Dear Resident Advisor,

Thank you for taking the time to be there for your residents and help them throughout a difficult time. You have a resident who has come to you to talk about her unexpected pregnancy. You may be as taken aback as she is. However, this guide is here to help you counsel her in the best way possible and to let her know that she is not alone.

First and foremost, there are overarching tips that we encourage you to keep in mind in these situations.

1. *Listen very carefully.* She may talk a lot, or she may not have much to say at all. No matter what, she needs someone who will simply listen to her without feeling judged, criticized, or pressured to do something she does not want to do. She may be very scared of what people will tell her, especially family members or her partner. In pregnancy resource centers, the number one compliment clients give their counselors is that for the first time, they felt someone listened to everything they had to share.

2. *Keep calm.* As mentioned above, you may be as shocked as she is. However, maintain a balance of empathy and calm. If she is crying, comfort her. If she is upset, let her vent. If she is shocked, remain level-headed.

3. *Suggest help.* There are countless resources to offer her. Further in this guide you will find some.

Simply have a conversation with her. Let her vent, but help her organize her thoughts by asking her questions. Some helpful questions may include:

- How are you feeling?
- When was your last period?
- Have you taken a pregnancy test?
- Have you told anyone that you think you may be pregnant?
- Have you told the dad?
- What do you think he would say about this?
- Would he help raise his kid?
- Have you told your parents?
- What do you think they’d say?
- What kind of options are you considering?
- Would you mind if I talked with you about what you can do next?
Needless to say, **DO NOT** rapid-fire these questions at the resident. If the conversation merits these questions, use them as necessary. She is mostly likely in crisis mode and has many emotions running through her head. *Do not* overwhelm her, but instead allow her to think through her situation logically by asking questions as needed.

Please encourage her to visit [PregnantOnCampus.org](http://PregnantOnCampus.org) as well. This website helps women find out what her rights are on campus with a child. As an RA, you are also able to use the Pregnant and Parenting Resource Guide included in this kit.

If she would like to call a help line, there are trained counselors standing by. You should recommend these help lines to your resident:

- **OptionLine:** 1-800-712-HELP (1-800-712-4357)
- **LifeTime Adoption help line:** 1-800-9Adopt4 (1-800-923-6784)

Finally and most importantly, encourage the resident to go to a pregnancy resource center (PRC), also known as crisis pregnancy center (CPC), to get a free pregnancy test and to receive free, confidential counseling. The OptionLine number listed above, 800-712-HELP (800-712-4357), is the best way to find a PRC nearest to your campus.

Again, thank you for taking the time to provide the best advice and encouragement for your resident. She and her child deserve the best guidance, and you may be the first person she talks to. You deserve to know what your resources are so that you may better guide your peers.

Sincerely,

Beth Rahal

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