

Twelve Things to Consider When Approaching Clients with Adoption Information

1. When presenting adoption information, speak in the third person “individuals sometimes choose” not “you should choose,” so the parties involved do not feel you are pushy.
2. Give the parties involved control and let them talk it out. Plan for the future not just the birth. (School, job, moving, etc.) Use active listening and positive adoption language to build trust with the parties involved.
3. Encourage the parties involved to set a goal of knowing what the plan will be by the time the pregnant woman is seven months pregnant. Even though that plan may change, it can be helpful to move in one direction or the other.
4. Let parties involved know that you have confidence in them and you believe that if they do make an adoption plan, they will be able to handle the rough spots and that you (or someone) will be there to help them.
5. Consider that making an adoption plan brings on a grief experience for the whole family, try and help the whole family through this experience. Admit, out loud to the birth parent(s), that choosing to make an adoption plan is a hard decision.
6. Encourage the parties involved to talk to their families regarding parenting and the help they could expect from the family if parenting. Encourage them to identify what they expect the family to do and what the family really will do. Will comparing these realities affect the decision either to parent or make an adoption plan?
7. Encourage the parties involved and their families to realistically face what parenting means financially, spiritually, emotionally and physically. Help them define “whose” baby this is.
8. You may ask yourself, “How could I ever support the decision for someone to consider giving up their flesh and blood?” Actually, you are empowering them to explore diverse options in order to help them make a fully-informed decision.
9. Help demystify adoption by giving lots of information about the actual process of adoption (without giving legal advice). However, don’t gush about how wonderful everything will be if they choose to make an adoption plan and how happy the adoptive family will be when they finally have a child to love.
10. Offer to help the parties involved meet adoption professionals. If they are willing, continue to have contact with them to offer ongoing support.
11. Don’t disable the parties involved from looking at adoption because of your own biases. Strive to become as supportive of the adoption option as you are of the parenting option.
12. You may be the only person who gives the parties involved “permission” to look at adoption. Be willing to discuss options that provide the best for the client in the long-term. Facing tough choices today could result in the most positive future outcome.