

How to Help a Friend Who Has Received a Prenatal Diagnosis Choose Life

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It happens every day. A couple, excited about their pregnancy and the birth of their child, receive the devastating news of a prenatal diagnosis.

But even if the diagnosis includes those heartbreaking words – “incompatible with life” – every life deserves to be celebrated, and every baby deserves to be loved. As the friend or family member of someone who has received such a diagnosis, you have the power and the ability to help the couple cope, heal, and find joy.

Listen

Many parents who receive a diagnosis of their unborn children are being told by their doctors that abortion is the [best option](#). Even if the parents don't want to abort, they may be feeling a lot of pressure to do so. Some may even have doctors and family members telling that keeping their baby is selfish. It's the hardest time in this couple's lives, and the last thing they need from you is your unsolicited advice. It is best to listen to them. Let them cry. Let them get angry.

Let them experience the pain that this diagnosis has caused them. In the beginning, they don't need you to tell them anything. They just need you to listen and hug them. Don't disappear for fear of upsetting them. Make yourself available whenever your friend needs to talk, and call to check in on her. When the couple is ready to listen to your advice, be kind and non-judgmental. Remember that they want their baby, but they are afraid. Use examples of other families in [similar situations](#) to show them that loving a child is not dependent on a child's health.

Support

Be there to support your friends' decision to continue with the pregnancy. It's the right decision, but they may be getting a lot of flak from doctors, friends, and even family about how others think they are doing their child a disservice. Attend doctor appointments with the expectant mom if her partner can't be there. Be a positive, life-affirming presence in her life. Let

her cry when she wants to cry. Let her yell when she wants to yell. Let her know she's doing the right thing. Make her dinner. Take her to lunch. Help her find resources of support concerning her child's condition.

Celebrate

Most expectant moms get a baby shower to celebrate their new bundles of joy. But when a couple receives a diagnosis for their unborn child, family and friends often worry about whether or not to throw a baby shower. They often wonder how they can possibly celebrate during such an emotionally devastating time. Before planning a [Celebration of Life shower](#), talk with the couple and make sure they're okay with it. If they are, help them start a baby registry. Even if they have been told their child won't survive birth, there is always the hope and the chance that the baby will. The baby may even end up going home after all.

You can ask guests to bring gifts for the mom that include gift cards to restaurants or a spa for a day of pampering. Gifts can also include blankets and quilts with the baby's name on them. An amazing gift would be a pregnancy photo session. And of course, include the usual gifts such as outfits and baby toys.

Just because a baby has received a prenatal diagnosis does not mean his or her life should go uncelebrated. This child, and his or her parents, need all the love and support they can get, and there's no better way to do that than by showing how much you care for all of them.

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