

# SUPPORT

AFTER ABORTION



## KEYS TO HOPE AND HEALING

A joint resource from *The Word Among Us Partners*  
& *Support After Abortion*.

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& *Support After Abortion*.

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Made and printed in the United States of America

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## Introduction to This Booklet

I am very grateful to share this *Support After Abortion* booklet with you. I am so sorry if you are hurting right now. How you feel is very real, and I know many women who have suffered like you. But there is hope: many have healed or are on the path to healing. And you can be too.

After your abortion, you may have experienced a range of emotions, from initial relief and confidence in your decision to regret, grief, guilt, or shame. You may even now be having flashbacks or bad dreams or experiencing a mix of emotions that surface from time to time. Perhaps you have thoughts such as:

“I did what I thought was right at the time, but . . . ”

“I wasn’t given an alternative option, but . . . ”

“I want to move forward with my life, but . . . ”

“I want to stop thinking about what happened, but . . . ”

If you’ve had any thoughts like these, please be open to what this booklet can offer you: keys for healing and hope. These *keys* will open up doors for anyone who has had an abortion or may have participated in an abortion. Will they take courage and willingness? Yes. Will they take time and openness? Yes. Will they possibly change your life? Yes!

I became involved in writing this booklet because I am passionate about helping women who have experienced an

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abortion find healing. I've known or heard from women who have suffered for decades because of an abortion—one woman until the last weeks of her life. I'm happy to share that others learned there was support available and began the healing process much sooner. There is a need for healing material for women like you, and, in my heart, I want the good news of healing to be globally known.

As not everyone is looking for the support offered through personal or group counseling—and perhaps that's you—this booklet will hopefully meet you where you are at.

If your abortion is recent—perhaps within the last 24-48 hours—now may not be the time for you to work through this booklet. Instead, I'd like to ask you: Are you sleeping? Are you eating? And do you have someone to talk to? If you feel the need for immediate support and someone to talk to, please reach out to **Support After Abortion**, a wonderful organization that offers real-time assistance. Their contact information is on the back of this booklet.

A lot of information at once is not always helpful. Therefore, each key is broken down into two parts and followed by action steps to help you personalize and journal what you've read. I think you will find the stories of women who have had an abortion and who are now on their own path to healing very encouraging.

Don't feel the need to rush through each key in one sitting. Take a break if you need to: go for a walk, watch a movie, exercise, distract yourself somehow. Stay with a key until you feel you are ready to move on. One key builds on the next, so it's best to read them in order. Revisit any of the six keys

## Introduction to This Booklet

as often as you need. You are a unique and special person on your own individual journey.

A suggestion I'd like to offer is that you journal your thoughts through this journey. Treat yourself to a paper journal or use your phone, laptop, or tablet. There are also blank pages in this booklet you can use to journal your thoughts.

So, are you ready to turn to the first key and open the door to begin your journey to hope and healing?

My thoughts are with all who will seek after abortion support through the key offered in these pages.



*Angela*

**Angela M. Burrin**  
**The Word Among Us Partners**



# Key 1

## Acknowledge Where You Are Now

**You Are!** *You are worthy of having a life that is happy and fulfilling. Spend thirty seconds recalling some fulfilling times in your life.*

If you are anything like me, I often skip the introduction at the front of books. Sometimes I make an exception, and I hope you will with this booklet. It is beneficial for navigating the booklet as well as understanding why each reflection is called a key. It isn't a long read—it should take you less than two minutes!

### STEP 1

Most of us are asked at least once a day, “How are you?” We might smile and respond, “I’m fine,” even if it’s far from the truth. It’s a safe answer that usually doesn’t require us to share too much information, and we quickly move on.

**Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now** is inviting you to stop and check in with yourself by asking, “How am I really doing following my abortion?” Identifying and acknowledging

## Acknowledge Where You Are Now

your emotions is a crucial key to working through your abortion experience. Many overlook this critical step.

Right now, you might be ready to look at how you're feeling. On the other hand, maybe you're hesitant to start because you know it will be a painful exercise. Or perhaps you just don't see the value in acknowledging your emotions. If you identify with the last two groups, please don't talk yourself out of it. It is a choice that you won't regret.

