

Promoting At-Promise Student Success

Student Facing Unexpected Pregnancy

Purpose: This student vignette provides insight into how an unexpected pregnancy may alter the way a student is able to navigate through their undergraduate or graduate career.

Student Vignette:

Annica had missed her last period and was throwing up every morning for the past few days. When she went to the campus health center, the nurse suggested that she take a pregnancy test. As she stared at the positive pregnancy test, she couldn't help but think about how this was going to affect her internship placement. She wondered whether she could handle all the appointments while managing her internship hours and schoolwork. Taking a deep breath, she decided to reach out to her advisor, someone she knew and trusted, to discuss her options.

Guiding Questions:

1. Have you encountered a situation like this? If so, briefly reflect on those experiences. How did you support the student? What approaches were beneficial? What approaches were less successful?
2. Describe the challenges Annica is navigating. What are the key issues that need to be addressed to support Annica before the semester ends? What resources exist on campus that may be helpful? What are her strengths that can be leveraged in this situation?
3. Given your role (e.g., academic advisor, program director, faculty, etc.), what might you do to support Annica? What are some limitations in your current knowledge and skills in meeting Annica's needs? What resources or opportunities can you connect her with on and off-campus?
4. Reflect on the concept of ecological validation. How could the norms framing student interactions (holistic, proactive, strengths-oriented, and developmental) and the work of educators (collaborative and reflective) be leveraged to support Annica?
5. What policies and practices could be shifted to support students in a similar situation? What would need to happen to initiate change? Who would be involved in this process?