

LIVE ACTION

Can't Stay Silent

The Reality of Abortion Regret,
Trauma, and Healing



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Introduction

The abortion industry and its influential political and media allies have sought to normalize abortion for decades. Abortion advocates declare the practice to be a social good, benefiting women¹, men², and even children³. To bolster these claims, abortion advocates promote the stories of post-abortive individuals who celebrate⁴ the decision.

Some of these individuals say abortion gave them a second chance at pursuing their true dreams, college, a career, a better relationship, or parenthood at a later time. Others say abortion spared them from difficult circumstances such as raising a child in a bad relationship with the wrong person, giving birth to a child with disabilities, or bearing a child conceived as a result of sexual assault.

But many post-abortive individuals stay silent, carrying the trauma of their abortions for the remainder of their lives.⁵ The abortion industry benefits when its former customers don't speak up to warn others of the damage that can be caused by abortion.

In reality, abortion – an intervention to end a pregnancy so that it does not result in a live birth⁶ – can deeply impact multiple parties: the child, the mother, the father, the siblings, other family members, and society. This report is meant to amplify these accounts of abortion regret and trauma and give pro-life advocates tools to support those most intimately impacted by abortion.

1 "Facts Are Important: Abortion Is Healthcare," American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Accessed August 30, 2022, <https://www.acog.org/advocacy/facts-are-important/abortion-is-healthcare>.

2 Andréa Becker, "Men Have a Lot to Lose When Roe Falls," The New York Times, May 26, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/opinion/men-abortion.html>.

3 Bridget Sielicki, "Kamala Harris: Abortion should be legal... for the children," Live Action News, August 1, 2022, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/kamala-harris-abortion-children/>.

4 "Abortion Stories," Shout Your Abortion, Accessed August 30, 2022, <https://shoutyourabortion.com/abortion-stories/>.

5 Sydna Masse, "The Right to Remain Silent After Abortion," Ramah's Voice, April 18, 2016, <https://ramahvoice.com/right-remain-silent-abortion/>.

6 "Abortion Care," American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/induced-abortion>.



The Supreme Court of the United States

In June 2022, Roe v. Wade was finally overturned by the Supreme Court, ending a nearly 50-year regime of federally protected acts of violence against innocent children.

The goals of this report are:

- To discuss the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual consequences experienced by post-abortive individuals.
- To discuss the institutional bias that favors the abortion industry's false narratives about post-abortion trauma and regret, and how this bias silences many who suffer as a result of abortion.
- To discuss healing and recovery resources available to people suffering from post-abortive trauma.

This report concludes with a call to action to support organizations and ministries devoted to post-abortive healing.

In June 2022, *Roe v. Wade* was finally overturned by the Supreme Court, ending a nearly 50-year regime of federally protected acts of violence against innocent children. But since that time, the abortion industry has significantly boosted its deceptive rhetoric, disinformation, and propaganda, and continues to mask the brutality of abortion behind euphemisms like “women’s reproductive health” and slogans like “abortion is healthcare.” This billion-dollar abortion industry promotes the stories of women who still believe the industry’s rhetoric that continues to encourage women to kill their children every single day.

This report shares the real stories of individuals who experienced abortion and later came to see the truth once cloaked by pro-abortion euphemisms. This report is for and about the women and families who have decided they **can’t stay silent**.⁷

⁷ “Can’t Stay Silent,” Can’t Stay Silent, Accessed August 30, 2022, <https://cantstaysilent.com>.

“Everything the Doctor Told Me Was a Lie”⁸ - The Traumatic Consequences of Abortion

I had an abortion for many reasons. I didn't want to interrupt what I had going with school and my plan for life, I didn't want this child to have anything to [do] with his father, I felt my life would be 18 years of hell and custody battles, I felt my parents would kill me, and I was very embarrassed.

— Sarah⁹

I was in college, excited to be free and on my own. I met the man of my young dreams, and we dated for four years. Then, one day, I found myself pregnant and scared. A baby was not in my plans for college, fun, or freedom. Because my boyfriend didn't want children, he suggested abortion. I started believing the lies in my head: an abortion probably is the best option because you don't want to embarrass your family. No one ever has to know, and since it's legal, how could it be so wrong?

— Terri¹⁰

Studies tell us many women have abortions because they think it is a straightforward solution to the complexities posed by an unplanned pregnancy.¹¹ Many women feel unprepared to give birth to a child; some have partner-related issues; others feel pregnancy would interfere with their education, work, or life goals; some experience all of the above.¹²


⁸ Patricia, “Everything the Doctor Told Me was a Lie,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4202>.

⁹ Sarah, “Living Every Day,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3411>.

¹⁰ Terri Baxter, ‘Statistics’, email, 2021.

¹¹ Lawrence Finer, “Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives,” Guttmacher, 2005, <https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/journals/3711005.pdf>.

¹² *ibid*



Science clearly confirms the humanity of each preborn child at the moment of fertilization when genetics such as ethnicity, hair color, eye color, and other traits are already determined.

Yet, according to an Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) study, about **64%¹³ of women seeking abortion realize that abortion ends a human life**. Hollie, for example, says in her post-abortive testimony on the Silent No More Awareness website: “I knew what it was and I did understand that I was killing my baby, but I didn’t really give much thought to it and what exactly all [sic] was going on by having [an abortion].”¹⁴

Science clearly confirms the humanity of each preborn child¹⁵ at the moment of fertilization when genetics such as ethnicity, hair color, eye color, and other traits are already determined.

In addition to ending the lives of preborn children, abortion also puts mothers at significant risk of a variety of negative consequences, such as physical, psychological, and interpersonal trauma.

I was told abortion was “quick [and] safe,” and that I could go on with my life. I was never told about the development of my baby or the risks of abortion ... I was told there would be a “tugging,” like strong menstrual cramps. What I felt was intense pain and as though not only my baby but also my soul was being suctioned out ... My heart and my life changed that day. I began to stuff the pain of abortion. My own worth and value began to diminish.

Within a year, I ... went into a deep depression using drugs and alcohol to bury the pain of the abortion. I left college and began a destructive lifestyle of promiscuity, drugs, alcohol, bulimia, thoughts of suicide, and continued abortions...

One year after [my] marriage, I miscarried, due to the scarring in my uterus as a result of my abortions. In subsequent pregnancies, my obstetrician told me I was at risk and would have to remain in bed for my health and the health of my children. As a child, my son told me, “Mom, I feel like there was someone before me...”

— Cindy¹⁶

13 M. Antonia Biggs, “Developing and validating the Psychosocial Burden among people Seeking Abortion Scale (PB-SAS),” PLOS One, 2020, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/authors?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0242463>.

14 Hollie, “If I Had Looked at the Ultrasound, I May Not Have Gone through with It,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4215>.

15 “Baby Olivia,” Live Action, Accessed September 1, 2022, <https://babyolivia.liveaction.org>.

16 Cindy, “Cindy’s 2020 March for Life Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4109>.

...[M]y abortion had a negative impact on almost every aspect of my existence.

— Tori¹⁷

Cindy's and Tori's stories are not especially unique. Sites like Can't Stay Silent,¹⁸ Silent No More Awareness,¹⁹ After Abortion,²⁰ ClinicQuotes,²¹ Abortion Changes You,²² Hope After Abortion,²³ and Priests for Life,²⁴ in addition to countless blogs,²⁵ articles,²⁶ and online support groups²⁷ are full of similar testimonials written by post-abortive women and men.

Overarching patterns readily emerge from these stories. But these patterns are not merely anecdotal — they are supported by international scientific research. This research has found that there are multiple physical and psychological health risks associated with abortion.

PHYSICAL TRAUMA

Abortion can be physically harmful in several ways that affect women's health later in life. To understand why, one must first understand what abortion is and does.

Every abortion ends the life of a preborn child, but specific procedures vary. Abortions can be performed surgically, by using chemicals – sometimes termed “medical” or “medication” abortions – or through some combination of the two.

17 Tori Shaw, *Free Indeed: Learning to Walk in True Forgiveness and Healing After Abortion* (Kingdom Winds, 2021,) 5.

18 “Can't Stay Silent.”

19 “Welcome to our Testimony Directory,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/>.

20 “Testimonies About an Experience with Abortion,” After Abortion, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://afterabortion.org/abortion-testimonies/>.

21 “Women's Stories,” Clinic Quotes, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://clinicquotes.com/category/womens-stories/>.

22 “After Abortion Stories: Read and Share,” Abortion Changes You, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.abortionchangesyou.com/stories>.

23 “Your Stories,” Project Rachel, Accessed February 23, 2022, https://hopeafterabortion.com/?page_id=18.

24 “Women who have had Abortions,” Priests For Life, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.priestsforlife.org/postabortion/postabortiontestimonywomen.htm>.

25 “My Story (Part 1),” The Post-Abortive Lutheran, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://thepostabortivelutheran.com/the-first-abortion/>.

26 Anna Reynolds, “Post-abortive woman: ‘Abortion was a dark cloud over my life’ for 30 years,” Live Action News, August 9, 2019, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/post-abortive-dark-cloud/>.

27 “I regret my abortion,” Facebook, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/16017309643>.

A so-called “medication” or chemical abortion is a two-step process. First, a woman is given mifepristone, which blocks the action of the pregnancy hormone progesterone. This causes the lining of the uterus to break down, and essentially starves the preborn child. Typically, 24-48 hours after taking mifepristone, the woman takes a second drug named misoprostol. This drug causes heavy bleeding, severe cramping, and contractions which expel the dead child from the mother’s uterus. At that point, the mother will often flush her child down the toilet.²⁸

Bleeding and spotting may last for several weeks afterward; some women require hospitalization due to heavy bleeding.²⁹ Maternal deaths have also occurred, most frequently due to infection and undiagnosed ectopic pregnancies.³⁰ The later the gestational age of the baby, the higher the failure rate of the drugs.³¹ In this event, a surgical abortion will often be recommended to complete the process.

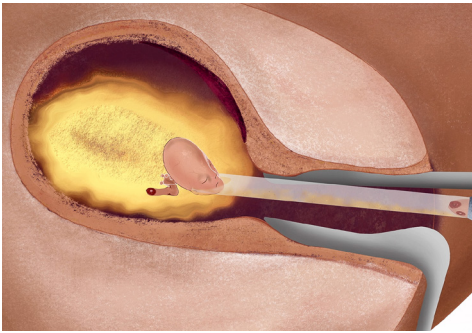
Surgical abortion can utilize a variety of methods, depending primarily on the child’s gestational age. First trimester surgical abortions are generally performed via vacuum aspiration, also known as suction D&C (dilation and curettage). In this procedure, the abortionist places a speculum inside the vagina and opens it, enabling him/her to see the cervix, which is the entrance to the uterus. The abortionist stabilizes the cervix by grasping it with a long metal instrument called a tenaculum, then opens the cervix with a series of progressively thicker metal rods called dilators. This allows the abortionist to access the uterus. Next, the abortionist inserts a suction cannula – a hollow plastic tube with a hole in the end – attaches it to suction, and rotates it within the uterus.

28 “Abortion Pills,” Abortion Procedures, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.abortionprocedures.com/abortion-pill/>.

29 “The Abortion Pill,” Planned Parenthood, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion/the-abortion-pill>.

30 Carole Novielli, “FDA shock: Abortion pill caused 22 deaths and a thousand hospitalizations,” Live Action News, July 21, 2018, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/fda-abortion-pill-deaths-hospitalizations/>.

31 Angel M. Foster, “Medication Abortion A Guide for Health Professionals,” Ibis Reproductive Health, Accessed February 23, 2022, https://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org/sites/default/files/files/publications/Med_ab_A_guide_for_health_professionals_English.pdf.



Abortionist using a suction cannula during a D&C abortion procedure.

The preborn child is sucked out, generally in pieces, along with the other contents of the uterus. The lining of the uterus may then be scraped with a metal curette to be certain no baby body parts have been left behind.

