

## POST-ABORTION HELP

### ► 1-866-469-7326

**Abortion Recovery Network** - nationwide toll-free hotline for post-abortive counseling and referral information for local help.

### ► 1-800-57-WOMAN

**Right to Life of Michigan** - 24-hour toll-free hotline operated by OptionLine with referral information for local agencies in Michigan offering post-abortive counseling, pregnancy help and adoption assistance.

### ► 1-877-586-4621

**Lumina** - post-abortion referral network offering retreats and counseling.

### ► [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)

**Rachel's Vineyard** - weekend retreats for women and men suffering from an abortion to enter a non-judgmental safe place to think and explore their feelings about abortion.

### ► [www.abortionrecovery.org](http://www.abortionrecovery.org)

**Abortion Recovery InterNational (ARIN)** - CARE directory online listing local centers with abortion recovery programs or referrals.

## References

- 1 - Priscilla K. Coleman, "Induced abortion and anxiety, mood, and substance abuse disorders: Isolating the effects of abortion in the national comorbidity survey," *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 45, no. 8 (2011): 1133-1134.
- 2 - N.P. Nota et al., "Associations between abortion, mental disorders, and suicidal behaviour in a nationally representative sample," *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 55, no. 4 (2010): 239-247.
- 3 - Hanna Söderberg et al., "Emotional distress following induced abortion," *European Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Reproductive Biology* 79, no. 2(1998): 173-178.
- 4 - CV Bellieni and G Buonocore, "Abortion and subsequent mental health: Review of the literature," *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 67, no. 5 (2013): 301-310.
- 5 - Kaeleen Dingle et al., "Pregnancy loss and psychiatric disorders in young women: An Australian birth cohort study," *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 193, no. 6 (2008): 455-460.
- 6 - Mika Gissler et al., "Suicides after pregnancy in Finland, 1987-94: Register linkage study," *British Medical Journal* 313 (1996): 1431-1434.
- 7 - Priscilla K. Coleman et al., "Late-term elective abortion and susceptibility to posttraumatic stress symptoms," *Journal of Pregnancy* 2010 (2010).

## Right to Life of Michigan

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# Post- Abortion Syndrome



The emotional and mental effects abortion has on men and women.

Right to Life  
of Michigan

[www.RTL.org](http://www.RTL.org)

## POST-ABORTION SYNDROME

Post-Abortion Syndrome (or PAS) is a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Symptoms may occur immediately following the abortion, but they may also develop years later or come to the surface around the anniversary of the abortion, the expected due date of the baby, or major holidays and celebrations.

Abortion can be a traumatic experience for both women and men, as well as family and friends.

Symptoms and disorders that have been attributed to PAS:

- Sadness
- Depression
- Thoughts of suicide
- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety
- Trouble bonding with other children
- Uncontrollable crying
- Drug/alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders
- Trouble sleeping
- Self-punishing behaviors
- Abusive relationships
- Promiscuity
- Survival guilt
- Reliving the abortion experience

Millions of women in America have had abortions since 1973, yet relatively few speak openly about their experience. Many post-abortive women and men suffer in silence.

Many may believe their negative reactions to abortion experiences are not legitimate because of the political nature of the abortion debate, especially when the existence of these reactions are denied by others.

## EVIDENCE OF PAS IN STUDIES

► Abortion is related to an increased risk for several mental health problems including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.<sup>1</sup> (2008 STUDY OF 3,049)

► Abortion is associated with mood disorders, anxiety, substance abuse and suicidal thoughts.<sup>2</sup> (2010 STUDY OF 3,310 AMERICAN WOMEN)

► More than half of women experienced emotional distress one year after their abortions, and 30 percent were classified as severe.<sup>3</sup> (1998 SWEDISH STUDY)

► Abortion is associated with an increased risk of mental problems in 13 of 36 studies between 1995-2011. No difference between abortion and childbirth is found in five of the studies, and only one found worse outcomes for giving birth.<sup>4</sup>

► Women who experience pregnancy loss are three times more likely to experience a lifetime illicit drug disorder. Women who had abortions were more likely to engage in drug abuse than those who experienced miscarriage.<sup>5</sup> (2008 AUSTRALIAN STUDY)

► Suicide rates increased significantly in relation to abortion versus childbirth: 5.9 per 100,000 births compared to 34.7 per 100,000 abortions.<sup>6</sup> (1996 FINNISH STUDY)

► Second and third trimester abortions are more likely to be associated with trauma than first trimester abortions, specifically experiencing disturbing dreams, reliving the abortion and trouble falling asleep.<sup>7</sup> (2010 STUDY)

## ADDITIONAL READING

Books below are available from a Right to Life of Michigan Educational Resource Center near you. Visit [www.RTL.org](http://www.RTL.org) for a list of locations.

- **CHANGED**, by *Michaelene Fredenburg*  
Collection of short stories as told by people who have experienced abortion directly or indirectly.
- **FORBIDDEN GRIEF**, by *Theresa Burke*  
Written by a counselor who has devoted more than 18 years to helping women come to terms with their past abortions.
- **FORGIVEN AND SET FREE**, by *Linda Cochrane*  
A bible study to help women come to terms with their abortion and find healing and forgiveness.
- **HEALING A FATHER'S HEART**, by *Linda Cochrane*  
A bible study to help men come to terms with their abortion experience and find healing and forgiveness.
- **HER CHOICE TO HEAL**, by *Sydna Masse*  
A post-abortive woman who found healing through Christian faith shares her message of hope to other suffering women.
- **MEN AND ABORTION: A PATH TO HEALING**, by *C.T. Coyle*. A book for men involved in the abortion process.

