NIAGARA REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

Community members organizing for more accessible pro-choice and sexual health resources in the Niagara region.

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ACTUALLY ACCURATE INFORMATION: CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES IN NIAGARA

BY NIAGARA REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

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WHAT ARE CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES (CPCS)?

“CPCs are anti-choice agencies that present themselves as unbiased medical clinics or counselling centres, and whose ostensible goal is to provide women with non-judgemental information on all their options when faced with an unintended pregnancy” (ARCC, 2016)

CPCs often try to mimic the appearance of a medical facility to trick clients into believing that the information they provide is scientific and trustworthy.

However, most of them are Christian ministries whose employees have no medical training.

WHERE CAN YOU GET RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT ABORTION AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN NIAGARA?

Niagara Region Sexual Health Centre
Staffed by nurses who provide STI testing and treatment, birth control at a reduced price, pregnancy testing, the morning after pill, unplanned pregnancy options counselling, and free condoms. No health card needed.

Can be reached at 905-688-3817
Fort Erie - 1264 Garrison Rd., Unit 12 (appt. only)
Niagara Falls - 7835 McLeod Rd
St. Catharines - 277 Welland Ave.
Welland - 200 Division St.

Abortion referrals in Niagara
1. Choice Connect Abortion Referral
   Web app provides referrals to closest abortion provider in your area

2. Action Canada Access line: 1-888-642-2725
   Confidential 24-hour Canada wide toll free number that provides information on reproductive and sexual health and referrals on pregnancy options

3. Niagara Region Sexual Health Centre (no health card needed)
FAKE CLINICS/CPCS WILL HAVE DISCLAIMERS SUCH AS “WE ARE NOT A MEDICAL FACILITY” AND “WE DO NOT REFER FOR ABORTION OR CONTRACEPTION”

IN CONTRAST, GENUINE SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRES OR ABORTION CLINICS TEND TO HAVE THE FOLLOWING ON THEIR WEBSITES:

1. Professional, complete information about procedures and policies right on the website
2. Links and resources to help you decide for yourself
3. Resources from a variety of mainstream services, including government supports and
4. LGBT resources
5. Inclusive information on gender identity or orientation
6. Fun, sex-positive messaging

CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES SPREAD MISINFORMATION TO PROMOTE THEIR ANTI-CHOICE MESSAGE.

CPCs in Niagara have falsely told clients that they are at risk of hemorrhaging and dying if they take the abortion pill. In fact, the abortion pill is considered to be very safe by medical experts.

They also falsely claim that there may be a link between abortion and breast cancer. The National Cancer Institute debunked this claim 17 years ago.

They also claim that depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts increase after receiving an abortion. The American Psychological Association debunked this claim in 2008, instead showing that denying people abortions is linked to a decrease in mental health.
CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES ARE DANGEROUS.

CPCs spread misinformation about abortion, contraception, and STIs. Through doing this, they seek to take away individual autonomy - not just in making choices about pregnancy, but also in any matter regarding sex and sexual health. CPCs will use scare tactics and guilt tactics that cause mental and physical harm to clients.

WHAT FAKE CLINICS WILL NOT OFFER/INCLUDE:

- Contraception information
- Downsides of adoption or parenting
- Health risks of full-term pregnancy
- Links to abortion or contraception providers
- Gender identity and orientation information (language and pictures only recognize male/female and heterosexuality)
- LGBT supports
- Resources to help you decide without coming into the centre
- Safer sex information
- Sex positive language
COMMONLY FOUND ON CPC WEBSITES

WORDS AND PHRASES
- Abstinence
- Faith-based
- Father, dad, men
- Grief
- Healthy relationships
- Mother, mum, mom
- Post-abortion, followed by the word stress, distress, trauma, syndrome, grief, recovery, healing.
- or support
- Pre-born/unborn
- Pregnant? Alone? Afraid?
- Recovery
- Sexual integrity
- Values

IMAGES
- Mothers and babies
- Pregnant bellies, usually near term
- Sad people

SERVICES
- Adoption
- Appeals to men, “Dads” programs
- Maternity/baby clothing and other free stuff
- Parenting programs/classes
- Post-abortion counselling
- Pregnancy or STI tests
- Sex ed programs

THERE ARE 6 CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES IN THE NIAGARA REGION.

Fort Erie
Port Colbourne and Wainfleet
Grimsby
St. Catharines (2 Locations)
Welland

CPCs are not regulated by the government and many are registered as charities. Many CPCs receive federal funding through government grants.

AS OF 2016, THERE ARE MORE CPCs IN CANADA THAN THERE ARE CLINICS THAT OFFER ABORTION.
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TEXT THE NUMBER ON THE ANTI-CHOICE BILLBOARDS AROUND TOWN?

You get connected to a counsellor at Elisha House, a ‘Crisis Pregnancy Centre’ located in Welland.

Elisha House claims to be a “safe, non-judgemental and confidential place for you” when in reality, they are anti-choice and provide scientifically inaccurate information about abortion and contraceptives.

CPC Locations in Niagara (Avoid!)

Fort Erie: South Niagara Life Ministries, 143 Gilmore Rd
Port Colborne and Wainfleet: South Niagara Life Ministries, 72 Charlotte St
St. Catharines: Niagara Life Centre, 65 Lakeshore Rd
Welland: Elisha House Pregnancy & Family Support Centre, 48 Burger St
Grimsby: Grimsby Life Centre, 18 Elm St

HOW TO IDENTIFY FAKE CLINICS AND CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTRES

Adapted from Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada’s resource of the same name
ARCC-CDAC.CA

FAKE CLINICS OFTEN HAVE NAMES SIMILAR TO ABORTION CLINICS

They may also “co-locate” near real reproductive health clinics, hoping to misdirect potential clients to themselves.

Some words in the names of organizations to watch for include “Beginnings, Birthright, Choice, choices, Crisis, Hope, Life, Options, Pregnancy care, and Pregnancy support.”

Of course, legitimate clinics use some of the same terms (which is the point), so the presence of one or two of these is not a definite indicator of an anti-choice stance.