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Immediate risks of this method include perforation/laceration of the uterus or cervix, and damage to the intestines, bladder, and/or nearby blood vessels. Other risks include hemorrhage, infection, and, occasionally, death.³³

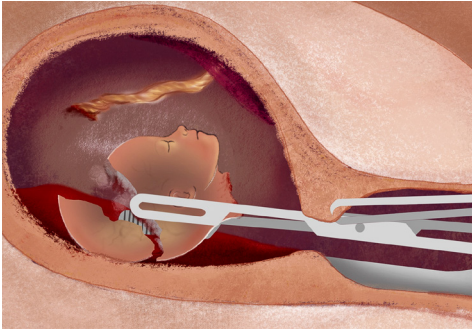
As the preborn child grows, more invasive, dangerous procedures are required to end his or her life. In the second trimester, a procedure called dilation and evacuation, or D&E, is the standard abortion practice. Before this procedure can take place, the cervix must be dilated using laminaria (seaweed) or a similar product. This process typically takes 1-2 days. During the evacuation portion of the procedure, the abortionist uses the speculum and tenaculum in the same manner as he or she would for a D&C. He or she may also employ metal dilators like those used in a D&C to further open the cervix. Like D&C's, D&E's also involve suctioning the amniotic fluid, although the child is too big at this point to be removed via vacuum aspiration. Instead, abortionists grasp limbs and other parts of the baby using a Sopher clamp, which is a long, stainless steel tool that resembles a pair of scissor tongs with sharp teeth on the ends. Once the abortionist has a firm grip, he or she pulls and twists until the preborn baby's body part has been torn off and can be pulled out. If the cervix has been over-dilated, the baby's entire body might come out intact. In most cases, the abortionist removes the baby piece by piece. The most difficult piece to remove is the skull – it is generally crushed before it can be removed. Any remaining limbs, organs, bone fragments, or placenta are removed by scraping the uterine lining with a curette, as in a D&C.³⁴

32 "Aspiration Abortion," Abortion Procedures, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.abortionprocedures.com/aspiration/>.

33 Carole Novielli, "Abortion trainers admit: Even so-called 'safe' first trimester abortions have major risks," Live Action News, June 4, 2019, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/abortion-trainers-first-trimester-major-risks/>.

34 "D & E Abortion," Abortion Procedures, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.abortionprocedures.com>.

The D&E method of abortion has the same risks as vacuum aspiration/D&C, but carries a higher probability of complications.³⁵



Abortionist using a Sopher clamp to dismember an unborn child during a D&E abortion procedure.

Used in the third trimester, an induction abortion typically takes 3-4 days to complete. On the first day, the abortionist generally injects digoxin or another feticide into the baby through the woman's abdomen or vagina – this kills the child. Then, laminaria are inserted to dilate the cervix; these are replaced on day 2. The woman may go into labor and deliver the dead child at any point thereafter. Sometimes mifepristone and/or misoprostol are used to help hasten the process. If the baby does not come out intact, the procedure becomes a D&E.³⁶

Late-term abortions have a high risk of hemorrhage, lacerations, and uterine perforations; there is also a risk of maternal death.³⁷

Abortion is an invasive and violent procedure. As such, it has very real potential to cause lasting physical damage to the mother. Abortionists themselves have repeatedly acknowledged the life-ending and brutal nature of the procedure. Abortionist Marc Heller has said: "I experience a mixture of horror and relief when I crush the skull of a second-trimester fetus, knowing that I will be able to safely complete the procedure, but also I will see the squashed face and bulging eyes of the baby I just killed."³⁸

Often, the physical damage incurred by abortion manifests within subsequent pregnancies. The most well-documented negative reproductive repercussion correlated with abortion is pre-term birth

35 Sarah Terzo, "Abortionist describes dangers of abortion: 'All of us have complications,'" Live Action News, January 11, 2016, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/abortionist-describes-dangers-of-abortion/>.

36 "Induction Abortion," Abortion Procedures, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.abortionprocedures.com/induction/>.

37 Nancy Flanders, "Late-term abortionist Curtis Boyd admits late-term abortions come with major risks," Live Action News, May 3, 2020, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/abortionist-curtis-boyd-late-term-abortion-risks/>.

38 Sarah Terzo, "Abortionist admits: 'I will see the squashed face... of the baby I just killed,'" Live Action News, June 30, 2022, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/abortionist-admits-killing-baby-abortion/>

“I experience a mixture of horror and relief when I crush the skull of a second-trimester fetus, knowing that I will be able to safely complete the procedure, but also I will see the squashed face and bulging eyes of the baby I just killed.”

of subsequent children, likely as a result of cervical trauma sustained from earlier abortion(s). Studies and meta-analyses from Scotland,³⁹ Denmark,⁴⁰ Finland,⁴¹ the Netherlands,⁴² Australia,⁴³ Germany,⁴⁴ Iraq,⁴⁵ Greece,⁴⁶ and Canada,⁴⁷ among others, confirm this risk, with some finding a dose-response relationship.^{48 49 50 51} In other words, the greater the number of abortions a woman has had, the greater the risk to her future children.

Low birth weight of future babies is another well-documented risk factor for abortion. A nationwide, register-based study of 300,858 first-time birth mothers in Finland, for example, showed that the subsequent children of women with a history of multiple abortions had a significantly increased risk of low birth weight.⁵² Similarly, a Danish cohort study of 15,727 women with a history of abortion found that “[l]ow birthweight ... occurred more frequently in

39 Siladitya Bhattacharya, “Reproductive outcomes following induced abortion: a national register-based cohort study in Scotland,” *BMJ Open*, August 6, 2012, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4400701/>.

40 W Zhou, “Induced abortion and subsequent pregnancy duration,” *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, December 1994, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10576181/>.

41 R. Klemetti, “Birth outcomes after induced abortion: a nationwide register-based study of first births in Finland,” *Human Reproduction*, August 29, 2012, <https://academic.oup.com/humrep/article/27/11/3315/809139>.

42 Brenda L. Scholten, “The influence of pregnancy termination on the outcome of subsequent pregnancies: a retrospective cohort study,” *BMJ Open*, May, 2013, <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/3/5/e002803.long>.

43 Rosanne Freak-Poli, “Previous abortion and risk of pre-term birth: a population study,” *Journal of Maternal-Fetal & Neonatal Medicine*, September 12, 2008, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14767050802531813?journalCode=ijmf20>.

44 Manfred Voigt, “Is induced abortion a risk factor in subsequent pregnancy?” *De Gruyter*, October 31, 2008, https://core.ac.uk/reader/19418389?utm_source=linkout.

45 Samim A Al-Dabbagh, “Risk factors for pre-term birth in Iraq: a case-control study,” *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, April 18, 2006, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1479367/>.

46 Vasso Lekea-Karanika, “Previous obstetric history and subsequent preterm delivery in Greece,” *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, November 7, 1989, [https://www.ejog.org/article/0028-2243\(90\)90103-8/pdf](https://www.ejog.org/article/0028-2243(90)90103-8/pdf).

47 Ghislain Hardy, “Effect of Induced Abortions on Early Preterm Births and Adverse Perinatal Outcomes,” *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology Canada*, February 1, 2013, [https://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163\(15\)31018-5/fulltext](https://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163(15)31018-5/fulltext).

48 John M Thorp Jr, “Long-Term Physical and Psychological Health Consequences of Induced Abortion: A Review of the Evidence,” *Linacre Quarterly*, June 1, 2017, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/20508549.2005.11877742>.

49 Gabriele Saccone, “Prior uterine evacuation of pregnancy as independent risk factor for preterm birth: a systematic review and metaanalysis,” *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, December 29, 2015, [https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0002-9378\(15\)02596-X](https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0002-9378(15)02596-X).

50 Zhou, “Induced abortion.”

51 Joachim A Martius, “Risk factors associated with preterm (<37+0 weeks) and early preterm birth (<32+0 weeks): univariate and multivariate analysis of 106 345 singleton births from the 1994 statewide perinatal survey of Bavaria,” *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, October 1, 1998, [https://www.ejog.org/article/S0301-2115\(98\)00130-4/fulltext](https://www.ejog.org/article/S0301-2115(98)00130-4/fulltext).

52 Klemetti, “Birth outcomes.”

women with one, two, three or more previous abortions, compared with women without any previous abortion.”⁵³ A meta-analysis of 37 independent studies⁵⁴ as well as an evaluation of 2,282,412 singleton pregnancies from the German Perinatal Database⁵⁵ also found a significant correlation between abortion and low birth weight in subsequent children.

Previous abortion is also associated with placental problems in future pregnancies. Two meta-analyses both demonstrated a strong link between abortion and placenta previa,^{56 57} a condition in which the placenta attaches in an abnormal location over or near the cervix. A Dutch study of 16,000 women with a history of surgical abortion found the same association, along with an additional correlation between abortion and retained placenta.⁵⁸ This was later substantiated by another case-control study on women with this condition.⁵⁹

The Dutch study found an association between surgical abortion and postpartum hemorrhage as well.⁶⁰ This connection was also observed in Lohman-Bigelow’s study on D&C.⁶¹

Yet another finding made by the Dutch study was the correlation between surgical abortion and later cervical insufficiency,⁶² a connection corroborated by Grünberger and Riss’s study on cervical

53 Weijin Zhou, “Induced abortion and low birthweight in the following pregnancy,” *International Journal of Epidemiology*, April 1, 2000, <https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/29/1/100/666814>.

54 PS Shah, “Induced termination of pregnancy and low birthweight and preterm birth: a systematic review and meta-analyses,” *BJOG*, September 16, 2009, <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1471-0528.2009.02278.x>.

55 M Voigt, “Zum Einfluss von vorausgegangenen Schwangerschaftsabbrüchen, Aborten und Totgeburten auf die Rate Neugeborener mit niedrigem Geburtsgewicht und Frühgeborener sowie auf die somatische Klassifikation der Neugeborenen,” *Thieme*, February 27, 2008, <https://www.thieme-connect.com/products/ejournals/abstract/10.1055/s-2008-1004690>.

56 Thorp, “Long-Term Physical and Psychological Health Consequences of Induced Abortion.”

57 Cande V Ananth, “The association of placenta previa with history of cesarean delivery and abortion: A metaanalysis,” *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, November 1, 1997, [https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378\(97\)70017-6/fulltext](https://www.ajog.org/article/S0002-9378(97)70017-6/fulltext).

58 Sholten, “Influence of pregnancy termination.”

59 Margit Endler, “Epidemiology of Retained Placenta,” *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, April, 2012, https://journals.lww.com/greenjournal/Fulltext/2012/04000/Epidemiology_of_Retained_Placenta__Oxytocin_as_an.16.aspx

60 Sholten, “Influence of pregnancy termination.”

61 Jennifer Lohmann-Bigelow, “Does Dilatation and Curettage Affect Future Pregnancy Outcomes?” *Ochsner Journal*, 2007, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096409/>.

62 Sholten, “Influence of pregnancy termination.”

incompetence after D&C⁶³ and a German study of 247,593 first-time birth mothers.⁶⁴ Cervical insufficiency/incompetence can be a factor in miscarriage, which is, in itself, along with stillbirth, linked to previous abortion.^{65 66 67 68}

Abortion also appears to play a role in the development of uterine fibroids,^{69 70 71} a condition for which many women are asymptomatic, but which can cause serious distress, including intense pain, heavy and/or prolonged menstruation, infertility, and pregnancy loss.⁷²

Abortion appears to have a potential impact on future fertility in general, which even Planned Parenthood admits on its consent forms for chemical and surgical abortions.^{73 74}

But abortion is not merely documented as being connected to pregnancy and fertility-related problems. It is also shown to be associated with other physical problems for the women who undergo it--conditions which can be life-changing, or even life-threatening.

63 W Grünberger, "Cervical incompetence after previous cervical dilatation and curettage," National Library of Medicine, July 15, 1979, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/506292/>.

