



## Understanding Infant Adoption 7 Handout

# Assessing Community Resources

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At first glance, identifying a community resource that meets an individual's specific needs may be like looking for a needle in a haystack. There are, however, some helpful techniques that can be used to assess whether a resource is a good match for a particular patient.

Asking clarifying questions to help patients home in on their specific needs as much as possible is the first step in the referral process. This sets the stage for focused, productive communications with community agencies or resources on their behalf.

One key factor is whether the healthcare provider will make the referral directly to the resource or whether it will be necessary for the patient to obtain the information for him/herself. Regardless of what method is used, it is recommended that the individual be "coached" to obtain information and assess its value, a skill that they can use in the future.

Most healthcare providers are aware of a number of community resources, either through personal networking contacts or through collecting business cards and agency brochures at conferences and meetings. These contacts can be used to narrow the search and identify a small number of resources that may work. Starting with "who you know" is always a good idea. When looking for resources and supports, it is important to trust your feelings about the interactions. Developing a trusting relationship is key to being able to honestly discuss service needs and find a good match.

Assessing the following issues can help:

- Were you able to get through to the provider in a timely and easy manner?
- Did you feel comfortable talking to the provider?
- Did he/she treat you respectfully and confidentially?
- Did he/she readily answer your questions about the range of services provided?
- Did he/she respond to your specific needs or just talk generally about the services?

- Would you feel comfortable sending a patient to this community resource?

The following questions are a good starting point for patients to ask in deciding whether to make an appointment with a particular resource:

- What services do you provide in pregnancy counseling and adoption?
- What are your eligibility criteria?
- What are your fees? Who pays these fees?
- Do you know about other resources that might meet my needs?
- If you had a loved one needing these services, is there a resource you would recommend?
- Are there any other questions that would be helpful for me to ask?

When evaluating resources and supports you will want to be able to assist your patients in recognizing those aspects of the service or service provider that are important in determining a potential match for their needs and preferences.

Some important questions to consider and/or coach your patient to consider are:

- Who does the provider consider to be the primary client? The birth parent(s), the unborn child? The adoptive parents?
- Does the provider provide the full range of pregnancy counseling and adoption options that your patient is interested in considering?
- What will this provider do to protect the rights and preferences of the patient(s)?
- Will this provider be competent and respectful of the age, religion, ethnic and cultural background of the patient(s)/client(s)?
- Will the provider provide a translator if one is needed?

Helping patients find appropriate resources is an important aspect of the services offered by health care providers. Developing the knowledge and skills necessary to assess how services fit with their individual needs and preferences will enable patients to become informed consumers and to advocate for themselves.

### **About the Adoption-Sensitive Clinical Care Project**

It is critical that expectant parents who may wish to place a child for adoption have access to appropriately trained staff and comprehensive supports throughout the adoption process. The federally-funded Adoption-Sensitive Clinical Care Project and the Understanding Infant Adoption curriculum are being administered by [National Council For Adoption \(NCFA\)](#), [The Adoption & Foster Care Clinic](#), [Spaulding for Children](#), and [University of Washington School of Social Work](#) for the project period 2024-2026.

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