This exercise is no small feat, and if you've picked up this booklet, I know you have great strength in you. Go at your own pace, pick up where you left off or restart a key. Everyone's needs are different. Try to remember that you are brave and worthy of healing. Keep your hope alive.

After an abortion, women may try to hide or repress their emotions. These emotions are different for everyone—they could include guilt, shame, despair, or a combination of all of these. Everyone is unique. It may seem like hiding or repressing emotions will help you heal. They may feel too overwhelming, and it may seem like addressing them will be uncomfortable. However, these emotions need to be acknowledged. An abortion does change you, and very few women are not affected in some way by their abortion.

While emotions may lessen over time, they won't just go away. They will always be just under the surface. Refusing to face emotions surrounding a loss such as an abortion can lead to unhealthy behaviors, as you will read in Lucille's story (on page 17).

I want to remind you that every woman experiences a range of emotions that may come and go. They may get weaker or

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stronger when you are having thoughts or memories about your abortion experience.

There are a host of triggers to our emotions. If you find yourself becoming overwhelmed, it will help to reach out to **Support After Abortion** listed on the back of this booklet. Now it's time to take a pen or pencil to begin the first action part of this key.

### Common Feelings following Abortion

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Loneliness
- Despair
- Relief
- Numbness
- Guilt
- Mood Swings
- Fear
- Optimism
- Shame
- Exhaustion
- Regret

### Actions

- Circle the emotions in the box above that apply to you.
- Add others not listed that come to mind.
- Highlight or put an \*asterisk next to your three strongest emotions.

The emotions you've just acknowledged are real and valid. It's where you are right now. Please give yourself permission to cry, especially if you haven't done so before. Crying is very healing.

If you're thinking, "I don't know what I'm feeling," that is also a very real and common experience. You've started the healing process! Other women have become numb and don't know what they are feeling. Be kind to yourself and read over the "Common Feelings following Abortion" box again. Emotions come and go, and you may identify with some of these in time.

Now it's time to read Jessica's Hope Story.

### **Jessica's Hope Story**

Mike and I had been dating for about two years when I got a *positive* on a home pregnancy test. We really loved each other, so I was confident that together we could talk through our options—keep the baby or place it up for adoption. What I hadn't anticipated was Mike's reaction of shock, fear, panic, and his refusal to talk about my being pregnant with his child.

The very next day, Mike made an appointment for me at an abortion clinic. When he told me about this, I was hurt that the man who said he loved me would do such a thing without talking to me first. I felt desperately alone as I didn't have anyone to talk to. That night I couldn't sleep. The thought of having an abortion kept going through my mind over and over again. It was a situation I never thought I'd find myself in.

By morning, I had bought into the claim that my baby was just tissue. But another part of me questioned whether this was true. While driving to the clinic, Mike tried to console me with, "You're doing the right thing." I cried throughout the procedure. I left that place feeling empty and broken and was in shock and in mourning. But I plastered on a fake smile and told everyone I was "fine."

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Mike and I did get married, but we never talked about my abortion. I suffered in silence, but inside, I screamed anguish, anger, and deep regret almost every day, until one day, after sharing my story with a close friend, I said to Mike, “We have to talk about the abortion.”

I was grateful that Mike was open to talking and seeking professional help. We went to our first counseling session, which was such a huge decision for both of us. It was the first step toward seeking healing.

Years later, I decided to tell my story to a few women at a support group. When I cried, they cried with me and reached out with hugs. I left feeling loved and encouraged—another step toward healing.

### What Do You Think?

- What did you take away from Jessica’s story?
- Can you relate to any of the emotions she felt?

### STEP 2

Have you ever had a thought and then moments later you couldn’t remember what it was or recall what you were thinking at all? This happens to me all the time. That’s why I’d like to suggest that you keep a journal of your journey through the six keys in this booklet because I can assure you that you’re going to have a lot of thoughts, and some of them will be powerful. You will not want to forget them!