64 Voigt, "Induced abortion."

65 Nisha D. Almeida, "Risk of Miscarriage in Women Receiving Antidepressants in Early Pregnancy, Correcting for Induced Abortions," *Epidemiology*, July, 2016, https://journals.lww.com/epidem/Abstract/2016/07000/Risk_of_Miscarriage_in_Women_Receiving.14.aspx.

66 Weijin Zhou, "Are complications after an induced abortion associated with reproductive failures in a subsequent pregnancy?" *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, March 18, 2003, <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1034/j.1600-0412.2003.00005.x>.

67 Yuelian Sun, "Induced abortion and risk of subsequent miscarriage," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, June 1, 2003, <https://academic.oup.com/ije/article/32/3/449/637113>.

68 Yao Wang, "Association between induced abortion history and later in vitro fertilization outcomes," *Gynecology & Obstetrics*, March 6, 2018, <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ijgo.12481>.

69 Lulu Song, "Induced and Spontaneous Abortion and Risk of Uterine Fibroids," *Journal of Women's Health*, January 1, 2017, https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/jwh.2016.5913?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rft_id=ori%3Arid%3Aacrossref.org&rft_dat=cr_pub++0pubmed&.

70 Qi Shen, "The use of mifepristone in abortion associated with an increased risk of uterine leiomyomas," *Medicine*, April, 2017, https://journals.lww.com/md-journal/Fulltext/2017/04280/The_use_of_mifepristone_in_abortion_associated.17.aspx.

71 Wei Wang, "Determining the risk factors of uterine myomas by using back propagation neural network," National Library of Medicine, June, 2007, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17767869/>.

72 "Uterine fibroids," Mayo Clinic, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/uterine-fibroids/symptoms-causes/syc-20354288>.

73 "Disclosure and Consent Form for Medical, Surgical, and Diagnostic Procedures," Planned Parenthood, Accessed February 23, 2022, https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/6114/0168/3065/CI07e_Disclosure_and_Consent_for_Medical_Surgical_Diagnostic_ProcedureTexas.pdf.

74 "Parental Consent Form for a Minor Seeking Abortion," Planned Parenthood, Accessed February 23, 2022, https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/3314/7880/2031/Oklahoma_Parental_Consent_form_and_statement.pdf.



"Those who aborted had a significantly higher age-adjusted risk of death from all causes, from suicide, and from accidents, as well as a higher relative risk of death from natural causes..."

Perhaps the most contested and hotly debated of all - is that of a suggested link between abortion and breast cancer found by numerous studies.⁷⁵ According to Dr. Joel Brind, professor of human biology and endocrinology at Baruch College, City University of New York:

[A]bortion raises a woman's risk for breast cancer in two ways; the debate is over the second, not the first. Scientists have long understood that the risk of breast cancer is reduced when a woman completes a full-term pregnancy. This "protective effect of childbearing" is lost with an abortion. The second way abortion increases the likelihood of breast cancer is that an abortion leaves a woman with more cancer-vulnerable breast tissue than she had before she became pregnant.⁷⁶

Abortion advocates dispute the correlation between abortion and breast cancer and frequently point to a 2003 National Cancer Institute (NCI) workshop, where a relatively small number of researchers gathered to disavow their own data, which supported this link. Yet these same researchers never published formal retractions; just six years later, some of the same workshop participants, including the workshop's chair and NCI's chief of epidemiology, Dr. Louise Brinton, authored a paper in which they argued that abortion leads to a 40% increased risk of all types of breast cancer.⁷⁷

A variety of other studies have confirmed that level of risk. For example, a 1996 meta-analysis of 23 independent studies produced the same results as the NCI paper.⁷⁸ Other sources also support this linkage – out of 45 statistically significant studies conducted between 1957-2016, 41 found a positive correlation between abortion and subsequent breast cancer.⁷⁹

75 "Epidemiologic Studies: Induced Abortion and Breast Cancer Risk," Breast Cancer Prevention Institute, April, 2020, https://www.bcpinstitute.org/uploads/1/1/5/1/115111905/bcpi-factsheet-epidemiol-studies_2020.pdf.

76 Joel Brind, "Abortion-Breast Cancer Link," Action Life, Accessed September 8, 2022, <https://actionlife.org/life-issues/abortion/medical-and-psychological-effects/item/119-abortionbreast-cancer-link>.

77 Jessica M. Dolle, "Risk Factors for Triple-Negative Breast Cancer in Women Under the Age of 45 Years," Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention, April, 2009, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Dolle-Cancer-Epid-Bio-Prev-2009-.pdf>.

78 J Brind, "Induced abortion as an independent risk factor for breast cancer: a comprehensive review and meta-analysis," Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, October, 1996, <https://jech.bmj.com/content/50/5/481.long>.

79 "Epidemiologic Studies" Breast Cancer Prevention Institute

After 46 years it is still a vivid memory, lying on a cold table in a heartless room. A room where my child died as well as my inner self. ...

Despite these studies' conclusions, it should be noted that any link between abortion and an increased risk of breast cancer is disavowed by both the medical community and the abortion industry.

Post-abortive women face other risks, as well, including markedly increased mortality rates. A California study comparing the Medicaid records of 173,279 women who had either an abortion or a delivery in 1989 to death certificates for the period spanning 1989-1997 found that “those who aborted had a significantly higher age-adjusted risk of death from all causes, from suicide, and from accidents, as well as a higher relative risk of death from natural causes...”⁸⁰ Another meta-analysis found that women experiencing pregnancy loss, including abortion, were twice as likely to die from either suicide, accidents, homicide or natural causes as women who gave birth, with the risk remaining elevated for many years after the loss – a dose-response effect was also found.⁸¹ A Danish population register-based study similarly found that the increased risk of mortality following an abortion endured for at least 10 years.⁸²

PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

As I was laying on the table, it was cold, quiet, then I hear[d] this suction machine. I felt like my body was being ripped out from the inside. It was horrific[.] After a few minutes it was quiet. I believe the nurse took the torn parts and wrapped them in a plastic bag, and I heard it drop on the bottom of a metal trash can. ... I was immediately convicted that I just made the worst mistake of my life. I would have done anything to put the baby back inside me... it was too late, I felt I murdered my own flesh and blood. I was devastated and became suicidal. I was filled with so much guilt and shame I couldn't deal with it at that point. I had nowhere to turn, it was my secret.

80 David C. Reardon, “Deaths associated with pregnancy outcome: a record linkage study of low income women,” Southern Medical Journal, August, 2002, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12190217/>.

81 David C. Reardon, “Pregnancy associated death in record linkage studies relative to delivery, termination of pregnancy, and natural losses: A systematic review with a narrative synthesis and meta-analysis,” SAGE Journals, November 13, 2017, <https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/N86GqF7e5kx7diHpiRng/full>.

82 David C. Reardon, “Short and long term mortality rates associated with first pregnancy outcome: Population register based study for Denmark 1980–2004,” Medical Science Monitor, August 30, 2012, <https://www.medscimonit.com/abstract/index/idArt/883338>.

I was numb with fear and filled with dread ... The shame, anger, depression, anxiety, and resentment that clouded my life after those days completely consumed me.

I worked with a guy that I knew used drugs. I knew I could OD easily from cocaine. Then no one would know it was suicide...

— Sadona⁸³

After 46 years it is still a vivid memory, lying on a cold table in a heartless room. A room where my child died as well as my inner self. ... I realized I had done something awful – after that I could do nothing right. I partied hard to forget, was promiscuous, used drugs and alcohol. ... The self-loathing brought me to a world of darkness. A world where love was an obsolete word and hate was the name of the game. I deserved punishment and found someone to help me in this goal. My self worth had deteriorated. I gained weight, stopped wearing make-up and did not care what I wore. My husband abused me and I deserved his abuse.

— Carol⁸⁴

Research shows that abortion significantly increases the risks to a woman's psychological health.^{85 86}

Studies and meta-analyses have collectively pointed to a 45%-81% increase in the risk of mental health pathologies among post-abortive women.^{87 88}

Anxiety

Abortion advocates often point to studies which show a decrease in anxiety immediately following abortion, such as *The Turnaway Study*, but the reality is that post-abortive psychological distress manifests in many ways. Research on long-term anxiety indicates that post-abortive women fare worse in this regard than their peers who either carry to term or experience a natural pregnancy loss.⁸⁹

83 Sadona, "Testimony", email, 2021.

84 Carol, "It is still a Vivid Memory," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4223>.

85 Natalie P. Mota, "Associations between Abortion, Mental Disorders, and Suicidal Behaviour in a Nationally Representative Sample," Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, April 1, 2010, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/070674371005500407?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%20pubmed.

86 David C. Reardon, "The abortion and mental health controversy: A comprehensive literature review of common ground agreements, disagreements, actionable recommendations, and research opportunities," SAGE Journals, October 29, 2018, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2050312118807624>.

87 Sullins, "Abortion, substance abuse and mental health."

88 Priscilla K. Coleman, "Abortion and mental health: quantitative synthesis and analysis of research published 1995–2009," British Journal of Psychiatry, January 2, 2018, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/abortion-and-mental-health-quantitative-synthesis-and-analysis-of-research-published-19952009/E8D556AAE1C1D2F0F8B060B28BEE6C3D>.

89 Carlo V. Bellieni, "Abortion and subsequent mental health: Review of the literature," Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences, July 16, 2013, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/pcn.12067>.

Women may also become anxious that they are either incapable of caring for, or even an active danger to, their born children.

⁹⁰ Though many women report a feeling of relief immediately following an abortion, those same women often report that soon after the relief they were overcome with feelings of regret. *After the procedure, I remember sitting in the recovery room with a little cup of water and a couple of Oreo cookies...the amount of relief I felt was enormous. ... I didn't cry, and I didn't feel numb. I was back to "normal." I felt as if they had cured me of cancer or something. Looking back on this, I can honestly say that I didn't learn a thing and that the impact of the actuality [sic] of what happened didn't hit me. Several months later ... [t]he impact finally hit me, and it hit hard. ... I was numb with fear and filled with dread ... The shame, anger, depression, anxiety, and resentment that clouded my life after those days completely consumed me.*⁹¹

— Joyce

Research has also shown that post-abortive women feel increased anxiety during later pregnancies,⁹² and shows that a history of abortion can exacerbate the anxiety felt after a subsequent miscarriage.⁹³ There can be a tendency to become more anxious about one's already-born children, as well. K.D. says she grew fearful and somewhat obsessive over her relationships with her existing and successive children:

*After the abortion, it seemed like my love for my son grew deeper ... I snuggled and loved on him as if somehow that was going to make up for the loss, both mine and his, of his brother. I had three more children... In the back of my mind, I felt like I didn't deserve these children... I had a nagging fear that somehow one day I'd lose them.*⁹⁴

⁹⁰ David M. Fergusson, "Does abortion reduce the mental health risks of unwanted or unintended pregnancy? A re-appraisal of the evidence," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, April 3, 2013, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0004867413484597?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%20pubmed.

⁹¹ Joyce, "The Scars are Still There," *Silent No More Awareness*, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4151>.

⁹² Gabriel D. Shapiro, "Previous pregnancy outcomes and subsequent pregnancy anxiety in a Quebec prospective cohort," *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynecology*, January 12, 2017, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0167482X.2016.1271979?journalCode=ipob20>.

⁹³ Liying He, "Prevalence of depression and anxiety in women with recurrent pregnancy loss and the associated risk factors," *Gynecologic Endocrinology and Reproductive Medicine*, August 21, 2019, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00404-019-05264-z>.

⁹⁴ KD, "Post abortion story", email, 2021.

