

## UNINTENDED PREGNANCY & CONTRACEPTION

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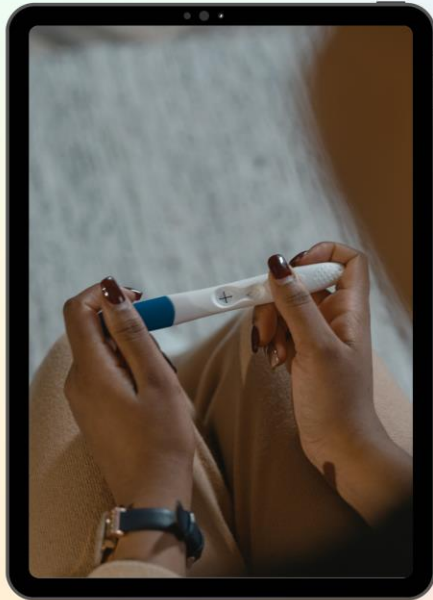
*Professor Khine Pwint Phyu & Dr Malar Kandasamy*

- ✓ Unintended pregnancy is a reality that many young people face around the world. Whether due to lack of access to contraception, misinformation, or sexual coercion, discovering a pregnancy that wasn't intended can be overwhelming.
- ✓ In 2019 adolescents aged 15-19 years had an estimated 21 million pregnancies each year and of this almost 50% were unintended. This leads to about 12 million births.
- ✓ According to data from the Ministry of Health Malaysia, the rate of teenage pregnancies increased by 42% between 2010 and 2020.
- ✓ In 2010, there were approximately 15,000 reported cases of teenage pregnancies, while in 2020, this number rose to over 21,000.
- ✓ According to data released by WHO in 2023 this same data also showed that 55% of unintended pregnancies among 15 -19 years old ended up in abortions which are often unsafe

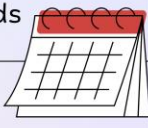



### **What Is an Unintended Pregnancy?**

- ✓ An unintended pregnancy is one that occurs when a person is not intending to become pregnant—either at that time (mistimed) or at all (unwanted).
- ✓ WHO recognizes unintended pregnancy as a major public health concern, especially among adolescents, and encourages interventions like comprehensive sex education, youth-friendly reproductive health services, and access to contraception.