No one will see what you journal unless you choose to share it. You can be one hundred percent real and honest in what you

## Acknowledge Where You Are Now

write. This includes any negative thoughts towards yourself: *I can't move forward*; *I won't heal*; or *I can't forgive myself*. There is no right or wrong way to keep a journal. It's all about what you want to express. Write or type as much or as little as you want. It's a good idea to date each entry. Poetry, a sketch, or a picture are all great additions and entirely up to you.

The very act of describing your emotions may help you become aware of your abortion's impact on your life. Together with reflection and meditation, it is a profound and impactful tool. As you journal, some emotions may come to mind that perhaps were hidden in your subconscious. Writing can also be incredibly helpful if you're feeling numb or finding it hard to acknowledge your emotions.

Women are often so adept at multitasking, but this is your time for healing. So please find some ways to relax and be mindful of *your* needs. When you journal, try to put away your phone and find some personal space. Sit outside in the fresh air, if that is comfortable for you, play some music, or do some deep breathing exercises—whatever helps you relax.

The benefits of keeping a journal while going through these keys are limitless. A journal is an excellent record of the transformation that is going to take place in your life in the coming days and weeks. It helps you keep track of where you are now and is so encouraging to read in the future!

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### Actions

- Journal why you are working through this booklet.
- Journal what you have found helpful about **Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now**.
- Take two to three minutes to recall and be grateful for some of the things in your life.

### Points to Review

- I need to be aware of what I'm thinking and feeling.
- Self-honesty is an important key that will lead me to experience hope and healing.

### Final Thought and Meditation

In this key, you may have discovered some challenging or painful emotions—well done in persevering. Until you have time to begin the second key, keep your eyes on your goal of healing and why you are going through this process. Recall some of the things you've discovered about yourself. You are stronger than you know.

*"I'm growing in self-awareness, and each feeling I have is valid."*

### What to Expect in the Next Key

You've identified some of your emotions, and this is a huge step toward healing. **Key 2: You Are Not Alone** will help you begin working through the feelings you've identified. Please try to remain hopeful about why you are working through this booklet.

## Key 2

### You Are Not Alone

**You Are!** *You are likable and loveable. Spend thirty seconds thinking of three people you enjoy spending time with.*

**Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now** opened the door to acknowledging your emotions and encouraged you to begin journaling. I hope you didn't skip that key. Why? Because after going through that door, you're ready to pick up the next *key*: **You Are Not Alone.**

Let me ask: Did you circle the emotion *loneliness* on the "Common Feelings following Abortion" box?

#### STEP 1

There's a quote by an anonymous writer, "Even in a crowd, you are alone inside your own head." Sometimes loneliness has nothing to do with a person's present circumstances but everything to do with how they perceive them. It has nothing to do with how many people they have surrounding them or how many likes or followers they have on social media.

There are some great synonyms for the word *alone*: being unaccompanied or disconnected. Maybe that defines how



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you've felt since your abortion. However, the truth is that you are not alone in your abortion experience, and you are not alone in feeling lonely. From

Sharing what you have experienced since your abortion in a safe environment can be essential to understanding that you are not alone.

an aerial perspective, countless women—maybe that includes you—were shocked by the devastating effects of their abortion on their emotions. They, and perhaps you, were unprepared for what they felt.

Without hesitating, some women choose to process their emotions by sharing their abortion story with a trusted friend or an after-abortion counselor. Others find it incredibly difficult to share their experience for whatever reason—perhaps fear of people's judgments or rejections—and choose to keep their abortion a secret.

For any woman in this last group, it takes courage to share about their abortion. The thought of opening up and being vulnerable can cause them to feel overwhelmingly anxious or scared. It may take several attempts to make a phone call or keep an appointment.

If that's you, sharing what you have experienced since your abortion in a safe environment can be essential to understanding that **You Are Not Alone**. Many women have found it to be freeing. It can be an enormous relief. Your abortion will no longer be an elephant in the room. You will find yourself smiling and less frozen in your pain. You may be able to move forward more easily. And . . . you are worth it. Your story matters.

## Actions

- Journal about a time where you felt alone. What steps did you take at the time to help ease your loneliness?
- Recall a time when you said to a family member or friend, “I’m here for you. You’re not alone.” What was their response? How did that make you feel?

