, it's okay to pause, gather information, and reflect thoughtfully. You deserve space to think carefully and honestly about what you are facing and what moving forward could look like for your life.

Thinking About Adoption?

Thinking about adoption can bring up many questions and emotions. You might be wondering what adoption really involves, how it could affect you and your child, or whether it's something you could live with long-term. Some people feel hopeful. Others feel grief, uncertainty, or pressure. Many feel more than one thing at once.

It's normal to have questions. They might sound like these or you may have many others:

- What does the process of adoption look like?
- What are the different types of adoption and how do they work?
- How would adoption affect me and my child emotionally?
- What could contact with the child or adoptive family look like?
- How do I think about long-term impacts, not just the present moment?
- What support is available before and after adoption?

Thoughts on Adoption

Adoption decisions often unfold over time and involve many people and steps. Feelings can change as you learn more. It's common to move back and forth between clarity and uncertainty as you consider what adoption could mean for your life and your child's life.

Adoption comes in many forms. Open adoptions allow for connection, while private arrangements provide more distance.

Like the other options, adoption is also a complex choice. Supportive professionals can guide you through both the practical and emotional aspects of this decision.

For some women, the idea of adoption can bring hope and resolution. But it may also bring feelings of grief and loss. If you are considering adoption but feeling a mix of emotions, it's okay. That's normal.

Finding Reliable Adoption Information

Adoption can be presented in very different ways, depending on the source. Some information focuses on hope and possibility, while leaving out challenges or long-term realities. Others may push toward a decision before you're ready. Looking for balanced, transparent information can help you understand what adoption involves and what questions to ask.

As you look for information, it can help to:

- Look for organizations that explain both benefits and challenges
- Pay attention to whether you feel pressured or rushed
- Notice if your questions are welcomed—or avoided
- Seek out information that talks about long-term experiences, not just the moment of placement

Trustworthy sources should respect your questions, your pace, and your right to decide.

Choose Support Carefully

If you speak with an adoption agency, counselor, or organization, it's okay to ask questions like:

- What support do you offer before and after adoption?
- Do I have access to independent counseling?
- What choices do I have, and what control do I keep?
- Can I take time to decide without pressure?
- Support should feel informative and respectful—not persuasive

Here are some search terms to help you find reliable resources online:

- Adoption counseling nonjudgmental
- Considering adoption after unintended pregnancy
- Open adoption explained
- Birth parent experiences with adoption
- Adoption support before and after placement

When It Comes to Considering Your Options



Remember

It's Your Space—Take What You Need

Right now, this is your “sacred space.” You can protect it however you need. Most women don't share pregnancy news until later, to give themselves time to process and adjust. This is your experience, and you get to decide when you're ready to share it.

Navigating the “In Between” While Making a Decision

It's okay to feel frustrated or sad about this moment in time. These feelings are valid, and it's normal to feel like none of the choices are easy. Give yourself grace to sit with those emotions and, when you're ready, reach out to someone you trust who can support you through them.

Take the time, take the space, and take care of you. Whatever happens, you deserve to feel supported and to care for yourself right now.

Remember

Every Path—Abortion, Adoption, or Parenting—Can be Supported

There's no shame in seeking help. You can find people and programs ready to guide you step-by-step, so you don't have to do this alone.

