



Some people seem to come through an abortion unchanged. Others struggle for years with feelings of grief, guilt, shame, anxiety, low self-esteem, anger, or depression. Still others have problems with nightmares, eating disorders, broken or abusive relationships, substance abuse, and even suicide.

It is possible for any woman to unexpectedly have a bad emotional reaction to an abortion. But researchers have identified several factors that predict which women are most likely to suffer the most severe reactions.

The best-established risk factors include: feeling pressured to have an abortion; strong maternal tendencies; a desired pregnancy; feelings of attachment to the unborn child; a history of prior psychological illness or emotional instability; lack of support from her parents or her male

partner; adolescence; prior beliefs that abortion is immoral; a history of prior abortion(s); or abortion in the second or third trimester.

A woman who has one or more of these factors is likely to have strong negative reactions to an abortion. The best estimates indicate that at least four out of every five women undergoing abortion today fall into one or more of these high-risk categories. How many of these women will actually have post-abortion emotional problems is still unknown.

For a more complete list of known risk factors, plus a breakdown of the percentages of women seeking abortion who fall within many of these categories, and citations to the medical literature documenting these risk factors, visit our web site at www.afterabortion.org and follow the link to the *Hope and Healing* version of this article.

FINDING THE RIGHT HELP. IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

When looking for a post-abortion counselor or support group, keep in mind that many of these groups have different philosophies and approaches.

Many are run by women who have had abortions themselves. Some are run by licensed psychiatrists, psychologists, or social workers. Others are extensions of churches or crisis pregnancy centers.

Be sure to ask lots of questions in order to find a group or counselor with whom you feel comfortable.

In some cases, especially if you have a history of psychological problems or other trauma that may complicate your abortion problems, you may need the help of a professional counselor.

Don't expect that just any licensed counselor can help you. Indeed, many professional counselors are unaware of or may even be politically hostile to post-abortion issues. Many women have reported that their therapist's insistence on looking at everything but their abortion made their problems worse.

If you want a professional counselor, make sure you find a therapist who has experience and training specifically in the field of post-abortion counseling. Your local post-abortion ministry or crisis pregnancy center can probably refer you to one.

The following is a partial list of the many organizations offering post-abortion counseling either by phone or by providing referrals to a network of counselors around the country.

In recent years, many crisis pregnancy centers have also begun to offer post-abortion counseling. You may want to inquire about post-abortion counseling by calling your local crisis pregnancy center or asking for a referral from a sympathetic pastor at your local church. Many post-abortion counseling services are free.

CARENET	(703) 478-5661	National Memorial for the Unborn	(800) 505-5565
Fathers & Brothers	(303) 494-3282	National Office of Post-Abortion	
Healing Hearts Ministry	(888) 217-8679	Reconciliation and Healing	(800) 593-2273
HEART Inc.	(513) 528-6040	Rapha	
Last Harvest Ministries	(972) 840-3553	(refers only to licensed counselors)	(800) 383-4673
Men's Abortion Recovery	(610) 384-3210	Rachel's Vineyard Retreats	877-HOPE-4-ME
America's Crisis Pregnancy Helpline	(800) 672-2296	Victims of Choice	(630) 378-1680

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Contributions to the Elliot Institute, a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, are tax deductible. Much more information is available on our web site at www.afterabortion.org. To receive a free sample of our quarterly publication, *The Post-Abortion Review*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Elliot Institute, PO Box 7348-H, Springfield, IL 62791-7348.



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