Now it’s time to read Lucille’s Hope Story.

### Lucille’s Hope Story

As a stylist, I spend all of the day on my feet, so I brushed it off when I started feeling tired. When I began to feel nauseous, I got nervous. I was twenty when I got pregnant from a short-term relationship. As the father was no longer in my life, I had flashbacks to my childhood without my dad, who didn’t seem to want to be there for me.

My current boyfriend, Pete, told me I couldn’t raise a child on my own. I felt stuck, especially as I had no intention of telling my mom or sister. The loneliness was crippling. Having an abortion seemed like my only option to keep my secret.

But then I began to second-guess myself, so by the day of the abortion—June 22—I was really unsure about going. I struggled to get in Pete’s car and wanted him to turn around as we drove up to the clinic. He reminded me of what I wouldn’t be able to do.

As the procedure began, I immediately felt a lot of regrets. Within weeks of my abortion, I had emotions that shocked me: uncontrollable anger, crying suddenly, and overwhelming

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episodes of low self-esteem. When I saw some of my best friends with their babies, I'd feel like a loser because I opted out of raising mine.

I turned to pills after I was given some for a back injury. I found that they numbed my emotional pain but didn't take it away. It only grew. I knew I needed somewhere safe to help me heal from negative emotions that turned to negative behaviors.

I stumbled across a pamphlet for healing after abortion in my doctor's office. A phone call later, and I found a local group in my area. The support offered by after abortion classes played a massive part in identifying and processing emotions and behaviors that were holding me back. After a few months, I felt like all the negative feelings and actions were removed and lifted. I had a more positive outlook on my life and began to look for new, challenging, and exciting opportunities. I've done some fun traveling and plan to open my own salon.

I didn't think it could be true, but healing was possible for me. I'm most grateful that I have serenity in my life today.

### What Do You Think?

- What did you take away from Lucille's story?
- Can you relate to any of her personal struggles?

### STEP 2

I'm sure many of us have watched a YouTube video or seen a Facebook post or news story of someone doing an act of kindness for another. As the story evolved, you may have learned they were prompted to serve by remembering when they had

## You Are Not Alone

received support in their own personal time of need. Having empathy, or walking in another's shoes, is why many wonderful women—who themselves have had one or more abortions—are now counselors. Their hearts go out to suffering women because they have been there. There are many of these women waiting for you when you're ready to speak with them. For information on these resources, see the back of this booklet.

If you haven't shared your struggles—or have not told your complete story—consider identifying why. Remember, the goal is to know in your heart and mind that “I am not alone.” If you are a visual person, you might find it helpful to make two columns on paper. At the top of the first column, write “Positive Reasons for Sharing My Story,” and on the other, “Negative Reasons for Sharing My Story.” Then brainstorm and fill in the columns. The answer will become clear.

Sharing a story for the first time often becomes very emotional. It's good that tears flow. The release of tension held for months or years is so very healthy. Please don't let the thought of crying through your story stop you. Don't rehearse it before you speak. It's always okay to say, “I don't know where to start.” If you want to tell someone but know you just can't do it face-to-face with them, consider a phone call, talking with an online support group, or writing your story out and reading it to someone you can trust.

There is so much power in bringing your story into the light with someone you trust and who will respect and keep confidential all that you share. It gets this truth into the open: “Yes, my abortion has impacted me, and I need help.” Does someone you trust come to mind?

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Loneliness has tentacles like a jellyfish. You may have found it zaps your energy and motivation or causes confusion or depression. It can affect your confidence, decrease your appetite for food, impact your social life, or cause a fear of entering into or keeping up with relationships. Sadly, the list goes on to also include substance abuse or activities that will numb your suffering.

It is always important to be kind to yourself and treat yourself like someone you know and love. But now is the time to be extra kind to yourself. It's essential to take time for self-care, especially if you have a busy home life or work schedule. You've been through a lot. Consider asking yourself:

- Do I have any physical problems related to my abortion procedure that I need to get checked out?
- Are there appointments that I need to make to take care of myself. Do I need a haircut, to visit the dentist or eye doctor, or to get a manicure or pedicure?
- Am I eating a diet that will keep my body healthy?
- Am I getting regular exercise?
- Am I getting enough sleep and feeling rested in the morning?
- Is there a favorite restaurant or outdoor activity that I could go to with a good friend?
- What book or hobby is waiting for me to pick it up?

