SHE MATTERS

Serena’s Story

SUPPORT CIRCLE
PREGNANCY CLINICS
“You really gave me support in a moment in which I felt helpless.”
Serena met Brian in Italy while he was stationed in the Navy in Sicily. “We knew we would become a couple shortly after our first date,” said Serena. Their common interests, depth of their conversations and core values were the foundation of what ultimately led to their three year, monogamous relationship. This was confirmed when Serena returned to Italy after a one year study in Scotland during her junior year as an undergraduate student of Linguistics at the University of Catania. “He waited for me,” said Serena, “and that won me over.” Brian wanted Serena to complete her education and to realize all of her dreams in life. Serena felt the same way about Brian.

When Brian was discharged from the Navy and returned stateside, he immediately found a job and enrolled in the Graphic Design program at the Academy of Art in San Francisco; and Serena was in her final year at the university in Italy. They were very committed to each other and the relationship. It was during the fall while on holiday that Serena visited Brian and later discovered she was pregnant. “I was devastated,” said Serena. “I began to panic until I found your clinic and met with a counselor and had an ultrasound. I am so glad I found you all.” Serena’s two pressing concerns were her parents’ reaction to news of her pregnancy and how she would finish college. “I knew they would be disappointed and it was difficult to think of how I would face them. I knew I had Brian’s support but losing my parent’s support was unthinkable.” Serena further stated, “I wasn’t ready to have a baby but once I saw the ultrasound, my heart melted.”
After the ultrasound and nurse consultation, Serena and Brian engaged in couples counseling at Support Circle. Our counselor helped Serena develop a series of communication strategies to share the news of the pregnancy with Serena’s parents. She also developed strategies, with the help of her counselor, to finish her senior year in college and graduate with a degree. Two months later, she gave birth to Emma and Brian proposed marriage. “You really supported me in a moment in which I felt completely helpless,” said Serena. “I am so happy and that happiness could not have happened without Support Circle’s help.”

Brian and Serena were married on January 21, 2016 in Italy. A few months ago they returned to the Bay Area where they spend time working and furthering their education and invest every other waking hour playing with Emma. Thank you for surrounding Serena and Brian with a circle of support, and for making this story possible!
She’s our sister, our daughter, our friend

Dear Supporters,

Our society has become so accustomed to talking about the politics of abortion and unintended pregnancies that the personal aspect is forgotten. When it comes to a pregnancy decision, society reduces her to the decision she makes on whether to abort or carry to term.

But she’s not a decision. She’s a person. And she’s not a stranger. **She’s our sister, our daughter, our friend.** Half of all pregnancies in America are unplanned. One third of women in America have an abortion by the age of 45. Every one of them is someone’s sister, someone’s daughter, someone’s friend. With the incidence of unplanned pregnancy and abortion that high, the odds say that this woman is not someone you don’t know. She is in your family. She is someone you see and talk with every day. She is someone in your life, and she is also all around you. She’s us. And a man was involved in every instance of an unplanned pregnancy too. He is us. They are us.

At Support Circle, She Matters. In fact, we believe that **she’s so much more** than the decision she makes. She has values, plans, friends and family; she has a whole personality that encompasses much more than her decision.

With your help, Support Circle can give tangible help to her by providing a safe, civil place where she can address her most pressing needs when facing an unplanned pregnancy. A place where people aren’t jumping all over the woman making a decision about her pregnancy, demanding that she do one thing or another, but rather a place that gives her deference so she can sort out her own thoughts and feelings and make a well informed choice that she can own.

