

PLANNED PARENTHOOD LEAGUE OF MASSACHUSETTS, INC.  
99 BISHOP RICHARD ALLEN DRIVE  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

COUNSELING PROTOCOL: MINORS AND ABORTION

The following is a general protocol for handling phone calls from minors requesting abortion referrals who are not able or willing to involve their parents. Please read it carefully. It is very important that we provide consistent service. Remember that this law pertains to anyone under 18 who is not married and who has never been married. Every other minor, regardless of living situation, children, or "emancipation" must have parental consent.

1. Explore with the minor her decision not to tell her parents.  
DOCUMENT CAREFULLY ON MINOR INTAKE ABORTION FORM  
"Client Data Form for Unmarried Minors Seeking Abortion."
2. Explain what her options are:
  - a. Out-of-state referral
  - b. Superior court order
3. If she chooses to go out of state, give her at least 3 referrals. Please read the referrals carefully because there are some restrictions at some of the clinics. Inform the woman that we have not evaluated these facilities and cannot guarantee the quality of the services she will receive.
4. Ask her if she will please call back to let us (she should ask for the Manager of Counseling Programs or the C&R Coordinator) know if she has problems. Ask her also to call and to let us know how she is doing and to let us know that she did have the abortion. Please be sure to document all the information you gather on the intake form.
5. If she says that she wants to go to court:
  - a. Explain that what the judge is doing is assessing whether she is mature enough to be making this decision without involving her parents.
  - b. As a part of your counseling and also for her court experience, you should assess the woman's maturity. Areas to discuss, which are also items that judges have tended to focus on, are:
    - 1.) How did you make the decision to have an abortion? Are you aware of existing alternatives?
    - 2.) What steps have you taken since you first found out you are pregnant? With which agencies have you had contact?
    - 3.) With whom have you spoken about the pregnancy?

- 4.) Why are you unwilling or unable to tell your parents? Specifically, do you have reason to believe there will be a negative response? What would happen if you told them?
  - 5.) How does your partner feel about the pregnancy?
  - 6.) Do you work? Go to school? If so, are you a good student? What kind of work do you do around the house?
  - 7.) How are you going to pay for the abortion?
  - 8.) What are your future plans? (school, job, etc.)
  - 9.) What do you know about birth control? Are you planning to use it in the future?
- c. You should be sure you completely describe the abortion procedure to the client and you should ask her to repeat it back to you. The judge may ask her to do this at court. The judge want to be sure the woman knows exactly what will be happening to her at the clinic.
- d. Find out from the client where she lives and when she will be most available to go to court. Ask her if she would be able to get to Boston, if necessary (unless she is calling from western Mass.). The sooner the better, but the necessity to rush will depend on her LMP. Ask for her name and her phone number. Stress that you will never identify yourself as working for PPLM and give her your name. She will call us back for her lawyer's name.
- e. The box with the lawyer names is located atop the small filing cabinet. Look for a lawyer who has not been contacted recently and who will go to court in the county that is convenient for the minor. This is noted on the card. Please be sure to rotate lawyers so that one lawyer is not overburdened.
- f. Call the lawyer:
- 1) Identify yourself as a PPLM counselor
  - 2) Explain that you have a X-year old client who wants to go to court.
  - 3) Ask if she would be available to accompany the woman.
- g. If the lawyer says yes, tell her the client's name and other information. The client calls the lawyer after calling us for the lawyer's name. The client and the lawyer will then decide on a day and time to meet and go to court.

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, Inc.  
99 Bishop Richard Allen Drive  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Client Data Form for Unmarried Minors Seeking Abortion

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Client's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B.: \_\_\_\_\_  
(last) (first)

City or Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselors: \_\_\_\_\_ # of contacts: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. CLIENT HAS COMPLETED:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Positive clinical pregnancy test
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ultrasound (if necessary)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review of decision-making process
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parental consent/ outside Mass. options

THIS IS A CHECKLIST.  
PLEASE USE IT TO  
SUMMARIZE THE INFOR-  
MATION FROM YOUR CALL

2. CLIENT HAS CHOSEN:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Judicial consent
- \_\_\_\_\_ Outside Massachusetts
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parental consent

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Abortion appointment:

Clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

4. Minor is calling back for lawyer's name on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Lawyer's name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please fill in lawyer's file card)

Office Phone #:(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone #:(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

If the call is long distance, can the client call the lawyer collect? Yes No  
Make sure the lawyer will be available to take a collect call. A client  
cannot leave a message on a machine collect.

If known: Court date/time: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional messages from lawyer: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Minor has lawyer's name and number date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of counselor giving lawyer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please indicate any sections of this form that need to be reviewed:

- \*Introduce yourself, and explain briefly the Judicial bypass process.
- \*Tell the minor you will help her prepare for court by asking her questions that a judge may ask her.
- \*Ask minor if she has twenty minutes to speak privately with you.
- \*Ask her to have a pencil and paper ready.

