**Crisis Pregnancy Intervention:**

**What to Do and Say When It Matters Most**

**Resource Book by John Ensor, available for purchase on Amazon.com**



A pregnancy-related crisis may present itself to you in the form of a daughter, a sister, a schoolmate, a close friend, or a co-worker. You are not a licensed professional counselor. But you are the one she turned to for counsel.

For most readers of this book, that crisis will present itself as someone seeking services from a pregnancy help organization (PHO). You have come to your local PHO and are in training to work regularly with women and couples experiencing pregnancy-related crisis.

Beginners often experience trepidation in entering into the crisis of others. It isn’t, however, competence you lack. It’s confidence. You don’t realize that while, of course, you need to learn more and improve your skills to make you more effective, you already have everything you need right now to do an adequate job of pregnancy crisis intervention.

Counseling is properly understood to be “a conversation where one party with questions, problems, and trouble seeks assistance from someone they believe has answers, solutions, and help.”1 Lots of people, then, are good counselors.

Remember, there is no such thing as a professional mother or auntie. You can’t get a master’s degree in friendship. You don’t need to be license as a good neighbor in order to be one. On any given day, around the world, there are moms, aunties, BFFs and good neighbors who are approached by someone in a pregnancy crisis and who prove to be good counselors. They have not read this book, but they will do and say the right things when it matters most.

Why is that possible? Because they love the person in crisis, and **love is the actual life-saving power in pregnancy crisis intervention.**

When someone is in crisis, they are in a state of emotional disequilibrium. They are in inner turmoil. In pregnancy related crises, the dominant emotion that has metastasized out of control is fear. As the fear grows, it then paralyzes normative patterns of thinking and decision-making. Lower the fear and normative processes of coping and problem-solving reemerge.

As already noted, the reason untrained people can figure out what to do and say when approached by someone in a crisis pregnancy is because they love the person in crisis. This love guides their words and actions and diminishes fear. For example, love naturally teaches you to listen. **Listening signals empathy**. For the person in crisis, just finding someone who cares enough to listen relieves fear and stress. To them, you are like the proverbial shelter in the raging storm although nothing in their circumstances has changed, they begin to relax emotionally. They share their broken heart with you, and then open their heart to your counsel.

It’s your love for the woman in crisis that intuitively guides you to slow things down and make sure she obtains the pregnancy-related information necessary to make an informed decision. It’s love that prompts you to ask hard questions, even ones she may not be eager to consider. Love is gritty that way. As your conversation ends, it’s love that prompts you to say, “I will help you. We’ll get through this together.”

If you can love, then you can do pregnancy crisis intervention. Our point is not that love alone is all you need for effective crisis counseling, but it is all you need to get started. Good training is still necessary, because people do and say much that is insensitive to those in crisis, and people in crisis have specific needs. Love alone does not provide information, but it does provide motivation. Love, then, is the foundation for effective crisis intervention and a guiding power in applying all that you study and learn in pregnancy crisis intervention.

Using this as our foundation, we offer three further starting points for the beginner:

1. One rule
2. One illustration
3. One sentence

These will reduce the complex dynamics and the counseling approaches explored in this book down to easily remembered, simple, and recognizable starting points.