

# PREGNANT & NOW SINGLE?

**b**eing pregnant and planning a family can be difficult enough when you are happily married. But when you are in a relationship that has reached its end, there is always the underlying fear that you may not cope as a single parent – emotionally, psychologically and financially.

Attorney-at-law VEERASH SRIKISON addresses some common concerns she has experienced with newly single expecting moms, when they see little hope at the end of their growing bellies.

## Q HOW TO IDENTIFY THAT YOU ARE NOT COPING

Some of life's greatest traumas are invisible and all that invisible turmoil is hidden inside of us. The stages of heartbreak are similar to the recognised stages of bereavement and include: shock, denial, grief, anger, and acceptance. Most of us are familiar with the feelings of a rocky relationship break-up: rage, hatred, numbness, and ambivalence.

## Q HOW DOES MY EMOTIONAL STATE AFFECT THE FUTURE DECISIONS I MAKE REGARDING MY CHILD?

According to practitioners, clients who do not address their emotional state while pursuing legal action against the other parent, tend to make decisions in a rush or without thought to the consequence of their court order or agreement. Once they receive their order after a haty agreement, it becomes difficult for the parents to make changes to their terms, especially if they parted under difficult circumstances.

Emotions caused by the relationship ending should be addressed before the child is born; babies are affected by their parents emotions, and will be prone to taking on their parents emotions as their own. This is why it is of the utmost importance to be proactive during the pregnancy in working to divorce or separate amicably, and deal with each other as business colleagues with your child being the business.

Sit together and create a contact schedule that will

evolve as your baby grows and you will both be aware of the expectations that lie ahead. By doing this, your child will become accustomed to living in two homes and moving between them will just be a way of life.

## Q HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT MY CHILD AND I LIVE A STABLE LIFE, DESPITE BEING A SINGLE PARENT?

You will face countless instances of uncertainty throughout your single parenting life. Yet you will still have the option to create stability for you and your child by developing a relationship with the other parent, should they choose to continue to be a part of your child's life.

Expectant parents need to hold on to the knowledge that a strong mind will make better decisions. The strength they will need to sit down together and create a workable solutions is worth finding, if you want to avoid chaos and unreasonable requests in future interactions as co-parents to your child.

Putting aside strong emotions in favour of co-operating with your ex-spouse or ex-partner, and managing the thornier issues of your separation with a calm and level head, will definitely pay off in the long run.

Both of you will make wiser decisions and come out of the process with fewer bruises. If you still feel the need to express yourself after the agreements have been ironed out and the papers are signed, you can always sit down to dish up the dirt in your tell-all memoir! M&P



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Adv. Veerash Srikison is an internationally accredited mediator at Fair Practice in Johannesburg. For more information on mediation and how you can benefit from it, go to [www.fairpractice.co.za](http://www.fairpractice.co.za)

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