At the other end of the spectrum, women may also become anxious that they are either incapable of caring for, or even an active danger to, their born children. Post-abortive mother Kathy, for example, says: “Awhile [sic] after my son was born I became terrified I was going to harm my children.”⁹⁵

Many post-abortive women live in fear of what the future might hold. Some have a generalized anxiety that something bad will happen to “even the score” for the wrong they feel they have done. Often, these fears center around reproductive issues. Deborah said: “During my pregnancy, I was in constant fear that something terrible would happen to the baby or to me[,] and [I] ended up on bedrest during my third trimester.”⁹⁶

Similarly, Joyce said, “My OBGYN told me I may still be able to have children, but that I would either have a lot of trouble getting pregnant or have lots of issues during pregnancy ... either way I hung my head in shame, in complete acceptance of my punishment. I was a murderer.”⁹⁷

A significant percentage of post-abortive women experience post-traumatic stress and/or post-traumatic stress disorder following their abortions, with some developing symptoms following subsequent deliveries.^{98 99 100} Women who have histories of trauma, whether in childhood or adulthood, are at an even greater risk.¹⁰¹ In terms of specific symptoms, post-abortive women frequently

95 Kathy Cosgrove, “By Grace of God I Experience a Flashback,” *Silent No More Awareness*, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4222>.

96 Deborah, “My Heart is Healed,” *Silent No More Awareness*, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4077>.

97 Joyce, “Scars.”

98 Viltė Daugirdaitė, “Posttraumatic Stress and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder after Termination of Pregnancy and Reproductive Loss: A Systematic Review,” *Journal of Pregnancy*, February 5, 2015, <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/jp/2015/646345/>.

99 Loïc Sentilhes, “Risk factors for chronic post-traumatic stress disorder development one year after vaginal delivery: a prospective, observational study,” *Scientific Reports*, August 18, 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5562814/>.

100 Maureen Curley, “The characteristics and severity of psychological distress after abortion among university students,” *Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, July, 2013, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23576135/>.

101 Vincent M. Rue, “Induced abortion and traumatic stress: a preliminary comparison of American and Russian women,” *Medical Science Monitor*, September 23, 2004, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15448616/>.

A cohort study of data for nearly 2,000 women taken from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that, 8 years after the fact, women whose first pregnancies ended in abortion were 65% more likely to score in the “high-risk” range for clinical depression than women whose first pregnancies resulted in birth.

report experiencing nightmares, flashbacks, and panic attacks. Julia, for example, related: “... [A]round 10 years after the abortion, after marriage and following the birth of my wonderful children, I found that I was experiencing: nightmares, insecurity, distrust, anxiety, indecision.”¹⁰²

Along the same lines, Kristi said: “I became harsh and mean. I wanted to be tough because I was so broken inside. I suffered nightmares, flashbacks and panic attacks for years.”¹⁰³ And Keasha wrote:

*After the first one, I had a dream that I was sleeping with a baby boy. In the dream he began to fall out of the bed and I jumped up out of my sleep to catch him. When I came to, I shortly realized that it was just a dream and the baby boy wasn't actually there. I wanted him so bad, I wanted him to be real. After a later abortion I dreamt of a baby girl. She was the prettiest baby I have ever saw [sic] and I cried for days afterwards, wishing that she were real.*¹⁰⁴

Depression and Suicide

There is a demonstrated correlation between abortion and later depression.¹⁰⁵ This link has been well established by studies and research from around the world. A cohort study of data for nearly 2,000 women taken from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth found that, 8 years after the fact, women whose first pregnancies ended in abortion were 65% more likely to score in the “high-risk” range for clinical depression than women whose first pregnancies resulted in birth.¹⁰⁶ One meta-analysis of 30 independent studies found a 45.5% prevalence of depression and bipolar disorder among

102 Julia, “Julia’s 2019 March for Life Ottawa Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4153>.

103 Kristi, “I Came Out of the Darkness,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4196>.

104 Keasha, “Save those Unable to Speak,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed August 26, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4179>.

105 Louis Jacob, “Association between induced abortion, spontaneous abortion, and infertility respectively and the risk of psychiatric disorders in 57,770 women followed in gynecological practices in Germany,” *Journal of Affective Disorders*, May 15, 2019, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165032719301727?via%3Dihub>.

106 Jesse R. Cogle, “Depression associated with abortion and childbirth: a long-term analysis of the NLSY cohort,” *Medical Science Monitor*, April 23, 2003, <https://www.medscimonit.com/download/index/idArt/4701>.



“I was unable to do anything that I once enjoyed, I couldn’t even perceive of the concept [sic] of enjoyment. The worst part was that I didn’t see a future and felt increasingly suicidal,”

post-abortive women generally.¹⁰⁷ And a Chinese study found that, among women with recurrent pregnancy loss, those with a history of abortion had significantly higher levels of depression (and anxiety) than their peers with no such history.¹⁰⁸

This effect can endure through subsequent pregnancies. A meta-analysis of studies on antenatal depression found a strong correlation between history of abortion and depression during later pregnancy.¹⁰⁹ In addition, an Ethiopian cross-sectional study as well as an analysis of Medicaid records from 17 US states affirmed a correlation between abortion and postpartum depression.^{110 111}

Rates of suicidal ideation and behavior are significantly higher within the post-abortive population compared to the general population.¹¹² Suicidal behavior and ideation are also significantly more common among post-abortive women compared to those who give birth – nearly 7 times as high in one Finnish study – and are elevated compared to women who suffer miscarriage.¹¹³ This association between abortion and later depression appears to be cross-cultural, with one Chinese study finding post-abortive women nearly twice as likely to experience suicidal ideation¹¹⁴ and a Korean study showing a significant increase in risk of suicide for postmenopausal women who had undergone three or more abortions.¹¹⁵

107 Bellieni, “Abortion and subsequent mental health.”

108 He, “Prevalence of depression.”

109 Abriham Zegeye, “Prevalence and determinants of antenatal depression among pregnant women in Ethiopia: a systematic review and meta-analysis,” *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, November 29, 2018, <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-018-2101-x>.

110 Mengstu Melkamu Asaye, “Prevalence and Predictors of Postpartum Depression: Northwest Ethiopia,” *Psychiatry Journal*, <https://www.hindawi.com/journals/psychiatry/2020/9565678/>.

111 David C. Reardon, “Effects of Pregnancy Loss on Subsequent Postpartum Mental Health: A Prospective Longitudinal Cohort Study,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, February 23, 2021, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7926811/>.

112 Fergusson, “Does abortion reduce.”

113 E Karalis, “Decreasing mortality during pregnancy and for a year after while mortality after termination of pregnancy remains high: a population-based register study of pregnancy-associated deaths in Finland 2001–2012,” *BJOG*, December 28, 2016, <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1471-0528.14484>.

114 Mengyun Luo, “Association between induced abortion and suicidal ideation among unmarried female migrant workers in three metropolitan cities in China: a cross-sectional study,” *BMC Public Health*, May 15, 2018, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5952593/>.

115 Jeong Ha Wie, “The association between abortion experience and postmenopausal suicidal ideation and mental health: Results from the 5th Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey,” *Taiwanese Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, January, 2019, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1028455918303024?via%3Dihub>.

“Depression and tears filled my days and the emptiness inside of me from what I had done was destroying my ability to function.”

Post-abortive women’s testimonies frequently refer to symptoms of depression and suicidal thoughts and actions. Some speak of an inability to feel happiness or to enjoy life, which is a key symptom of chronic depression:¹¹⁶ “I was unable to do anything that I once enjoyed, I couldn’t even perceive of the concept [sic] of enjoyment. The worst part was that I didn’t see a future and felt increasingly suicidal,” said Sophie.¹¹⁷ Others, like Marie, described attempting suicide, sometimes repeatedly:

A few months later I attempted suicide with sleeping pills. But I didn’t die; I just got sick. I attempted suicide again, this time by cutting my wrists with a razor blade. Again, I survived. After months of feeling like I was in a black hole, I attempted suicide a third time. I made the cuts lengthwise into the arteries in my wrists. I remember seeing blood spurting out of my arm but not feeling anything. This time I almost died.¹¹⁸

Some post-abortive women speak of being unable to function normally after their abortions. Julia said: “I gradually became less and less able to manage all the basic tasks of day-to-day living and my life spiraled downward ...”¹¹⁹ Likewise, Rita said: “Depression and tears filled my days and the emptiness inside of me from what I had done was destroying my ability to function.”¹²⁰

This internal emptiness, or feeling of being “dead inside,” is also common: “I suffered with crippling depression, guilt, and suicidal thoughts. I continued my empty lifestyle. I was dead,” Nicola recalled.¹²¹ Frances wrote: “As the abortion was completed and the child within me died, I felt an incredible sense of emptiness and guilt. I walked home alone, a spiritually dead young woman.”¹²²

116 “Persistent Depressive Disorder (Dysthymia),” Healthline, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.healthline.com/health/dysthymia>.

117 Sophie, “My post-abortion trauma,” Mind, August 21, 2015, <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/my-post-abortion-trauma/>.

118 Marie, “I Will Never Forget,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3100>.

119 Julia, “Julia’s 2019 March for Life Testimony.”

120 Rita, “Emptiness Inside Me,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3702>.

121 Nicola, “Nicola’s 2020 March for Life Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4105>.

122 Frances, “The Grief I Carried,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3274>.

The abortion I had when I was just 19 really has ruined the rest of my life. Once upon a time I thought it might get better over time and maybe I might heal. I have not healed at all. It has been 15 years and I am as sad and depress[ed] and despondent about the entire situation as I have ever been.

The inability to cope that many post-abortive women describe can itself be a pathology. Adjustment disorder is defined as: “A mental disorder characterized by a maladaptive reaction to identifiable stressful life events, such as divorce, loss of job, physical illness, or natural disaster.”¹²³ Post-abortive women have been shown to have an elevated incidence of this disorder, both in a German retrospective cohort study of 17,581 post-abortive women and an equal number of controls,¹²⁴ and in an Italian observational study.¹²⁵ This is further evidenced by the number of post-abortive women who describe their abortion experiences as having destroyed their lives. Becky wrote:

*The abortion I had when I was just 19 really has ruined the rest of my life. Once upon a time I thought it might get better over time and maybe I might heal. I have not healed at all. It has been 15 years and I am as sad and depress[ed] and despondent about the entire situation as I have ever been.*¹²⁶

Substance Abuse

One of the most frequent maladaptive reactions to abortion is substance abuse. This is relatively common, and has been studied extensively.

One cross-sectional study reported that post-abortive women saw triple-digit increases in the risk for alcohol abuse (261%), alcohol dependence (142%), drug abuse (313%), drug dependence (287%), and any substance use disorder (280%).¹²⁷ Similarly, an Australian birth cohort study found that post-abortive women had 3.6 times the odds of experiencing a lifetime illicit drug disorder and were twice as likely to abuse alcohol as women who had never aborted.¹²⁸

123 “Adjustment disorder,” The Free Dictionary, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/adjustment+disorder>.

124 Louis Jacob, “Relationship between induced abortion and the incidence of depression, anxiety disorder, adjustment disorder, and somatoform disorder in Germany,” *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, July, 2019, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022395619302730?via%3Dihub>.

125 Barbara Ferrari, “Prevalence and risk factors of postpartum depression and adjustment disorder during puerperium - a retrospective research,” *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, June 25, 2020, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32584147/>.

126 Becky, “My Abortion.”

127 Mota, “Associations.”

128 Kaeleen Dingle, “Pregnancy loss and psychiatric disorders in young women: an Australian birth cohort study,” *British Journal of Psychiatry*, January 2, 2018, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/the-british-journal-of-psychiatry/article/pregnancy-loss-and-psychiatric-disorders-in-young-women-an-australian-birth-cohort-study/3FBC2259EA9CD4A7FF031344FCED2683>.