## How to know you are Pregnant?



### Early Pregnancy Symptoms

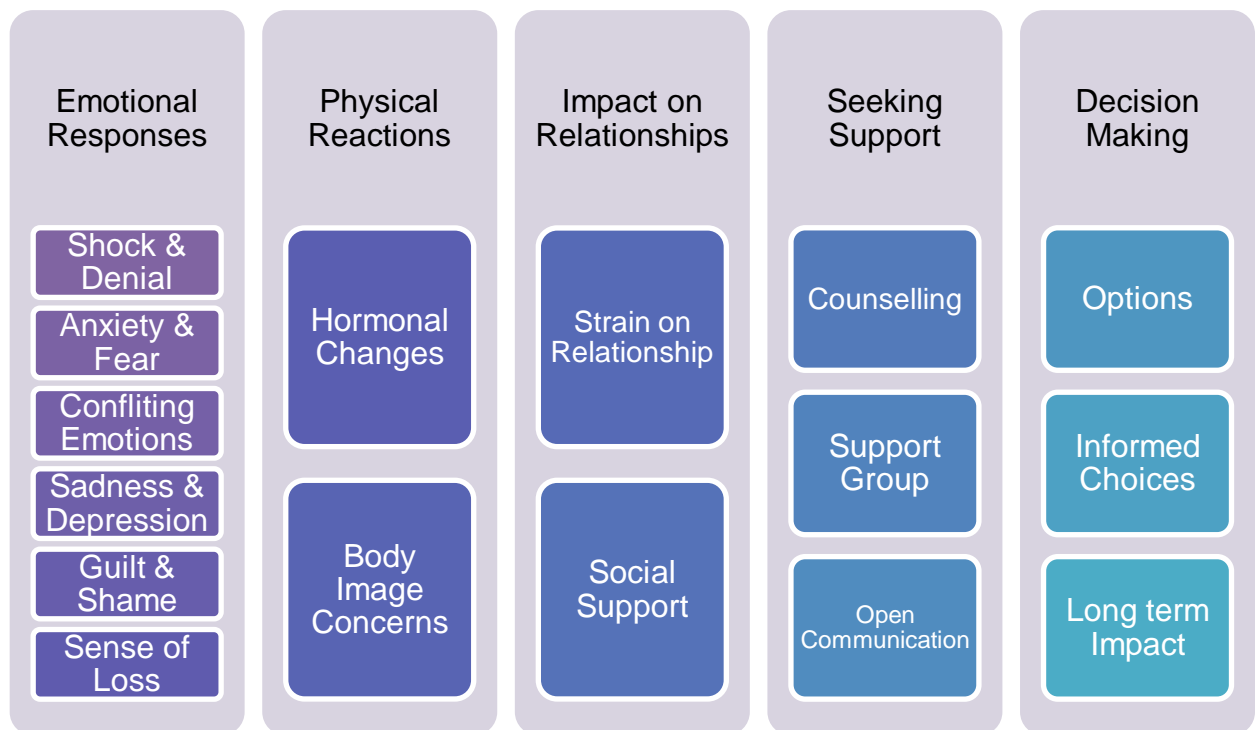
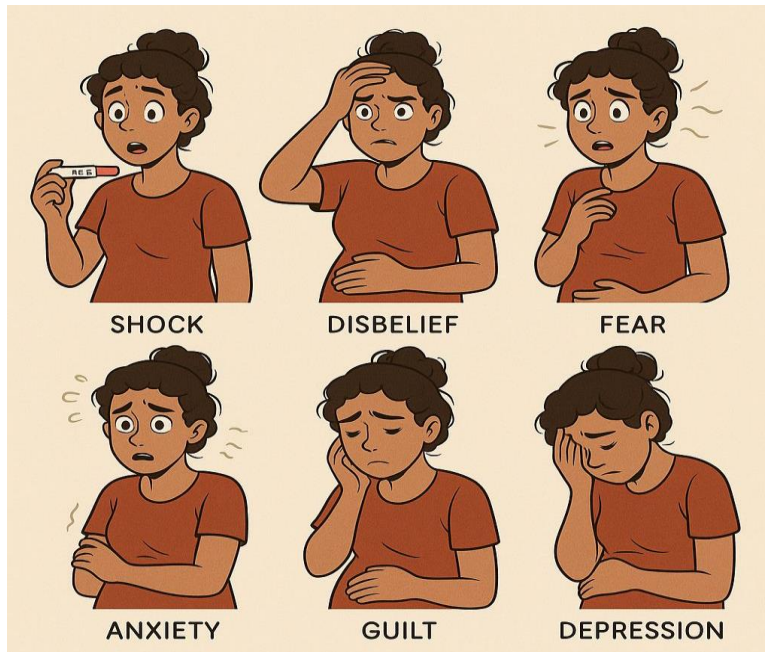
Missed periods 	Frequent urination
Faintness	Slight bleeding
Food aversion	Mood swings 
Tender breasts	Fatigue
Nausea 	Raised temperature
Constipation	Headaches 

## How Can you Confirm Pregnancy?



- ✓ Home Pregnancy Test
  - Detects the hormone hCG in urine
  - Most accurate when done after a missed period
  - easily available across the counter and easy to use
  - Can be done at home by the young adult
- ✓ Clinical Diagnosis by ultrasound
  - A doctor can perform an ultrasound to confirm this pregnancy – location and gestation/ how many weeks of pregnancy

## Emotional Responses to an Unintended Pregnancy



## **I. Emotional Responses:**

- **Shock and Denial:**

The initial realization of an unintended pregnancy can be shocking, leading to a period of denial or disbelief.