Sincerely,

Albert K. Lee, Executive Director

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**Care Promises**

**Time, Space and Support**

*Emotional support for the coming year no matter what you choose*

*A safe and civil place*

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**It’s been an exciting time** at Support Circle as we work tirelessly to build our brand and outreach. Our Vision Statement dovetails with our name: *We envision a community where women and men in unintended pregnancies are surrounded by respectful support to make well-informed choices that are in line with their core values. We want everyone who faces the challenges of an unplanned pregnancy to know that Support Circle will provide helpful support in a non-pressured environment. We think our approach will resonate with people more than ever, as we convey to potential clients our three care promises. These go well beyond what they can expect from a typical doctor’s office. Through your support, together we are creating that circle of care and that trusted relationship that women and men facing an unplanned pregnancy need.*

*The Board of Directors*
Men have traditionally been hesitant to seek counseling for trauma, stress, relationships, etc. And it is often taken for granted that of course men are resistant to counseling about unplanned pregnancies. But in 2014, a survey conducted by Public Opinion Strategies in six of America’s largest metro areas demolished stereotypes about men when it comes to unplanned pregnancies.

The researchers surveyed 600 men aged 18-30 and asked them if they would seek counseling with their partner when faced with an unintended pregnancy. The results? **Over two-thirds (68%) of men** said they would “definitely go to counseling” or they would actively seek counseling on their own even if their partner was unwilling. An additional 25% would go to counseling reluctantly if asked. Only 7% of men said they would not go to counseling when faced with an unintended pregnancy. An unplanned pregnancy can represent a big change not only in her life, but in his life as well, and millennial men are surprisingly receptive to counseling when faced with it.

Would men seek counseling with their partner when faced with an unintended pregnancy?

**Over two-thirds** of the men said they would “definitely go to counseling” or they would actively seek counseling **on their own** even if their partner was unwilling!

![Pie chart showing the results of the survey]

Source: Public Opinion Strategies Multi-Metro Online Survey, August 2014
Last year, armed with this research that indicates men want to go to counseling, Support Circle was intentional about inviting and actively including the partners and spouses of our clients in the counseling process. Our initial goal for 2015 was 66% participation by the men. By the end of 2015, our dedicated team of counselors had surpassed this goal and had counseled with 70% of male partners!

In society, men feel pressure to be politically correct and say, “It’s your choice. I’ll go along with whatever you decide.” But ironically many women are looking to him at that moment to express support and commitment, and that statement is the opposite of that since it leaves her on an island. And then men have often reported feeling violated and hurt that their partner would make a decision without at least considering their viewpoint. While perspectives vary, especially depending on the length of the relationship, in general, men want to be involved in the decision-making process. 89% of the men surveyed said they would be very upset if the woman did not include them in the decision-making process.

Support Circle offers relationship counseling for men and women facing unintended pregnancies for up to one year after the pregnancy decision. Counseling can be done with their partner or individually to help sort through and address various topics such as: communications struggles, relationship concerns, infidelity, healthy relationships, and any others. Our counselors can be there to be supportive when the woman shares the news of her pregnancy with her partner.

Support Circle recognizes that men need support as well in this situation and provides the following services for men:

- Addressing financial questions and concerns in an individual counseling setting
- Insurance assistance and enrollment
- Answers to medical questions related to the pregnancy
- Discussion facilitation — Sometimes conversations can be difficult with sensitive issues like an unintended pregnancy. Having a qualified third party facilitate discussion between you and your partner is extremely helpful. Our professional counselors specialize in facilitating discussions with couples who are “unsure” of their pregnancy decision. All sessions are confidential and free.
- Individual counseling — sort out your own thoughts and plans in complete confidentiality with a professional counselor.
- Relationship counseling
- Co-parenting counseling

Support Circle provides both women and men with a safe, civil place where they can each sort out their thoughts and feelings. We offer this because She Matters. And He Does, Too.
Our Clinics

San Francisco Clinic
450 Sutter Street, Suite 1740
San Francisco, CA 94108
(415) 627-9175
M, W, Th, F: 10am–6pm
Closed Tuesday

Oakland Clinic
400 30th Street, Suite 401
Oakland, CA 94609
(510) 891-9998
M, Tu, Th: 10am–6pm
W, F: 9am–5pm

Redwood City Clinic
801 Brewster Avenue, Suite 210
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650) 261-9115
Tu: 10am–6pm
Th: 10am–7pm
F: 10am–2pm (by appointment only)