



## **FACT SHEET – Health Care Professionals -** **The Importance of Impartial Communication**

*It is important that complete information is shared with prospective parents throughout the prenatal screening process, and what is complete information will differ from patient to patient.*

Research has shown that the way in which parents receive news about unexpected findings can have implications for their immediate and longer-term psychological wellbeing.

Where communication is poor or there are delays in receiving information, a sense of mistrust can develop towards the health system and the relationship between the prospective parent and health care provider can be undermined (ASUM, 2020).

### Possible Phrases and Terminology:

- When discussing results use terminology such as anomaly, difference and variation.
- We've just received your prenatal screening results and there have been some unexpected findings. I was hoping you could come into the clinic so we could talk about what the results mean. Would you like to bring in a support person?
- I am here to make sure you have the information and the care you need. I will support you and give you the time you need to make decisions that are right for you and your family.
- The results of these tests alone indicate the probability or chance of some fetal chromosomal conditions but nothing else.
- I can give you information from a clinical perspective about Down syndrome (or another condition) but my understanding of the lived experience of people with Down syndrome is limited.
- People often find it useful to connect with people who have lived experience of Down syndrome (or another condition). If this is something you are interested in, I can refer you to Down Syndrome Queensland (or another diagnosis specific group).



## References

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Australian Society for Ultrasound in Medicine. (2022). Parent-centred communication in obstetric ultrasound – ASUM Guidelines.

<http://www.asum.com.au/files/public/SoP/curver/ObsGynae/Parent-centred-communication-in-obstetricultrasound.pdf>

Down Syndrome Queensland. (2022). Practice Resource – Prenatal Screening for Chromosomal Conditions including Down syndrome.

<https://prenatalscreening.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Prenatal-Screening-Practice-Resource.pdf>