## Actions

- Write a note to yourself that reads, "I am NOT alone!" Display it somewhere you will see it, like on a bathroom mirror or on your laptop or phone background.

## You Are Not Alone

- Prioritize three of the self-care bullets above and begin to make progress on them.
- Journal about *anything* directly or indirectly related to this key.

### Points to Review

- Sharing my story is a crucial step because it shows me that I am not alone and allows someone to accompany me on my healing journey.
- It is critical to be *kind to myself* and practice self-care.

### Final Thought and Meditation

I'd like to leave you with some encouraging words from Rosa, who has walked in your shoes: "One of the best decisions I've made was sharing about my abortion. Looking back, I realize it was crucial to being able to process my abortion."

*"I am not alone—I am surrounded by the support of others."*

### What to Expect in the Next Key

Loneliness is a powerful and valid emotion, but it is not always based on the truth. You are not alone in your experience. **Key 3: Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness** will address another powerful emotion that you may be experiencing after your abortion—anger.

## Key 3

# Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness

**You Are!** *You have an inner strength that may surprise you. Spend thirty seconds recalling when you did something that you thought was impossible.*

**Key 2: You Are Not Alone** opened the door to sharing the story of your abortion. By choosing to be vulnerable, you came to the realization that you are not alone and that other women have walked in your shoes. You were also invited to take some time just for you, which I hope you did. **Key 3: Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness** includes three steps, so take your time going through it!

### STEP 1

Did you circle *anger* in the “Common Feelings following Abortion” box in **Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now?** Would you say you are more prone to anger since your abortion? If so, once again, you are not alone. Many women respond to their abortion with anger and may not realize there’s a connection.

## Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness

One woman shared, “After my abortion, I had violent outbursts of anger that frightened me. And I didn’t know why.”

Anger is personal for everyone, and it’s not always easy to put the feelings it gives into words. It is very often the result of being displeased about things that we cannot control. For example, we may not like other people’s actions toward us, events that happen around us, or a host of different situations outside of ourselves that we cannot change.

Often, we can hold on to things that have already happened. We can become resentful or embroiled in anger over the past. This anger can cause us to be upset and snap or lash out at others or ourselves.

Sometimes, after an abortion, a woman can be resentful toward herself, the child’s father, family members, friends, or healthcare providers. This anger can show itself in many ways and destroy relationships, her way of life, and her peace of mind.

Have you ever done something fueled by anger and immediately regretted it? Anger can cause you to react or act out in ways that you usually wouldn’t. It can cause you to hurt yourself or others. The actions that hurt you are known as self-destructive behaviors. These can look like excessive drinking, drug use, gambling, unwanted sexual behaviors, or worse. In these cases, the primary person you are hurting through these self-destructive behaviors is yourself. This anger is punishing you and not helping the situation.

Sometimes, the easiest anger to hold on to is when you or I feel that we are justified in being angry. People hurt us for no reason or events happen that cause us real pain—but our part is that we let anger begin to be the master over us. It can



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reign over our lives, and our self-destructive behaviors can become consistent patterns. Perhaps you're angry as a result of your abortion and find you are letting anger control a lot of your decisions.

Countless women have come to understand the universal truth that *the only way to get rid of your anger is forgiveness*. This concept may seem contrary to what you are feeling, but it is true. Forgiveness can be for yourself, your child's father, family members, or healthcare providers.

While it may seem easier to point your finger in blame, the way through *anger to peace* is through surrendering to *grace and forgiveness*. It is a beautiful and straightforward action,

Countless women have come to understand the universal truth that the only way to get rid of your anger is forgiveness.

and it is important to know that you don't always have to *feel* like forgiving. But the act of forgiveness is necessary to heal. We are not in control—but we can let go of our anger through forgiveness.