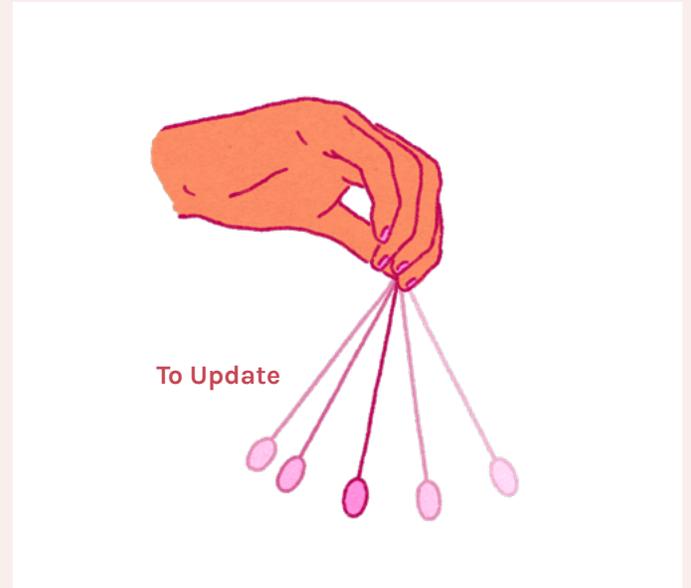
Exploring Each Destination

Abortion, Adoption, Parenting

Take some time to explore each destination - abortion, adoption, parenting. Imagine that you are standing there briefly. You will use the same lens each time. The structure stays the same. The terrain changes.

Remember, you are not committing and you are not solving every detail. You are orienting yourself.

*If you already know that one destination is not something you would choose, you can set it aside. Focus only on the paths you are genuinely willing to explore.



Large Image

The Five Dimensions of You

There are five big parts of who we are that keep us grounded, even during tough times. Each of these plays a part in how you feel about yourself and your life. And when something big happens—like an unexpected pregnancy—all five can feel a little out of sync. Here's what each dimension is about and why it matters right now:



Emotional

Your emotions are how you feel, and they might be all over the place—happy, sad, angry, scared, maybe even excited. That's totally normal and okay! We'll help you find ways to make sense of all those feelings, so they don't feel quite so overwhelming.



Relational

Relationships can get tricky during times like this. You might feel closer to some people and further from others. Or maybe you're trying to figure out how to talk about this with people who matter to you. We'll look at ways to get the support you need and stay connected with safe people.



Practical

Real life doesn't stop just because you're unexpectedly pregnant. Things like money, work, school, or where you live might suddenly feel more complicated. We'll walk through some steps to help you handle these practical parts so they don't add to your stress.



Physical

An unexpected pregnancy can be a stressful situation, and your body feels that. Your sleep may be disrupted, your appetite may be less than normal. Not to mention, your body is changing, and that alone can be a lot to process. We'll talk about how to give yourself the care you need to feel as strong and healthy as possible.



Spiritual

This reflects how you understand meaning, purpose, and the deeper questions stirred by this season. For some, this is shaped by faith or religious belief. For others, it may involve conscience, values, or a sense of what matters most. We make space to notice how this is present for you and how it may offer grounding, perspective, or hope as you move forward.

DESTINATION

Parenting

Imagine that parenting is the place you are standing. This decision includes continuing the pregnancy and raising the child yourself, either on your own or with support from family, friends, or a partner. It involves long-term responsibility, daily care, and shaping a child's life and well-being over time.

This destination often brings closeness and meaning, while also requiring significant and ongoing responsibility.



As you stand here, reflect on the following:

- What could daily life look like in this place? What sources of support would you need to make this possible? (Practical)
- What might you need in order to care for your physical health? (Physical)
- How does this destination intersect with your beliefs or values? (Spirituality)
- Who would you want to walk with you here, and if that support is not available, how does that affect this path for you? (Relational)
- After sitting with these questions, which emotions are coming up for you (excited, scared, curious, frustrated, etc.)? Do you notice any sensations in your body? Is there lightness or heaviness or something else? If so, what might that tell you? (Physical & Emotional)
- Which part of your whole self might need the most attention and protection here? (Integrative)

You've been exploring the option of Parenting through the five parts of your whole self.

You've noticed what feels tense and what feels steady or calm.

No option is perfect or meets every need. The next step is deciding which needs you can compromise on, which challenges feel workable, and which ones you cannot accept. From there, you can make a thoughtful, honest decision.

NOW, ASK YOURSELF

Based on what you've learned, can you see yourself choosing this path?

DESTINATION

Abortion

Now imagine yourself standing in the place of Abortion.

This decision includes ending the pregnancy through a medical or surgical procedure. It involves medical care, legal considerations that vary by location, and emotional processing that can differ greatly from person to person.