How was client referred to PPLM: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a social worker or counselor helping her with this pregnancy?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. Pregnancy Verification

1. LMP date: \_\_\_\_\_ # weeks LMP: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Clinic Pregnancy Test: Yes No  
Where done: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referred to : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ultrasound: Yes No Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Estimated # weeks as of date performed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Where done: \_\_\_\_\_  
Referral, if necessary: \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Abortions outside Massachusetts

1. Is client interested in an abortion outside Massachusetts? Yes No  
If yes:
2. Ask the client if she would like you to explain the abortion procedure and risks to her.
3. Ask the client if she has anyone who is helping her through this situation. Encourage her to find the support of someone older, if possible.
4. Offer the client the hotline numbers for teens on the bulletin board.
5. Offer three referrals: \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Abortion Appointment

1. Tell the client that you will ask her some questions about the plans she has made to have an abortion. If she is having some trouble making arrangements we and her lawyer can try to help her.
2. When is the client's appointment? Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where is the client's appointment? Clinic: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Does the client know the address and phone # of the clinic? yes no
5. How many visits are required for the procedure? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How is the client getting to the clinic? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How will the client arrange to miss school? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How will the client be paying for the abortion? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who, if anyone, will go with the client to her appointment? \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. Court Counseling / School and Work History

1. Explain that the law says a judge must find a minor mature enough to make her own decision to have an abortion. Judges often ask questions about work and school to determine maturity.

2. School:

Client's grade: \_\_\_\_\_

How is the client doing in school? \_\_\_\_\_

What are client's plans after graduation? \_\_\_\_\_

If client is not in school, last grade finished: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for leaving school: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Work:

Is the client working?    No    Part-time    Full-time

What type of work? \_\_\_\_\_

Previous jobs: \_\_\_\_\_

#### V. Family History

1. Explain that because of the consent law, it is helpful for us to know exactly who has custody of the client. In addition, judges often ask about a client's living situation and her relationship with her parents.

2. Who is the client living with? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who has legal custody of the client?    both    parents    mother  
                 father                  DSS    other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is client able to contact:    Mother? \_\_\_\_\_  
   Father? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Has the client told her parents about her pregnancy? Yes No

If no, why does the client feel she cannot tell her parent(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, why did her parent(s) deny her consent? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### VI. Decision Making

1. Has the client considered all three of her options:  
\_\_\_\_ Continuing the pregnancy and becoming a parent?  
\_\_\_\_ Continuing the pregnancy and making an adoption plan?  
\_\_\_\_ Terminating the pregnancy?

2. The client has chosen to have an abortion because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who knows about and is supporting the client's decision? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Does the client feel anyone is forcing her to have an abortion? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Is the client's partner involved? How old is he? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Is an adult helping the client? Who? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Offer the client the numbers of the teen hotlines listed on the bulletin board.

#### VII. Abortion Counseling/Medical History

1. Has the client been pregnant before? Yes No

If yes, what was the outcome of her pregnanc(ies):

# children born \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

# miscarriages \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

# abortions \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Any complications? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Client should be able to repeat back the steps of an abortion procedure and the risks. Encourage her to take notes. Explain any unfamiliar terms.

First Trimester (D&E) 5.0-13.9 weeks LMP

Procedure:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Pelvic exam
- \_\_\_\_\_ Insertion of speculum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Local anesthetic to cervix
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dilation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vacuum Aspiration

Risks:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Infection
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heavy Bleeding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Incomplete abortion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Injury to the uterus or cervix

Second Trimester (Late D&E and Infusion) 14.0-22.5 weeks LMP.

Each clinic has a different cut-off for each procedure. Check the Abortion notebook for details.

Risks for first and second trimester procedures are the same.

Assessment of client's knowledge: \_\_\_\_\_

### VIII. Contraception Counseling

1. Has the client used contraception in the past? If yes what kind(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What are the client's plans for using contraception in the future?

\_\_\_\_\_

### IX. Contact Information

1. Explain that we avoid calling clients, but that a contact number can be useful in certain situations. If the client is uncomfortable giving a number or doesn't have a very safe number, let it go.

2. Safe phone number.(\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_\_Where is this? \_\_\_\_\_  
Double check to make sure a call to this number won't raise suspicions.

3. When can we call? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Can we leave a message? Y N If yes, under what name? \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Please do not use KK code\*

5. What arrangements have you made with the client if we must call?

\_\_\_\_\_

### X. Court Information

1. Client's first choice: \_\_\_\_\_ Second choice: \_\_\_\_\_

2. If necessary can client come to Middlesex or Suffolk? Yes No

3. Who, if anyone, will accompany the client to court? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Any limitations on going to court? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Client will call back for her lawyer's name at: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Remind and encourage the client to call us right away if she has any difficulty contacting her lawyer. Tell her we are here to help her if things do not go smoothly. Make sure she has our WATS number if she is calling long distance.

#### XI. Counselor's assessment

Describe the client's maturity, affect, and her understanding of the information discussed. Please include any special concerns you would like to pass on to the lawyer.