- **Anxiety and Fear:**

Fear about the future, financial stability, and the impact on relationships is common.

- **Conflicting Emotions:**

It's normal to feel a mix of positive and negative emotions, such as excitement and anxiety, or joy and resentment.

- **Sadness and Depression:**

Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or even depression can arise, especially when dealing with feelings of loss or disappointment

- **Guilt and Shame:**

If the pregnancy was unexpected or unwanted, guilt or shame might be experienced, particularly if there are societal pressures or personal beliefs about abortion or parenthood.

- **Sense of Loss:**

Feelings of loss about one's previous life, freedom, or relationship status are also common, according to The Conversation.

## **II. Physical Reactions:**

- **Hormonal Changes:**

Pregnancy hormones can lead to physical symptoms like fatigue, nausea, and changes in appetite.

- **Body Image Concerns:**

Changes in body image and physical appearance can also cause anxiety and self-consciousness.

## **III. Impact on Relationships:**

- **Strain on Relationships:**

Unintended pregnancies can put a strain on relationships, particularly with partners or family members who may not be supportive.

- **Social Support:**

Lack of social support from family or friends can exacerbate feelings of isolation and anxiety. Increased social isolation due to stigma and discrimination.

#### **IV. Seeking Support:**

- **Counseling:**

Seeking professional support from a therapist or counselor can help individuals process their emotions and make informed decisions

- **Support Groups:**

Connecting with others who have experienced Unintended pregnancies can provide a sense of community and shared understanding.

- **Open Communication:**

Talking to trusted friends, family members, or partners can help individuals feel less alone and more supported.

#### **V. Decision-Making:**

- **Options:**

It's crucial to understand all available options, including parenting, adoption, and abortion, and to weigh the pros and cons of each.

- **Informed Choices:**

Making informed decisions based on individual circumstances and values is essential, and seeking professional guidance can be helpful.

- **Long-Term Impact:**

- ✓ It's important to consider the potential long-term consequences of each decision, including social, emotional, and financial implications.
- ✓ A young adults reaction to an unwanted pregnancy can be highly personal and vary from one person to another. What seems to be a difficult situation to one person could be a catalyst for growth and resilience for another.

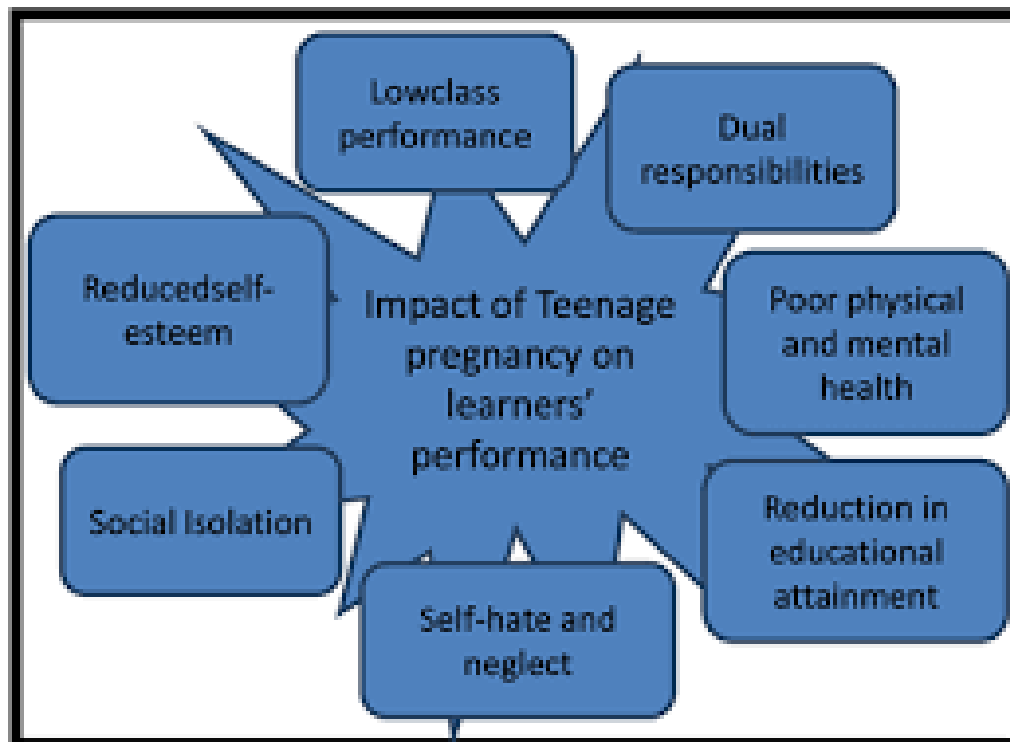
- ✓ It's normal to feel overwhelmed, scared, anxious, or even numb. Every person's emotional response is different.