Reardon's 2009 study found that "[w]omen who aborted a first pregnancy were five times more likely to report subsequent substance abuse than women who carried to term, and they were four times more likely to report substance abuse compared to those who suffered a natural loss of their first pregnancy."¹²⁹

The results of an American longitudinal cohort study showed that the wantedness of the child did not affect these odds. In this study, both wanted and unwanted pregnancies ending in abortion led to a doubling in the risk of future substance abuse.¹³⁰ A higher, nearly four-fold increase in risk was observed in a meta-analysis of eight independent publications.¹³¹

The personal stories of post-abortive women contain many mentions of alcohol and drug abuse. Marie said: "Afterward, I started drinking, doing drugs... anything to make the pain disappear. I no longer cared what happened to me; I had no respect for myself or my body."¹³² Analogously, Melody stated: "About a month later, I found myself very depressed ... I didn't care what happened to my body. I remember drinking a lot and using LSD, [m]ushrooms, anything to forget."¹³³

Self-Harm

Sometimes substance abuse is a manifestation of the drive toward another maladaptive reaction – that of self-harm. Becky wrote:

The smoking felt like it was just punishment for my abortion. Like I have taken my child's life and now I must pay for it by punishing myself with addiction to cigarettes. That is literally how I think of it. That I deserve to get lung cancer. I deserve emphysema. I first started losing teeth from smoking in 2011, then again in 2013.

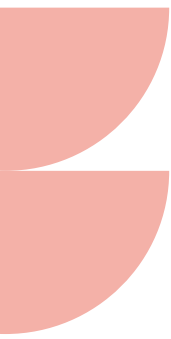
129 David C. Reardon, "Abortion and Subsequent Substance Abuse," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, July 7, 2009, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1081/ada-100100591?journalCode=iada20>.

130 Donald Paul Sullins, "Affective and Substance Abuse Disorders Following Abortion by Pregnancy Intention in the United States: A Longitudinal Cohort Study," *Medicina*, November 15, 2019, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6915619/>.

131 Fergusson, "Does abortion reduce the mental health risks."

132 Marie, "I Will Never Forget."

133 Elaine, "Consequences," *Silent No More Awareness*, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4214>.



*I got to be [sic] so out of shape. I can barely walk up a flight of stairs now without gasping and wheezing for air and I'm only 34.*¹³⁴

Often, self-harm can be more direct: "I hurt myself by burning and cutting my body," Julie wrote.¹³⁵ And Savannah said: "I was depressed – cutting and anorexia were how I dealt with that."¹³⁶

Avoidance, Guilt, and Shame

The above-described disorders and maladaptive behaviors are often deeply entangled with the guilt and shame felt by many post-abortive women. These feelings drive avoidance behaviors that have been studied to some degree by research, and are heavily documented in personal testimonies.

A two-year follow-up study comparing women who underwent abortion and women who experienced miscarriage, for example, found that post-abortive women were more likely to express avoidance.¹³⁷

Post-abortive women may avoid things that trigger negative emotions. Some cannot discuss the topic of abortion. "It's been hard," one woman wrote. "I can't even say the word abortion."¹³⁸ Events and celebrations, especially those related to babies and children, are additional examples of triggers for post-abortive women, leading to avoidance. Lynn wrote:

For 38 years I would avoid anything or anyone that had anything to do with children, ESPECIALLY babies. I would make excuses not to attend baby showers or children's events and ran from any opportunity to hold infants. I struggled with feelings of unworthiness, feelings that something was drastically wrong with me, feelings that I was not a normal woman.

"I can't even say the word abortion."

Events and celebrations, especially those related to babies and children, are additional examples of triggers for post-abortive women, leading to avoidance.

134 Becky, "My Abortion."

135 Julie, "Every Child Needs a Champion," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=2123>.

136 Savannah, "I Know I Will See You Again," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3408>.

137 Anne Nordal Broen, "Psychological Impact on Women of Miscarriage Versus Induced Abortion: A 2-Year Follow-up Study," Psychosomatic Medicine, March, 2004, https://journals.lww.com/psychosomaticmedicine/Abstract/2004/03000/Psychological_Impact_on_Women_of_Miscarriage.15.aspx.

138 "Abortion Story: Cape Town, South Africa," Abort73, July 22, 2020, <https://www.abort73.com/testimony/2694/>.

*There is something wrong ... normal women LOVE babies and children ... not run away [sic] from them! Not only could I not connect with women and their unbelievable attachment to babies and children, I actually got ANGRY at them.*¹³⁹

Studies also show that women who experience abortion are more likely to feel guilt and shame than their peers who miscarry.¹⁴⁰ These reactions are commonly observed responses to abortion within published research.^{141 142 143}

These facets of the post-abortive experience can be observed even more readily in women's testimonies. Sue wrote:

*I was filled with shame, sorrow, and sadness... How could I have done such a horrible thing[?] ... I blocked the abortions from my mind. They were hidden deep in my soul. Never to be shared. It was bad enough to have one abortion ... I had two! I was filled with shame and guilt.*¹⁴⁴

These feelings of shame and guilt drive many women to keep their abortions a secret, sometimes for decades. Denise said: "I spent 35 years not talking about my first baby. I married, had four beautiful children, and never dealt with it."¹⁴⁵

Similarly, Charlotte wrote:

It took me ten years to repent of my abortion. During that traumatic decade ... my first denial stage quickly evolved into unexpressed grief and then into a deep pit of depression and crippling shame. Because my abortion was a secret to everyone except my husband, a cluster of normal

139 Lynn, "Chloe's Cry," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3833>.

140 Broen, "Psychological Impact."

141 S. Suffla, "Experiences of induced abortion among a group of South African women," South African Journal of Psychology, December, 1997, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12321538/>.

142 Ugash Subramaney, "Of ambivalence, shame and guilt: Perceptions regarding termination of pregnancy among South African women," UCLA, April 1, 2015, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4fw2c4h5>.

143 Donna Krupkin Whitney, "Emotional Sequelae of Elective Abortion: The Role of Guilt and Shame," Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling, June 15, 2017, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1542305017708159?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%20pubmed.

144 Sue, "The Empty Hole."

145 Denise, "Denise's 2020 March for Life Testimony," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4102>.

*human emotions began to freeze up inside of me, isolating me emotionally and psychologically from my family and friends.*¹⁴⁶

Terri wrote: “I was never to mention my abortion, that time in my life, again to anyone. I felt so alone, realizing that I had to keep it hidden in my heart. No one would ever understand my brokenness.”¹⁴⁷

INTERPERSONAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

*The aftermath of my choice included an inability to trust. ... I struggled to connect and be fully present with those closest to me. I was angry and operated out of fear. That anger and fear bled onto my relationship with my children and my husband. I know that it has ultimately contributed to the downfall of my marriage. I wasn't able to be what they needed me to be, a good wife and mother.*¹⁴⁸

— Bridget

All of the factors thus far discussed can impact a woman's ability to form and maintain healthy and meaningful relationships with others. A German study of 247,593 first-time birth mothers showed that those with a history of abortion experienced a significantly higher level of social distress than those without – a dose-response effect was also observed.¹⁴⁹

Abortion has consequences which can reverberate outward from the women who choose it, affecting their various relationships.

Research shows that romantic relationships are affected. A study on abortion and intimate relationship quality concluded:

For men and women, the experience of an abortion in a previous relationship was related to negative outcomes in the current relationship; perceptions of improved quality of life if the current relationship also

146 Charlotte, “Pardoned,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3113>.

147 Baxter, ‘Statistics.’

148 Bridget, “Bridget's 2020 March for Life Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4094>.

149 Voigt, “Is induced abortion a risk factor.”

"I was never to mention my abortion, that time in my life, again to anyone. I felt so alone, realizing that I had to keep it hidden in my heart. No one would ever understand my brokenness."

ended[,] and intimate partner violence. Experience of an abortion within a current relationship was associated with 116% and 196% increased risk of arguing about children for women and men, respectively. Among females, experience of an abortion within a current relationship was associated with increased risk for various forms of sexual dysfunction (122–182%), increased risk of arguments about money (75%), increased risk of conflict about the partner’s relatives (80%), and increased risk of arguing about the respondent’s relatives (99%). Men whose current partners had experienced an abortion were more likely to report jealousy (96% greater risk) and conflict about drugs (385% greater risk).¹⁵⁰

Post-abortive testimonies provide first-hand evidence of these factors in action. Kathy wrote:

On the way home, I remember my boyfriend and I not speaking, only for me to direct him to stop at a liquor store and get me a bottle. When I got home ... I felt completely destroyed. After awhile [sic] my boyfriend came up to see me. I told him that our relationship should never have come to this and that it was over. We broke up. We ended up getting back together shortly after that. ... Again, unaware of how deeply affected I was by my abortion, I got pregnant again. This time he married me. There were lots of problems in the marriage. We only fought once about the abortion, but it was with us every day. My children grew up on a battlefield. He and I fought most of the time. In between fights that became physical, to me giving him the silent treatment, afraid of bringing anything up, and feeling completely trapped and hopeless and silent[,] we lived our lives.¹⁵¹

Holly similarly recalled:

My husband and I were clean for a while and then I started drinking heavily again (which eventually led back to drugs) while he stayed clean and sober. We had started a business together and were doing really well. Things quickly fell apart between us as I continued to pursue avenues to numb myself from feeling anything and run away from having to deal with life. We got divorced after a few years.¹⁵²

150 P. K. Coleman, “Induced abortion and intimate relationship quality in the Chicago Health and Social Life Survey,” *Public Health*, April, 2009, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0033350609000225?via%3Dihub>.

151 Cosgrove, “By Grace of God.”

152 Hollie, “If I had looked.”

**Things quickly
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divorced after a
few years.**

Cindy said, simply: “I could not forgive my husband or myself for not wanting this child, and we eventually divorced.”¹⁵³

The consequences of abortion can reverberate throughout a woman’s family. Serena related how her abortion at age 13 had a ripple effect: “Our family never talked about the abortion again, but it changed our lives. My mom would end up in and out of mental institutions, my dad would leave our family, and my sister would struggle with addictions.”¹⁵⁴

Relationships with already-born and subsequent children may also be affected. “I didn’t think I was worthy of love from my son (the first child after two abortions),” wrote Betty.¹⁵⁵ She added:

*His first words were “Trot Louis!” Louis was our horse. As cute as that is, I thought God was punishing me because “Mom” wasn’t among his first words[,] and I felt devastated. I also parented from a place of fear, so afraid that my children would make some of the same choices I so regretted.*¹⁵⁶

Others indicate their abortions led them to be aloof or even negligent toward their born children. Kathy wrote: “I was emotionally unavailable to my children. I felt angry and scared most of the time.”¹⁵⁷ And Erin related: “When I had my son, I lost everything about myself. I hated being a mother; I hated playing with him, giving him a bath, or even feeding him dinner.”¹⁵⁸

If a parent is responsible for coercing the decision to abort, the resulting resentment can damage the relationship for decades to come. Karen wrote:

I am 55 years old. My mother is 83 and facing her end of life [sic]. I am

153 Cindy, “Longing for My Lost Baby,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4200>.


154 Serena, “Serena’s 2020 March for Life Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4111>.

155 Betty Parquette, ‘PATH request’, email, 2021.

156 *ibid*

157 Cosgrove, “By Grace of God.”

158 Erin, “I Remember Everything,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3994>.



I am 55 years old. My mother is 83 and facing her end of life [sic]. I am sad every day that we could not have had a close relationship because of my feelings of resentment towards her for making me have those abortions.

sad every day that we could not have had a close relationship because of my feelings of resentment towards her for making me have those abortions. I think of this daily. I'm an only child[,] and on the surface we have had the appearance of a close relationship, however secretly, I've resented her so much. Sometimes I could even say I felt hatred, I was so angry. Any feelings of happiness between us feel "fake" or forced for the benefit of others. It's a shame, a waste, such a sad loss of what could have been a loving relationship. But how can a daughter love a mother who forces her to kill her baby, her own grandchild?¹⁵⁹

Fathers

Men are largely left out of the abortion conversation as predominant cultural narratives tell them they are supposed to defer to women, whose bodies are the ones primarily affected by pregnancy. But missing from these narratives is the critical influence fathers have on both the preborn child's future and the mother's pregnancy-related decisions.

