

Client-Centered Pregnancy Test Counseling

This one-pager provides a framework for discussing positive and negative pregnancy test results.

POSITIVE Test Result

After receiving a positive pregnancy test, your client may:

- Be excited and happy because the pregnancy is desired.
- Be unsure about what they might do.
- Need more information about one or all options, including prenatal care, adoption, foster care, or pregnancy termination.

When giving the pregnancy test result:

Use clear language.

“The test came back positive, which means that you are pregnant.”

Use open-ended questions to allow your client to consider and share their thoughts and feelings without requiring a concrete plan.

“What’s coming up for you right now?”

Use reflective listening.

“On the one hand, it sounds like your partner doesn’t want a baby right now and on the other hand, you’re pretty excited about becoming a parent. Do I have that right?”

NEGATIVE Test Result

After receiving a negative pregnancy test result, your client may:

- Be relieved or disappointed.
- Want to leave the visit without further conversation.
- Be interested in discussing contraception or how to get pregnant.

When giving the pregnancy test result:

Use clear language.

“The test came back negative, which means that you are not pregnant.”

Pay attention to your client’s reaction to determine what services might be relevant.

“I know you were really hoping the test would be positive today. I’m available to answer any questions you might have about...”

Use ASA Cycles throughout the visit:

Affirm/Acknowledge what your client has said

“I’m so glad you asked about...”

Ask follow-up questions

“What follow-up questions do you have about...?”

Share relevant information

“While you are deciding, it is a good idea to...”

For your client who is not pregnant but wants to be:

- Counsel on pre-pregnancy health and fertility.
- Offer basic infertility services, if needed.

For your client who is glad not to be pregnant:

- Offer to have a conversation about contraception, if appropriate.
- Address any issues or concerns your client has with a current method.

Regardless of the pregnancy test result:

- Give unbiased information with empathy and without judgment.
- Some clients may be struggling with reproductive coercion/intimate partner violence. Provide support and connect them to appropriate services.