As you stand here, reflect on the following:

- What information and resources might you need in order to move forward on this path? (Practical)
- What feelings might this path relieve, and what feelings, if any, might it introduce over time? (Emotional)
- Who would you want to walk with you here, and if that support is not available, how does that affect this path for you? (Relational)
- How does this destination align or conflict with your beliefs and values? (Spirituality)
- Which part of your whole self would need the most care on this path? (Integrative)
- After sitting with these questions, which emotions are coming up for you (excited, scared, curious, frustrated, etc.)? Do you notice any sensations in your body? Is there lightness or heaviness or something else? If so, what might that tell you? (Physical & Emotional)

You've been exploring the option of Abortion through the five parts of your whole self.

You've noticed what feels tense and what feels steady or calm.

No option is perfect or meets every need. The next step is deciding which needs you can compromise on, which challenges feel workable, and which ones you cannot accept. From there, you can make a thoughtful, honest decision.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Based on what you've learned, can you see yourself choosing this path?

DESTINATION

Adoption

Now imagine yourself standing in the place of Adoption. This decision includes continuing the pregnancy and making a plan for the child to be raised by another family. It can involve choosing the adoptive family and deciding the level of ongoing contact, while allowing you to carry the pregnancy without taking on the role of parent.

This destination often holds complexity. It may involve purpose, sacrifice, grief, relief, or emotions that shift over time.



As you stand here, reflect on the following:

- What could life look like during pregnancy, placement, and afterward in this place? (Practical)
- What might this path ask of your emotional life over time? (Emotional)
- What might you need to care for your physical health on this path? (Physical)
- Where would support be strong, and where might it feel thin or uncertain? (Relational)
- How does this destination align or conflict with your beliefs and values? (Spirituality)
- Which part of your whole self would need the most care and support here? (Integrative)
- After sitting with these questions, which emotions are coming up for you (excited, scared, curious, frustrated, etc.)? Do you notice any sensations in your body? Is there lightness or heaviness or something else? If so, what might that tell you? (Physical & Emotional)

You've been exploring the option of Adoption through the five parts of your whole self.

You've noticed what feels tense and what feels steady or calm.

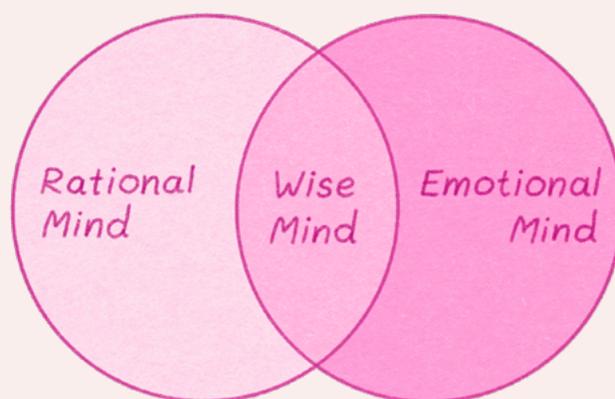
No option is perfect or meets every need. The next step is deciding which needs you can compromise on, which challenges feel workable, and which ones you cannot accept. From there, you can make a thoughtful, honest decision.

NOW, ASK YOURSELF

Based on what you've learned, can you see yourself choosing this path?

Still Struggling?

Use the “Wise Mind” Approach



When we're making big decisions, it's easy to fall into all-emotion or all-practical thinking. Instead, try to find a balanced “wise mind” space—a place where both practical information and your emotions are valued. Remember that no single choice will completely satisfy every need or resolve every fear, and that's okay. The goal is to make a decision that aligns with your values and circumstances.

Gather Information and Challenge Fears

Fear can be powerful, especially when it's based on uncertainty. Ask yourself, “Am I certain this will happen, or is it a fear of the unknown?” If there's information you don't have yet, try to gather it. Get clear on facts before basing a decision on worst-case scenarios.

For example, if you're afraid of losing support, try to ask a trusted person about it. Or, if financial fears are a concern, look into local resources that might help. The more information you have, the less likely fear will be the primary driver of your decision.

Try a Few Reflection Exercises

If you're still feeling stuck, here are some practices that might help:

10/10/10 Rule:

Ask yourself how you might feel about this decision in 10 minutes, 10 months, and 10 years. Sometimes, taking the long view can bring perspective to immediate fears.

