



Do you realize that you can promote post-abortion healing without ever talking to people about their past abortions?

You don't even have to know if someone has had an abortion. And you certainly don't have to become a trained counselor or an expert in post-abortion issues. All you have to do is sow a few words of healing into your everyday conversations.

In every case, your goal is merely to plant the seeds of understanding, empathy, and hope that can lead to future healing. You are not trying to complete the healing process. But you *can* help break down some of the obstacles to healing.

In a simple, conversational way, cover the following three points:

(1) Announce that you have come to a whole new understanding of the abortion issue, including why people choose abortion and how it affects them;

(2) Express your compassion for women and men who have had abortions, knowing that they must constantly face the fear that others are judging or condemning them, and that they may be experiencing feelings of doubt and regret; and

(3) Describe how you have heard of new programs that help women and men find freedom from the burdens of secrecy and shame associated with past abortions.

For example, you might simply say, "I read an interesting article that gave me a whole new understanding of why women have abortions. I never really understood before how much pressure many are under to have an abortion.

"I also didn't realize before how much they feel judged and condemned by others. That fear of judgement can really make it hard for them to complete the healing process. Did you know that on average it takes around ten years for women to recover emotionally from a past abortion?"

"The good news is that there are a lot of new programs now to help women and men who are dealing with post-abortion problems."

That's it. You have planted the seeds. Perhaps someone will ask for more information, in which case you can give them a copy of this publication or refer them to a post-abortion ministry in your area.

Just remember these three key words: understanding, compassion, and hope.

The first step, expressing understanding, respects the mind.

The second step, expressing compassion, soothes the emotions.

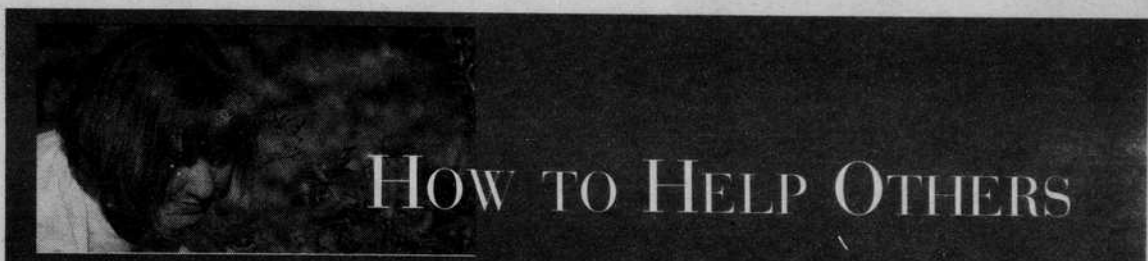
The third step, offering hope, feeds the spirit.

Wouldn't our world be a better place if everyone would begin to sow the seeds of understanding, compassion, and hope?

We have prepared this publication precisely to raise up millions of people, like you, to sow the seeds of post-abortion healing. Together we can create a much more loving and healing environment for those who are burdened by a past abortion.

So use this tool. Get some extra copies of this publication to leave around school or at work, to place in the literature rack at your church, or wherever. Encourage your friends and family to read it.

If this publication has opened your heart or mind in any way, it will help others, too.



DO

- Do listen patiently. They are trying to sort out their feelings. Verbalizing them with someone who will listen helps. Expect and allow them to repeat themselves and to bring the subject up again later. Listen for clues to their deeper feelings to which you can respond later.
- Do reassure them that we all make mistakes, and all religions teach that our mistakes/sins can be forgiven. God wants to forgive us. All we have to do is to admit that we need and desire it.
- Do reassure them that their feelings are normal. Others have experienced the same thing and found healing. Build up a sense of hope that they can be healed and reconciled with God and their child in heaven.
- Do allow them to vent their anger toward others. Remind them that it is a sign of an even deeper hurt that lies beneath the anger. Encourage them to get in touch with both the anger and the hurt, which they need to do before they can "let go" of their anger and approach forgiveness. Encourage them to see that the people they blame were also confused, scared, or just looking for the fastest way out of a hard situation.
- Do allow them to regret their choice. Remind them that we all learn from our mistakes. Women and men who have found healing after an abortion often become more humble, compassionate, and sensitive. Even a negative experience can be used to help others.
- Do encourage them to entrust their child completely to the care of God. Reassure them that, on a spiritual level, their loss is only temporary. Someday they can be with their child in heaven, and they will be able to ask for, and receive, their child's forgiveness.
- Do give them a copy of this publication, an 800 number to a post-abortion hotline, or some other referral information. If you don't have it on hand, promise to get it to them within the week. Then keep your promise.
- Do show that you care by keeping in touch and continuing to be a sounding board for them. Make at least one follow up call to see how they are doing.

DON'T

- Don't shut them off by changing the subject.
- Don't condemn them for making a bad or immoral choice.
- Don't deny that they lost a child.
- Don't encourage them to blame others for the abortion. But don't push them to forgive others either, especially when they are in the initial stages of venting their anger and rage.
- Don't insist that they did the "right thing" or the "best thing" at the time.
- Don't suggest that having another child "someday" can make up for the one that was lost. Future children are a blessing and comfort, but they can never replace the child who was lost.
- Don't leave them without encouraging them, over and over again, to find and accept the help of post-abortion counselors or peer support groups.
- Don't be afraid to follow up.

GIVE US FEEDBACK

If this publication has been a help to you or someone you love, write to us. Your letters of support will help us obtain the funding we need to continue distributing this publication at little or no cost to others.

GIVE US TO OTHERS

Our goal is to distribute *Hope and Healing* as a paid advertising insert in college and community newspapers throughout the country. With your help, we can reach millions of people with this message of understanding and compassion. You can help us place *Hope and Healing* in newspapers by sending your tax-deductible donation to: Elliot Institute, PO Box 7348-H, Springfield, IL 62791-7348. Thank you.



www.afterabortion.org