Research shows that a variety of factors influence a woman's abortion decision, and support from partners is among them.¹⁶⁰

The pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute identifies common partner-related reasons for abortion such as "not enough support from husband or partner," "husband or partner wants me to have an abortion," and "not sure about relationship."¹⁶¹

Key roles men can play in the abortion process:

- **Assistance** - Male partners may play an active role in facilitating the abortion. For example, it is common to hear about men providing transportation to the clinic. They may also participate in the counseling, sit in the waiting room, and/or pay for the abortion.
- **Inaction** - Men have expressed regret over not doing more to influence their partners to refuse abortion.
- **Coercion** - Intimate partner violence can be a factor leading to abortion.¹⁶² Men may also coerce women to have abortions.

¹⁵⁹ Karen, 'How abortion harms women', email, 2021.

¹⁶⁰ Finer, "Reasons."

¹⁶¹ ibid

¹⁶² ibid

- **Prevention** - Women have cited lack of male support as a significant factor in their decisions to abort.¹⁶³ Conversely, if men provide support, they may be able to convince women not to abort.
- **Healing** - Men may seek post-abortive healing on their own but can also play a significant role in women's healing, for example via couples' retreats. Even if a male partner wasn't involved in a past abortion decision, women may benefit from receiving their affirmation and support in dealing with post-abortion grief.

Men experience abortion regret similar to women, although with varying symptoms. Like women, they grieve the loss of their child. They also feel shame for participating in the decision – either by failing to support the mother or by pressuring her into ending their child's life. Dr. Vincent Rue writes that “[m]ale responses to a partner's abortion include grief, guilt, depression, anxiety, feelings of repressed emotions, helplessness/voicelessness/powerlessness, post-traumatic stress, anger and relationship problems.”¹⁶⁴

In her book *They Lied to Us Too: The Forgotten Fathers - Men and Abortion*, Victoria Robinson compiled the stories of men who have struggled with abortion-related distress.¹⁶⁵ “I started thinking about the relationships I'd had with all the other women since Jody,” Eric recalls. “I had been unable to commit to any of them.”¹⁶⁶

Bradley said: “We had a responsibility to protect him but instead had intentionally allowed an abortionist to kill him in the most gruesome, painful way. Our relationship was never the same. We were never the same.”¹⁶⁷

SPIRITUAL CONSEQUENCES

I lived my life hanging on by a thread. It was not the thread of His garment because I no longer felt like I deserved to live as a Christian or call God my Heavenly Father. I had lost that privilege with my

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ Vincent Rue, “The Hollow Men: Male Grief and Trauma Following Abortion,” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/hollow-men-male-grief-trauma-following-abortion>.

¹⁶⁵ Victoria Robinson, *They Lied to Us Too: The Forgotten Fathers - Men and Abortion*, 2022.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 46.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 39.

*decision to abort my child. ... You see[,] I deserved every terrible thing I got[,] because I had done the ultimate sin[,] one that God would never forgive.*¹⁶⁸

— Robin

I am broken for life because of my abortion. I will never be okay. I know I can never forgive myself.

Robin's belief that she had done something unforgivable is common among post-abortive women and underscores the ways in which abortion can damage women's spiritual lives. Julie wrote: "God could not forgive me. I murdered. I took the life he place[d] inside my womb. I deserved to die. I tried to die. I begged God to take my life."¹⁶⁹ And Marie recalled: "My parish priest ... came to see me. I started to cry as soon as I saw him. ... I asked him to hear my confession. I confessed that I had aborted my baby, and I told him that I knew I could never be forgiven..."¹⁷⁰

Some women fear God will never forgive them; others understand, but cannot fully take in, God's forgiveness due to their inability to forgive themselves. Frances wrote: "I accepted Christ's healing forgiveness for my actions, but it would be many years before I was able to forgive myself."¹⁷¹ Similarly, Becky related: "I am broken for life because of my abortion. I will never be okay. I know I can never forgive myself."¹⁷²

Other post-abortive women never consider forgiveness – they are too focused on their fear that God is punishing, or will punish, them for what they have done. "I ended up in an emergency room and it was a tubal pregnancy[,] which they removed. [I] felt this was my punishment," wrote Pamela.¹⁷³ And Stephanie recalled: "I was waiting for God to take my son that I got pregnant with 3 months after my abortion[,] because I thought I didn't deserve him[,] and that was the way God was going to punish me."¹⁷⁴

168 Robin, "Stories," Not Forgotten Ministries, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://theyarenotforgotten.com/stories?fbclid=IwAR35WWR283q-k36EG3-6e-9FsYZbgBK4bDoL-n5oLNaAlirXrkcY0A56MPI>.

169 Julie, "Every Child."

170 Marie, "I Will Never Forget."

171 Frances, "The Grief."

172 Becky, "My Abortion."

173 Pamela, "I'm Still Healing," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=2615>.

174 Stephanie, "I was Devastated that I Had Taken my Own Child's Life," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4197>.

"I asked God for forgiveness. Although I knew He did, I just couldn't let go of the memory and emotions. My choice continued to haunt me. ... I loved God but couldn't seem to get away from the suffering as a result of the bad decision I had made."

Still others are simply unable to connect with God and/or their religious communities due to their shame, guilt, anger, or fear. Terri wrote:

*I felt abandoned by the church, thinking they would never love me if they knew what I had done. ... I asked God for forgiveness. Although I knew He did, I just couldn't let go of the memory and emotions. My choice continued to haunt me. ... I loved God but couldn't seem to get away from the suffering as a result of the bad decision I had made.*¹⁷⁵

Marly recalled: "I often felt unworthy and distant from God."¹⁷⁶ Nichole also described this phenomenon:

*When I met Jesus in a glorious way at the age of 22, I said to Him, "Lord I give you everything, I hold nothing back!" He so gently touched that unhealed hurt. Yet I recoiled and remember saying, "No, I was the victim there." ... So, for the next eight years of knowing Him, I wasn't free. I sang about the Chain Breaker but carried around my own chains. I was full of shame, regret, and condemnation, because I had agreed with it for 14 years of my life. My heart's desire was closeness with Him and to really know the Holy Spirit. I desired to feel His presence, but I could never figure out what I was doing wrong! I medi[t]ated on the Word for eight years and prayed. My prayers were answered but [I] felt that no "stirring the gift within you" was possible for me. Whenever I tried, it was as if I was trying to walk through heavy[,] thick mud.*¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Baxter, 'Statistics.'

¹⁷⁶ Marlys, "Marlys's 2020 March for Life Testimony," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4123>.

¹⁷⁷ Nichole, "God Redeems All Things," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 24, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4039>.

“A World Full of Lies”¹⁷⁸: The Abortion Industry and Mainstream Misinformation

The abortion industry suppresses information about the negative effects of abortion, and claims abortion is perfectly safe.^{179 180 181} This narrative is amplified by the pro-abortion media and abortion advocates.

Planned Parenthood claims: “For more than 30 years, substantive research studies have shown that legally induced abortion does not pose mental health problems for women.”¹⁸² The National Abortion Federation (NAF) similarly asserts in its teaching textbook *Management of Unintended and Abnormal Pregnancy* that “[n]o convincing evidence suggests that induced abortion causes important negative psychological sequelae.”¹⁸³

This idea is propped up by the use of biased and skewed data. Conversely, research that suggests the existence of negative consequences is so heavily scrutinized by abortion advocates and the pro-abortion media that the basic findings become clouded.¹⁸⁴ Occasionally, the mere possibility of performing meaningful research on this subject is questioned — if not dismissed outright. NAF’s teaching text claims: “[D]istinguishing the possible impact of an induced abortion from other life events may be impossible.”¹⁸⁵

178 Theresa, “Voice of Truth,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4137>.

179 Sarah Erdreich, “Post Abortion-Syndrome: The Solution in Search of a Problem,” HuffPost, August 12, 2013, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/post-abortionsyndrome-the_b_3742606.

180 Emily Bazelon, “Is There a Post-Abortion Syndrome?” New York Times, January 21, 2007, <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/magazine/21abortion.t.html>.

181 Carole Novielli, “‘Abortion is safer than childbirth’ — according to those who profit from abortion,” Live Action News, July 18, 2019, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/study-pushing-abortion-pill-access-gain/>.

182 “What facts about abortion do I need to know?” Planned Parenthood, Accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/abortion/considering-abortion/what-facts-about-abortion-do-i-need-know>.

183 Maureen Paul, *Management of Unintended and Abnormal Pregnancy: Comprehensive Abortion Care* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 257.

184 “Post-Abortion Syndrome,” Abort73, Accessed February 17, 2022, https://www.abort73.com/abortion/post_abortion_syndrome/.

185 Paul, *Management*, 257.

The Turnaway Study

In 2019, pro-abortion media outlets parroted the results of an analysis using the flawed dataset from the *Turnaway Study*, which followed a group of women who obtained abortions and another group that was “turned away” due to advanced gestational age. The study, which followed the women for five years, claimed to report “the consequences of having – or being denied – an abortion.”¹⁸⁶ “Most Women Don’t Regret Abortions. Why Would They?” read a headline from *Vice*.¹⁸⁷ An op-ed in *Salon* similarly suggested that abortion regret was a “red herring.”¹⁸⁸

Despite the fact that the research team behind *The Turnaway Study* has refused to publish its complete questionnaires and other materials,¹⁸⁹ neither the abortion industry nor the media has applied scrutiny or skepticism to the study. They simply parroted *The Turnaway Study’s* central claim — that most women do not regret their abortions.¹⁹⁰ *The New Yorker* even touted *Turnaway* as “[t]he study that debunks most anti-abortion arguments.”¹⁹¹

The Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, hailed *The Turnaway Study* as “innovative” and said it produced a “wealth of information.”¹⁹² Leaving behind its claim that distinguishing the impact of abortion from other life events might be impossible, the National Abortion Federation hailed *Turnaway* – which specifically aimed to distinguish the possible impact of an induced abortion from other life events – as “fact” in an official statement.¹⁹³

186 Diana Greene Foster, *The Turnaway Study* (New York: Scribner, 2020).

187 Harron Walker, “Most Women Don’t Regret Abortions. Why Would They?” *Vice*, January 13, 2020, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/xgqxbq/regret-after-abortion>.

188 Corrine Rocca, “Debunking the “abortion regret” narrative: Data shows women feel relief, not regret,” *Salon*, January 12, 2020, <https://www.salon.com/2020/01/12/debunking-the-abortion-regret-narrative-our-data-shows-women-feel-relief-not-regret/>.

189 David C. Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study Wishful Thinking? or Willful Deceptions?” *Linacre Quarterly*, June 20, 2018, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6161227/>.

190 Monica Snyder, “The media’s reporting on the abortion Turnaway Study left out some important findings,” *Live Action News*, March 12, 2021, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/media-abortion-turnaway-study-left-important-findings/>.

191 Margaret Talbot, “The Study That Debunks Most Anti-Abortion Arguments,” *The New Yorker*, July 7, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-study-that-debunks-most-anti-abortion-arguments>.

192 “The Turnaway Study in Perspectives,” Guttmacher, Accessed February 17, 2022, <https://www.guttmacher.org/perspectives50/turnaway-study-perspectives>.

193 Katherine Ragsdale, “Trump seized another opportunity to use inflammatory rhetoric,” National Abortion Federation, February 5, 2019, <https://prochoice.org/trump-seized-another-opportunity-use-inflammatory-rhetoric/>.

In dismissing evidence of “abortion trauma syndrome,” NAF’s teaching textbook alleges studies supporting its existence contain “methodological shortcomings.” Part of the textbook reads:

*Some reports are anecdotal, involving self-selected populations of women who are often linked to a religious denomination strongly opposed to abortion or who have been treated by clinicians with similar negative beliefs.*¹⁹⁴

But the women being studied in *Turnaway* were selected by people “linked to” an organization strongly in favor of abortion and were “treated by clinicians with similar [pro-abortion] beliefs.” If the studies described by NAF were disregarded as flawed, the mirror opposite *Turnaway Study* should be considered equally invalid.

NAF, however, didn’t apply the same concern about bias to *Turnaway*, which involved a group of financiers, staff, and participants who favored abortion. Beyond their ideological leanings, some of these individuals also benefit financially from women obtaining the procedure.

