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## How do CPCs mislead pregnant people?

CPCs have a long history of deception. Listed below are tactics that some centres have been known to use:

- ❑ Give the impression they are medical clinics or professional counselling centres.
- ❑ Rename themselves to sound pro-choice and secular, or to imply they provide abortion care.
- ❑ Buy Google placements so their site comes up first on searches for abortion clinics.
- ❑ Promise to give information on all options but then refuse to refer for abortion care or contraception.
- ❑ Do not say upfront that they are anti-abortion or religiously affiliated.
- ❑ Claim they offer help to everyone regardless of religion, background, or gender identity, but do not provide culturally-informed or gender-affirming care.
- ❑ Make exaggerated promises of help, such as financial assistance, medical treatment, and prenatal and postpartum care. In reality, those services are often very limited.

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## How do CPCs mistreat pregnant people?

CPCs often provide misinformation or withhold information, or even mistreat pregnant people. Below are tactics that some centres have been known to use:

- ❑ Provide misinformation about abortion and exaggerate its risks. Abortions may be described as causing long-term emotional, physical, and psychological damage. Clients may be told that abortion increases the risk of breast cancer, future miscarriage, post-traumatic stress disorder, infertility, and even death. (All such claims are scientifically false.)
- ❑ Counsel against contraception and refuse to provide information except for negatives (such as emphasizing that condoms won't prevent sexually transmitted infections).
- ❑ State that some birth control methods are actually abortifacients, including emergency contraception, IUDs, and the birth control pill.
- ❑ Use methods and language that are designed to scare, horrify, and confuse people considering abortion, which can induce guilt, anxiety, and emotional trauma.
- ❑ Persuade pregnant people not to have an abortion even in the most desperate or compelling circumstances, such as a lethal defect in the fetus, maternal health risks, or in cases of rape.

- ❑ Delay the pregnancy test results and use the time to expose clients to anti-choice or religious propaganda, such as videos warning against abortion, or fetus dolls to show fetal development.
- ❑ Present the pregnancy results in ways that are ambiguous or even false, in order to delay or prevent an abortion.
- ❑ If the person turns out not to be pregnant, persuade them to remain abstinent and present premarital sex as wrong and dangerous.
- ❑ Promote abstinence except within marriage, regardless of the client's situation or moral values. For example, CPCs may counsel women to withhold sex from their boyfriends.
- ❑ Disrespect the client's own spiritual values by trying to impose fundamentalist Christian and patriarchal values.
- ❑ Abuse a client's trust by breaking confidentiality, such as by making unwanted phone calls at home urging her not to abort or calling her parents or other family members.
- ❑ Perform an ultrasound to dissuade pregnant people from abortions, even though non-clinical use should be avoided.
- ❑ Conduct unprofessional post-abortion "counselling," using a religiously based model of guilt, forgiveness, and redemption.

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## Where can you get accurate information and referrals?

You can call the Access Line run by Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights: **1-888-642-2725** for unbiased information about abortion services or counselling centres. Or text them at 613-800-6757.

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## How can you counter CPCs?

If you've had a first-hand experience with CPCs, we encourage you to report and document your encounter. You can remain anonymous, but stories of actual encounters help tell the truth about CPCs, and can be effective in educating the media and policy makers. Please report your story here:

[www.arcc-cdac.ca/share-your-cpc-story](http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/share-your-cpc-story)

You can check your local CPC's website and social media to see if it uses false or deceptive information in their public materials. Sometimes, local papers publish "puff pieces" about CPCs and report on their events, grants, or awards. If so, contact the media outlet or funder to complain.

You can help educate others by publishing social media posts, opinion pieces, or letters to the editor; distributing brochures like this one; or speaking to your friends and family.

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## Resources

*Examining the Websites of Anti-Choice "Crisis Pregnancy Centres."* March 2023. Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada and BC Humanist Association.  
[www.arcc-cdac.ca/cpcstudy-2023/](http://www.arcc-cdac.ca/cpcstudy-2023/)

*List of Crisis Pregnancy Centres in Canada.* Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada.  
<https://shorturl.at/ynkUO>

*How to Identify Fake Clinics.* Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada.  
<https://shorturl.at/5AT3B>

*Finding Pro-choice Pregnancy Supports.* Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights. [www.actioncanadashr.org/finding-pro-choice-pregnancy-supports](http://www.actioncanadashr.org/finding-pro-choice-pregnancy-supports)

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## Contact us!

This leaflet was prepared by:

Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada  
(ARCC-CDAC)

PO Box 2663, Station Main  
Vancouver, BC, V6B 3W3

Email [info@arcc-cdac.ca](mailto:info@arcc-cdac.ca)  
Web [www.arcc-cdac.ca](http://www.arcc-cdac.ca)  
TikTok [@abortionrightscoalition](https://www.tiktok.com/@abortionrightscoalition)  
BlueSky [@abortionrightscan.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@abortionrightscan.bsky.social)  
Instagram [abortionrightscoalitioncan](https://www.instagram.com/abortionrightscoalitioncan)  
Facebook [AbortionRights](https://www.facebook.com/AbortionRights)



## Beware of “Crisis Pregnancy Centres”

Many agencies that counsel pregnant people are actually anti-abortion Christian ministries. Their main goal is to stop clients from having abortions. These centres are not medical facilities, and most of their “counsellors” are volunteers who are not medical professionals and have no recognized training in counselling.

We call these places Crisis Pregnancy Centres or “CPCs” – although many have different names. This leaflet refers to all of them as CPCs.

Studies show that CPCs misinform and try to dissuade pregnant people from having abortions. Clients describe inflammatory language and being given blatantly false information. Some say their confidentiality has been violated, and that mistreatment by CPCs has threatened their health.



**Abortion Rights  
Coalition of Canada**