**ACOG and RCOG:**

***recommend non-judgmental, supportive, and evidence-based counselling for young people facing Unintended pregnancy.***

## Consequences of Unintended Pregnancy in Youth

- ✓ Unintended pregnancy can have far-reaching effects on a young person's life.
- ✓ Health risks include complications in adolescents and unsafe abortion. Educational impacts include school dropouts. Mental health effects involve depression and isolation. Economic effects include poverty and housing issues.



## What Can You Do?

The choice is yours to make. As an adult you have the right to make the choice that is best for you with guide from the correct person. Global reproductive health authorities outline three primary options:

1. Continuing Pregnancy and becoming a Parent
2. Continue the Pregnancy and Choose Adoption
3. End the Pregnancy Through Abortion in a legal way

***Well, it's not an easy decision or choice to make but guide and appropriate information given you can make the right decision that suits you.***



## Preventing Unintended Pregnancy

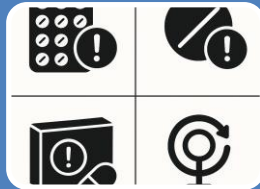


- ✓ Every young adult/ teenager must be empowered with the most effective strategy effective strategy in preventing Unintended/unwanted/unintended pregnancy which is education + contraception.
- ✓ Emergency contraception (EC) are methods of preventing a pregnancy after you have had unprotected vaginal intercourse.
- ✓ EC is effective the sooner they are used after the act of intercourse and are recommended for use within 5 days. EC can be used after unprotected intercourse.
- ✓ Emergency contraception methods currently available are copper-bearing intrauterine devices (IUCDs) and emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).
- ✓ Common methods include:
  - Barrier methods (e.g., condoms)
  - Hormonal methods (e.g., pills, patch, vaginal rings and depo provera )
  - Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC, e.g., Intrauterine device(IUD): Hormonal, copper implant)
  - Emergency contraception
  - Fertility awareness method
  - Abstinence



## Barrier methods (e.g., condoms, diaphragms)

- can be used just before sexual intercourse
- high failure rate



## Morning After Pills

- morning-after pill" contains ethinyl estradiol (estrogen) and levonorgestrel (progesterone).
- taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse and again 12 hours later



## Progesterone only Pills

- contains levonorgestrel and is marketed as Plan B.
- taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse and again 12 hours later.
- If a patient vomits within 2 hours of taking either the combined pill or the progesterone-only pill, some clinicians recommend the pill be taken again



## Intrauterine Copper Device

- Inserted 5 to 7 days after ovulation
- not commonly inserted in adolescents, , because many adolescents run the concurrent risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases leading to pelvic infections and possibly infertility.

## **Conclusion**

Unintended pregnancy is a serious issue that affects millions of young people. It is preventable with knowledge, support, and access to contraception.

You have the right to accurate information, safe care, and to make informed decisions about your future.

## References

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