According to *Turnaway’s* operating procedures manual, the study received funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, and other private donors.¹⁹⁵ The Packard and Gerbode foundations both invested in abortion pill manufacturer Danco – creating an obvious conflict of interest for their involvement.^{196 197 198}

The organizations behind the research are also favorable to

194 Paul, Management, 259.

195 Heather Gould, “Turnaway Study Operating Procedures Manual,” Jama Network, November 1, 2016, https://cdn.jamanetwork.com/ama/content_public/journal/psych/936028/yoi160091suppl_prod.pdf?Expires=2147483647&Signature=m4~qri4uqRn3i4FdbpiFH~l7Px6bxtG9TsjwQxkDMRPKcLLT0de9zMwIDi29D-5ftOsgUfYm2C9J6rZnu9Q1bqnFkBXEepYGOpLuYWlu3uxB7Er~MlAV5imCEChdMbYzGqv~IE0iEp4ANenkUIHleYSn~O0p1oRPHZYtauT~hLWYfSibOLa-b91fMpy2TLZw7l7DYCe4Z4kOUbdkUZvaxMSRgEbTC2yzx-c3ejRw4UwUk9CLdSUzGGVsnjq1Hw8Zw-MIJMUNS8ZoXXXzifD-cjNHKoW3a~nY1-OIxR8BN2a~Jzo5RiF4DAseTGdZJkZbxOfjSq0PL53waRfDWslcQ__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAIE5G5CRDK6RD3PGA.

196 Carole Novielli, “UNREAL: Medical journal lets study authors hide funding source over fear of ‘anti-abortion’ violence,” Live Action News, August 31, 2019, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/medical-journal-hide-funding-anti-abortion-violence/>.

197 Carole Novielli, “The secrecy surrounding the abortion pill’s maker and influential financial investors must end,” Live Action News, March 27, 2019, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/secrecy-abortion-pill-maker-investors/>.

198 “Abortion Pill Kills,” Live Action, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://www.liveaction.org/abortion-pill-kills/>.

abortion. The study was conducted out of UCSF – which has been described as “the nation’s abortion training academy”¹⁹⁹ – and it was initiated by Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH), whose former director, Dr. Tracy Weitz, advocated the “social good” of “abortion rights,”²⁰⁰ and once argued against using the slogan “safe, legal, and rare,” because abortion is “common” and therefore, moral.²⁰¹

ANSIRH’s pro-abortion bias is clear.

In addition, principal Investigator Diana Greene Foster is a known proponent of late-term abortion.²⁰² She has served on the board of the Later Abortion Initiative,²⁰³ whose stated aim is to increase the number of sites and physicians offering late-term abortions.²⁰⁴

The bias of the study’s in-facility recruiters – those who actually signed up the participants – is also evident. They work in abortion facilities and are paid by the abortion industry.

Another issue is the likely involvement of selection bias, in two ways:²⁰⁵ (1) Women who agree to speak to researchers about their abortions have less stressful abortion experiences than those who decline; research supports this conclusion.²⁰⁶ (2) The abortion facility workers who recruited study participants may have introduced their own selection bias by passing over women who seemed more upset or anxious about having an abortion.²⁰⁷

199 Randall K. O’Bannon, “Takeaways from the UCSF Abortion ‘Turnaway’ Study [part 4],” National Right to Life News, January 8, 2013, <https://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/2013/01/takeaways-from-the-ucsf-abortion-turnaway-study-4/>.

200 Calvin Freiburger, “Flawed, biased Turnaway study now claims 95% of women happy after abortion,” Live Action News, July 14 2015, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/flawed-biased-turnaway-study-now-claims-95-women-happy-abortion/>.

201 Tracy A. Weitz, “Rethinking the Mantra that Abortion Should be ‘Safe, Legal, and Rare,’” Project Muse, Fall, 2010, https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/Weitz_-_Reflections_Rethinking_the_Mantra.pdf.

202 “Diana Greene Foster, PhD,” ANSIRH, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190126045818/http://www.ansirh.org/staff-members/diana-greene-foster>.

203 Novielli, “Abortion is safer.”

204 “Later Abortion Initiative,” Later Abortion, Accessed February 23, 2022, <http://www.laterabortion.org/about-initiative>.

205 Christopher Ingraham, “95 percent of women who’ve had an abortion say it was the right decision,” Washington Post, July 14, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/07/14/95-percent-of-women-whove-had-an-abortion-say-it-was-the-right-decision/>.

206 Nancy E. Adler, “Sample Attrition in Studies of Psychosocial Sequelae of Abortion: How Great a Problem?” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, September, 1976, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1976.tb01329.x>.

207 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

“Charlotte Lozier Institute Associate Scholar Dr. David Reardon notes in his critique of *The Turnaway Study* that recruiters had the ability to “exclude women whom they may have anticipated were among the worst candidates for abortion ...”

Charlotte Lozier Institute Associate Scholar Dr. David Reardon²⁰⁸ notes in his critique of *The Turnaway Study* that recruiters had the ability to “exclude women whom they may have anticipated were among the worst candidates for abortion ... The lack of a randomized selection process, in and of itself, could lead to results that are not generalizable to all women having abortions.”²⁰⁹

Methodological Shortcomings

The Turnaway Study has methodological shortcomings beyond mere bias. While the study’s five-year duration may seem like a long time, some post-abortive women do not consciously process their regret until much later.²¹⁰ Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, for example, told the story of a woman who didn’t begin to confront her trauma until twice the time frame used in *Turnaway*.²¹¹ She had an abortion in her late thirties, without telling her husband or teenage children. At the time, she said it was “the best thing that ever happened” to her, describing it as a “clean slate.”²¹² But a decade later, when presented with her first grandchild, she had a psychiatric breakdown.²¹³

Additionally, *The Turnaway Study* relies on data collected from a skewed, small sample of just 877 women.²¹⁴ Researchers divided the women into three groups, all of which were methodologically problematic. One group of 413 women had abortions just under the gestational limits of their local facilities. The second group — the “turnaways” — consisted of 210 women who were too far along in their pregnancies and were “turned away” from the recruiting abortion facilities. As Reardon pointed out, data from this group is essentially meaningless, both due to the remarkably small sample size and because 24% of these women were not true “turnaways” — they went on to have either miscarriages or abortions in other states.²¹⁵ This group was also non-representative because of their

208 “David C. Reardon, PhD,” Charlotte Lozier Institute, Accessed February 23, 2022, <https://lozierinstitute.org/team-member/david-c-reardon-ph-d/>.

209 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

210 “Women and Abortion Regret,” Clinic Quotes, August 31, 2012, <https://clinicquotes.com/women-and-abortion-regret/>.

211 *ibid*

212 *ibid*

213 *ibid*

214 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

215 *ibid*

age range; the so-called “turnaways” were much more likely to be teens,²¹⁶ and teen pregnancies differ from adult pregnancies in multiple ways that are highly likely to affect the psychological impact.²¹⁷

The third group was the “control group,” which consisted of 254 women who had abortions in the first trimester.²¹⁸ But as Dr. Reardon pointed out, this wasn’t a valid control group, as researchers gave no consideration to these participants’ prior, or subsequent, history of abortion. Research suggests that the negative impact on a women’s mental health is compounded with each successive abortion until at least the fourth one.²¹⁹ Failure to utilize a control group with no previous history of abortion renders the study – which claims to explore the differences between women who experience abortion and those who don’t – unreliable. The fact that subsequent abortions were not controlled for in the other groups further nullifies the usefulness of the data collected.

Only 38% of the women approached for participation agreed – a whopping 62% refused.²²⁰ Researchers have found that women who expect the greatest negative reactions to their abortions are also the least likely to participate in interviews about the experience;²²¹ ²²² it has furthermore been shown that women who expect poor outcomes from their abortions experience worse outcomes than their more optimistic peers.²²³ It follows, then, that the women who had the worst abortion experiences were not likely represented in this study.

216 Randall K. O’Bannon, “Takeaways from the UCSF Abortion ‘Turnaway’ Study [part 2],” National Right to Life News, January 4, 2013, <https://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/2013/01/takeaways-from-the-ucsf-abortion-turnaway-study-2/>.

217 Stefanie Mollborn, “Investigating the Relationship between Teenage Childbearing and Psychological Distress Using Longitudinal Evidence,” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, September 15, 2011, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3174139/>.

218 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

219 Donald Paul Sullins, “Abortion, substance abuse and mental health in early adulthood: Thirteen-year longitudinal evidence from the United States,” *SAGE Open Medicine*, September 23, 2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5066584/>.

220 Michael J. New, “Turnaway Study Comments”, email, 2022.

221 Adler, “Sample Attrition.”

222 Hanna Söderberg, “Selection bias in a study on how women experienced induced abortion,” *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, March 1, 1998, <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0301211597002236>.

223 B. Major, “Attributions, expectations, and coping with abortion,” *APA PsycNet*, 1985, <https://content.apa.org/record/1985-20054-001>.

Although the Turnaway researchers widely publicized the finding that 95% of women did not regret their abortions, their data also shows that 93% of the women who were “turned away” did not regret giving birth instead of having an abortion — even as little as one week after attempting to obtain one.

Of those who initially agreed to participate, half dropped out at some point over the study’s five-year data collection period,²²⁴ and only 17% of invited women remained in the study until the end.²²⁵ Research has shown that women who drop out of similar studies experience the highest degree of post-traumatic stress.²²⁶ Of *Turnaway* participants, those who reported the least amount of relief eight (8) days after their abortions were the most likely to drop out before the three-year follow-up interview – again indicating the study was unrepresentative of the general population and a faulty gauge of abortion regret.

The 17% of those approached who remained in the study faced a flawed interview process. The interviewees were given limited answer choices and were allowed no nuance in their replies.²²⁷ For example, *Turnaway’s* conclusion that most women don’t regret their abortions was based on a single question about whether the abortion ‘was right for’ participants. What exactly that means was not expounded upon, and women were limited to the options “yes,” “no,” or “uncertain” as possible responses.²²⁸

Dishonest Reporting

The *Turnaway* team has never published its complete research materials²²⁹ and has refused to make any data available to other researchers. This decision not only violates the American Psychological Association’s ethical standards,²³⁰ but also prevents researchers from scrutinizing *Turnaway’s* findings through additional study and analysis.

Although the *Turnaway* researchers widely publicized the finding that 95% of women did not regret their abortions, their data also shows that 93% of the women who were “turned away” did not

224 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

225 *ibid*

226 Inger Wallin Lundell, “Posttraumatic stress among women after induced abortion: a Swedish multi-centre cohort study,” *BMC Women’s Health*, December 23, 2013, <https://bmcmwomenshealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6874-13-52>.

227 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

228 *ibid*

229 *ibid*

230 “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct,” American Psychological Association, 2017, http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx#8_14.

regret giving birth instead of having an abortion — even as little as one week after attempting to obtain one.²³¹

In one of the papers published by *Turnaway* researchers, they claim that women who are denied an abortion may be at greater risk of adverse initial psychological outcomes than those who receive them.²³² This claim is based on a single statistic — namely, anxiety scores measured one week after women were “turned away.” However, this statistic becomes meaningless when considered within the context of *Turnaway’s* other data, which also shows that women who carried to term demonstrated significant improvements in anxiety, depression, and self-esteem over time.²³³

Researchers also massaged the data in order to reach the conclusion Dr. Foster promoted in an interview on NPR: “Abortion is safer than very common procedures like tonsillectomy and wisdom tooth removal.”²³⁴ The team used a flawed method of assessing participant health.²³⁵ According to Live Action News: “Women were merely asked if there were any health problems after going through childbirth or an abortion, and if they experienced any debilitating periods. This self-survey did not examine any medical records[.]”²³⁶ This assessment elicited no meaningful information, as it relied entirely on unverified anecdotal evidence rather than examining hard, scientific data.

