



## **FACT SHEET - Health Care Professionals - The Importance of Complete Information**



*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.*

## The Importance of Complete Information

Pre-test counselling allows women and pregnant people to make an informed decision about whether they choose to participate in prenatal screening. Not all women and pregnant people will want to screen. The woman or pregnant person has the right to make choices and decisions, even if the partner/coparent does not agree with them. Follow the woman or pregnant person's lead in including or not including their partner in discussions and decision-making.

Communicate using clear, simple and consistent language and take time to confirm and to document that the information you have conveyed has been understood (Australian Government Department of Health, 2020). Ensure an interpreter service is available if required.

Information - where prospective parents have access to full information about the lives of people with a particular condition and their families, they are enabled to make an informed decision about whether they believe the results from prenatal screening may be helpful, neutral or harmful for their family.



Attitude - avoid any implication that people have a duty to have screening and/or diagnostic tests and/or terminations.

Routinisation - sometimes referred to as 'screening creep', the autonomy of prospective parents is compromised where a decision to participate in screening is presumed as part of 'routine' pregnancy care.

Broader Cultural Context - prospective parents may hold negative attitudes about disability and fear the life of their child will be marked by suffering. Negative cultural stereotypes and messages about the benefits of genetic research and prenatal screening could reinforce these fears.

(Shakespeare, 2014).

## References

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Australian Government Department of Health. (2020). Pregnancy Care Clinical Practice Guidelines.

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/pregnancy-care-guidelines>

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>

Shakespeare, T. (2014). Disability Rights and Wrongs Revisited. New York: Routledge.