Sleep on It

Act as if you've made a decision, then sleep on it for 24 hours. See what comes up in your mind or heart when you're not actively thinking about it.

Journaling

Write freely about each option and review what you wrote to notice any patterns or feelings you didn't expect.

Include your Partner

One thing we discovered in our research is that couples often struggle to have these conversations and sometimes the disconnection brings tension. Both men and women say they felt like “they missed each other” when what they wanted most of all was connection and support. Working through these exercises, and especially the Whole Self Approach, both individually and together, as well as looking at where your combined values add up and where they don’t can help you understand both alignment and disagreement more clearly.

Remember—It Feels Hard Because It is. There’s No Perfect Answer.

Even after all your self-reflection, it’s normal to still feel unsure or lacking confidence in your decision. This uncertainty is natural because different aspects of yourself may resonate more strongly with certain outcomes than others. Some choices are difficult because they carry different kinds of costs, and represent different paths for who you might become.

This decision is complex because it’s about more than “right” or “wrong”—it’s about the kind of life you are choosing to live and what you want your future to look like. Try to let go of finding the “perfect” answer, and look within to the very core of who you are. Make a decision that reflects that instinct of being true to who you are and what you really want and need.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The best you can do is the best you can do right now, with the information, support, and resources you have. This decision may not feel perfect, but it can still be something you can stand by because you did the hard work to get there. Be gentle with yourself, and remember—you are responsible for the direction of your life.

This is one chapter in the entire book of your life.

Moving Forward

Continuing with Care

You have spent time doing thoughtful, honest work during one of the hardest seasons of your life. Whether you have chosen a path or are still continuing to discern your next steps, this moment matters.

What comes next is not about being finished, but about continuing forward with care for your Whole Self.

1. This Chapter May Still Be Unfolding

Give yourself permission to feel whatever comes up, now or later. It is common for emotions and questions to resurface over time. Any part of you that feels unsettled or tender is not a failure; it is often a sign of a place that needs gentleness and care as you continue forward.

2. Stay Connected to Safe, Supportive People

If you can, continue to surround yourself with people who help you feel grounded and supported. This might include trusted friends, family members, or a counselor. If relationships feel strained or complicated, including with someone who may not see things the way you do, remember that support is still available. Relationships can change, heal, or be redefined over time, and you do not have to navigate that alone.

3. Your Story Is Still Being Written

Resilience is not about avoiding pain or difficulty. It is the ability to keep going, to adapt, and to care for yourself through life's harder moments. You may still experience sadness, doubt, or grief, and you may also discover strength and compassion you did not know you had. As you continue, resilience can help you meet future challenges with honesty and courage.



4. Practice Gentleness Toward Yourself

Self-compassion means offering yourself the same kindness you would give someone you love. This season may have involved trade-offs, uncertainty, and moments that felt far from perfect. Being gentle with yourself does not mean ignoring the weight of what you've been through; it means recognizing that you did the best you could with what you knew and had at the time. That kindness can help ease self-judgment and make space to keep moving forward.

5. Making Room for Acceptance

Acceptance does not mean that everything about this experience feels resolved or easy. It means finding a way to live honestly with what has happened and with where you are now. For many people, acceptance comes slowly and may involve grief, forgiveness, or time. As you continue doing the hard work of being human, you may eventually find meaning in this chapter in ways you cannot yet see. Some people choose to share their story later on as a way of helping others or making sense of their own journey. In fact, that is where Faint Pink Line began



LOOKING AHEAD

We are deeply proud of you, and truly honored to have been a part of your journey.

This season is an important part of your story, but it is not the whole story. What you have experienced here does not define your worth or limit your future. There is still room to imagine, build, and shape what comes next.

For now, we say goodbye, knowing that this work is ongoing. We are here if and when you want to return. Caring for your Whole Self—body, mind, and spirit—is not a one-time task. It is part of being human. If you are reading this line, it means you care a lot, and you're doing a great job! Thank you for walking with us.



faint pink line

Your Guide to Unintended Pregnancy

Support and reflection during and after an
unintended pregnancy

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