It is impossible to make generalizations about the entire abortion-seeking and post-abortive populations based on the experiences of a scant and skewed sample of women. When the study data is processed by a team with a clear pro-abortion bias and a vested

231 Snyder, “The media’s reporting.”

232 M. Antonia Biggs, “Women’s Mental Health and Well-being 5 Years After Receiving or Being Denied an Abortion,” *JAMA Psychiatry*, February, 2017, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2592320>.

233 Reardon, “The Embrace of the Proabortion Turnaway Study.”

234 Terry Gross, “Study Examines The Lasting Effects Of Having — Or Being Denied — An Abortion,” NPR, June 16, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/06/16/877846258/study-examines-the-lasting-effects-of-having-or-being-denied-an-abortion>.

235 Caitlin Gerds, “Side Effects, Physical Health Consequences, and Mortality Associated with Abortion and Birth after an Unwanted Pregnancy,” *Women’s Health Issues*, January-February, 2016, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1049386715001589>.

236 Samantha Kamman, “Four reasons why the abortion ‘Turnaway Study’ should not be trusted,” Live Action News, June 25, 2020, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/turnaway-study-authors-continue-deceive-public-abortions-consequences/>.



financial interest in ensuring abortion's legality and accessibility, the element of ideological agenda is introduced. This further confounds the reliability of the study's conclusions.

The fact that the *Turnaway Study* is the abortion lobby's go-to source for supporting "evidence" to back up their claims of abortion's psychological and medical benignity should call into question the claims themselves.

The Road to Recovery

Though my child went through a physical death, I went through an emotional death that was just as sudden and unsuspecting. The years that followed were a downhill spiral, until I met the Healer. Now, instead of mourning over the loss, I know that one day there will be a marvelous human who shares my genetics waiting for me on the other side. Memories of that experience still grip my heart and bring me to tears because choices have consequences. I am being held by the One who holds my child and only because of His mercy will our lives mesh together again ... in a place that is immeasurably safer than a mother's womb.

— Lori²³⁷

Although our culture doesn't acknowledge it, abortion results in a legitimate, profound loss. It is necessary for post-abortive women to grieve this loss in order to heal from the psychological, emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual damage it can inflict. Each woman grieves in her own unique way, but guidance and support can be immensely helpful in the overall healing process. This is a key function of abortion recovery programs.

Healing methods may vary according to organization but the process tends to coalesce around several primary themes:

Self-forgiveness: Post-abortion healing is a difficult path because it requires acknowledging the reality that abortion ends a human life. Faith-based messaging is often used to encourage self-forgiveness through recognition of God's forgiveness of women and their partners.

Forgiveness of others: Post-abortive women and men may feel anger towards each other, especially if their wishes were not honored. Post-abortive individuals have also expressed anger toward abortion facility staff and others who may have influenced the abortion decision. Faith-based healing and a recognition of God's forgiveness assists in the process of forgiving all of the people involved in an abortion.

237 Lori, "Stories," Not Forgotten Ministries, Accessed February 25, 2022, <https://theyarenotforgotten.com/stories?fbclid=IwAR35WWR283q-k36EG3-6e-9FsYZbgBK4bDoL-n5oLNaAliRXrcY0A56MPI>.

Processing grief: Post-abortive recovery provides a safe space which allows feelings of grief to surface and be processed.

Honoring the lost child: Post-abortive individuals may engage in rituals or other processes in order to acknowledge the humanity of their aborted children. These can include memorial services.

Camaraderie: Healing within a group setting can help assuage feelings of shame and provide opportunities for support among individuals experiencing similar feelings and outcomes.

Abortion recovery can result in dramatic personal transformations. Michelle, for example, described her life before abortion recovery as “a miserable hell.”²³⁸ She continued:

I could not live with what I had done. I became suicidal, paranoid, anxious, and spiraled into such a depressive hole I never thought I would get out of. ... No matter how much I tried to be free of it, I wasn't. I knew God forgave me but there was still something in the shadow holding on to me.

Someone close to Michelle suggested she attend an abortion recovery retreat, and Michelle signed up. What she experienced changed her life:

Not for one second was there any condemnation, fault finding, accusations of being dirty, disgusting, and unworthy [by] anyone there. The volunteers carried us home. They laughed and cried and lamented with us. I know when I got there, I felt craters in my heart, and bricks on my shoulders, and my face looked like a 70 year old woman, but when Sunday came... I was NOT THE SAME. I had thrown my guilt into the lake, nailed my shame to the cross, and walked out of there free for the first time in my life. ... I realized that this year, my [daughter] would be a 30 year old woman, probably a great mom, but she doesn't hate me, and I don't hate me anymore.

If you are enduring post-abortion trauma, you are not alone. Following this report is a list of resources aimed at helping women recover from the pain of abortion.

²³⁸ Michelle, 'Hope this helps', email, 2022.

Now I'm using my story to help others heal and prevent other women from going through this horrible experience as well.

Paying it Forward

By humbling myself, submitting my hurt, guilt, shame, and self-condemnation to God ... I can stand here today and say that God has forgiven me! God has delivered me! God has set me free! God can now use my testimony of His great healing and restoration to help others in need, as Luke 4:18 says, "... to heal the brokenhearted and to set the captives free..."

— Joi²³⁹

I contacted our local pregnancy help center and asked what I could do to help. I met with the Executive Director and told her my story. The next thing I knew, I found myself with a new job! ... Now I'm using my story to help others heal and prevent other women from going through this horrible experience as well.

— Lisa²⁴⁰

Post-abortive women and men who have been through recovery and found healing can be strong, passionate voices within the pro-life movement. Nobody understands the horrors of abortion and the destruction it can cause better than they do, and their testimonies can be a powerful tool in the effort to change hearts and minds and save lives.

Many decide they would like to pay it forward and help other post-abortive and abortion-minded women and men. Some have gone on to share their stories publicly to warn others of the potentially devastating effects of abortion; some volunteer as sidewalk advocates, reaching out to women seeking abortions to offer alternatives; some work for pro-life organizations in various capacities that utilize their unique perspective. Still others have gone on to found their own organizations devoted to post-abortive healing and abortion prevention.

239 Joi, "Forgiving the Unforgivable," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4033>.

240 Lisa, "Using My Story," Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=4032>.

Conclusion

For years, abortion remained a dark place within me, an indefinable root of my pain because its consequences “didn’t exist” according to those “helping me” with my bouts of depression, etc. Unbelievably, abortion was never brought up on any level by my doctors as a possible negative experience in my life, let alone the lynch-pin [sic] to my pain. The despair I felt when I had my abortion was “nothing” according to the therapists, and according to a society that accepts abortion as a legitimate answer to pregnancy. There was no grieving for me because the baby I was carrying was just “a blob of tissue,” “a mass,” “a cluster of cells” ...

— Jennifer²⁴¹

The culture told me abortion was no big deal. Why could I not get on with my life in peace and happiness? Where was the freedom that was to have accompanied the choice of abortion?

— Angelina²⁴²

The abortion industry and its allies have had a history of negligent treatment of “patients”^{243 244 245 246} and deny the negative consequences of abortion. This industry has profited millions annually and billions over the past decade²⁴⁷ from the killing of innocent humans in the womb.

When women acknowledge and verbalize the negative effects of abortion in their lives, this has the power to free them from the anguish of post-abortive trauma. When they are able to confront

241 Jennifer O’Neill, “Jennifer O’Neill shares her story,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=2061>.

242 Angelina, “Angelina’s 2018 March for Life Testimony,” Silent No More Awareness, Accessed February 25, 2022, <https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org/testimonies/testimony.aspx?ID=3825>.


243 Bridget Handy, “A case for parental notification: Teen left with baby parts in uterus after botched abortion,” Live Action News, May 31, 2021, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/botched-abortion-parental-notification-laws/>.

244 Amanda Vicinanza, “Planned Parenthood calls 911 for hemorrhaging patient after botched abortion,” Live Action News, May 28, 2021, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/planned-parenthood-hemorrhaging-911/>.

245 Cassy Fiano-Chesser, “Autopsy: Woman died from botched abortion at Alabama’s most prolific abortion business,” Live Action News, March 16, 2021, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/autopsy-woman-died-botched-alabama-abortion-business/>.

246 Cassy Fiano-Chesser, “Illinois abortion business with history of botched abortions injures two women in two days,” Live Action News, November 24, 2020, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/illinois-abortion-business-botched-two-women-days/>.

247 Carole Novielli, “Planned Parenthood’s past decade: 3.3 million abortions and \$6 billion in taxpayer dollars,” Live Action News, February 23, 2021, <https://www.liveaction.org/news/planned-parenthoods-past-decade-3-3-million-abortions-6-billion-taxpayer-dollars/>.



the deeper reality of their actions with compassion for both their aborted children and themselves, healing can begin.

In addition, by sharing their experiences – helping other post-abortive women to find healing, and warning abortion-minded women of the dangers they potentially face – these same women can transform their pain into a louder collective voice that could play a crucial role in helping to stop the killing, once and for all.

These women speak for those whose voices have been silenced by abortion, and for those whose voices and perspectives have been suppressed in the current volatile political and social climate. They speak about the dark realities of abortion and the pain it has caused countless individuals. They have decided they can't stay silent.

Recovery Resources

Retreats/Group Classes:

DEEPER STILL

<https://www.godeeperstill.org>
Non-denominational, faith-based, in-person and virtual retreats.

NOT FORGOTTEN MINISTRIES

<https://theyarenotforgotten.com>
Non-denominational, faith-based, in-person weekend retreats and online group classes.

PROJECT RACHEL

<https://hopeafterabortion.com>
Catholic faith-based recovery services.

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

<https://www.rachelsvineyard.org>
Non-denominational and Catholic faith-based, in-person weekend retreats for women, men, and couples.

REAL OPTIONS

<https://www.realoptions.net/after-abortion-support/>
Non-denominational, faith-based, online, ongoing support groups for women and men.

SAVE ONE

<https://saveone.org>
Non-denominational group and individual abortion recovery services for men and women.

SHE FOUND HIS GRACE

<https://www.shefoundhisgrace.org/abortion-regret-recovery>
Non-denominational, faith-based, online group classes.

Social Media Support Groups:

I REGRET MY ABORTION

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/16017309643>

PATH: POST-ABORTION TRANSFORMATION AND HEALING

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PostAbortionTransformationHealing>

Books:

FREE INDEED

<https://www.amazon.com/Free-Indeed-Learning-Forgiveness-Abortion/dp/1645900207/>

SURRENDERING THE SECRET (Video-based)

<https://www.lifeway.com/en/product/surrendering-the-secret-bible-study-book-P005812686>

FORGIVEN AND SET FREE

<https://www.amazon.com/Forgiven-Set-Free-Post-Abortion-Bible/dp/0801016622/>

SAVEONE

<https://www.amazon.com/saveone-Guide-Emotional-Healing-Abortion/dp/1600374379/>

Hotlines:

H3HELPLINE

866-721-7881 <https://h3helpline.org>
24/7 live help in English and Spanish. Live chat available via website.

OPTIONLINE

1-800-712-HELP <https://optionline.org/after-abortion-support>
24/7 live help in English. Live chat available via website; text HELPLINE to 313131 for text messaging.

Websites:

ABORTION CHANGES YOU

<https://www.abortionchangesyou.com>
Includes a self-guided recovery procedure as well as stories and other resources. Spanish version available.

AFTERABORTION

<https://afterabortion.org>
Information, resources, and testimonies.

CAN'T STAY SILENT

<https://cantstaysilent.com>
Information, resources, and testimonies.

LUMINA

<https://postabortionhelp.org>
Information and resources for women, men, and siblings, including prayer services. Catholic perspective.

SILENT NO MORE AWARENESS

<https://www.silentnomoreawareness.org>
Resources for women and men, and testimonies.

SUPPORT AFTER ABORTION

<https://supportafterabortion.com>
Healing resources and information for men and women

MEN AND ABORTION NETWORK

<https://menandabortion.net>
Resources and a free mentorship/counseling service for men.

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