### Actions

- Journal any thoughts from what you've just read on anger.
- Write down what went through your mind when you read the word *forgive*.
- On another page, write the names of those with whom you are angry. You'll refer to this list in the next step.

Now it's time to read Vivienne's Hope Story.

## **Vivienne's Hope Story**

I had a traumatic childhood, growing up in an alcoholic home with physical and sexual abuse. I skipped class throughout high school, cheated on tests, and eventually dropped out before the eleventh grade. Looking for a new start and excitement, I moved out of state and began living with my boss—a man fifteen years my senior. I desperately sought fulfillment and value from this sexual relationship.

Within months I was pregnant and immediately decided to abort. I wasn't ready to be a mother, had no wish to be tied to the father, and knew I couldn't provide a good lifestyle even with programs like food stamps. I believed the lie that an abortion was the socially responsible thing to do.

The one vivid memory of my first abortion was the doctor saying, "Everything will be okay." But I knew in my heart that it wasn't going to be okay. During my second abortion, I felt the very life of my baby being eliminated inside of me. I felt stripped, and this hardened my very being.

After my abortions, I became very self-destructive through drug abuse and alcoholism. I eventually changed this lifestyle and got married, but I raised our children out of anger, shame, and guilt. There were times when I couldn't control my anger. I had no idea where it was coming from and I could see that I was hurting my children, but I couldn't stop.

Anger is one of the worse occurrences after abortion because you don't know where it is coming from. It is so very damaging. My anger would burst over the simplest things: "You didn't answer my text right away." I'd go off the handle and completely lose it.

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I remember thinking to myself, “What is wrong with me?” “Why am I doing this?”

I got my answer when I came across the website for a support group. I made a phone call that saved me from a life of destruction and shame and guilt. Once I saw the connection between my anger and forgiveness, I began to take steps. I identified those whom I held in unforgiveness, including myself. I’m forever grateful for the understanding person at the end of that phone.

### What Do You Think?

- What did you take away from Vivienne’s story?
- What did you relate to?

### STEP 2

Forgiveness is a necessary key to experiencing freedom from anger and inner peace. It is also essential to help you move on with your life. It removes the reason for the anger surrounding your abortion by lessening the grip that the action and those involved in it has on you.

It’s easy to make excuses to not forgive, especially if you’re experiencing a lot of self-justified anger. A woman who has been deeply hurt by others involved in her abortion experience could well say: “I could never forgive him,”; “She doesn’t deserve my forgiveness,”; or “I’m waiting for an apology.”

If you have negative thoughts like these about one or more persons involved in your abortion, including yourself, you are not alone. Other women have struggled and couldn’t initially imagine ever offering forgiveness. If that’s

you, perhaps you will find it helpful to know what forgiveness is and what it isn't.

Forgiveness is a choice: it is something you do. It is an action, not a feeling—a letting go of negative emotions toward others and perhaps self-hatred and self-condemnation toward yourself.

Forgiveness has nothing to do with how you feel. Remember, it is a choice. Don't wait for your feelings to change because that may never happen. You can choose to forgive even while feeling angry, resentful, cheated, or abandoned. Forgiving doesn't mean denying or justifying the actions of others. Or in the case of yourself, it does not mean that you don't accept responsibility for your abortion and are shifting the blame. It does mean that you relinquish the hold that anger has on you.

The beautiful thing about forgiveness is that it is a gift! If the person is undeserving of forgiveness in your mind, you can choose to give them the free gift of your forgiveness.

### **Actions**

- Refer to the list of people that you wrote down with whom you are angry.
- Find a quiet place and do the following:
  - Read each person's name aloud and choose to give them the gift of your forgiveness by saying, "I forgive you (name the person) for (name their action)."
  - Let all the unforgiveness in your heart go.
  - Sit quietly and reflect.
  - Be grateful that you had the strength to forgive or to begin to forgive.

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### STEP 3

Once you've forgiven the people on your list, you've taken a really important step toward healing. There may, however, be one—or more—people you find it impossible to forgive. If there is someone you can't forgive, seek support from someone who knows your story. Together, try to do the impossible and take the first step in forgiving. Remember, it is a choice, not a feeling. It can be helpful and healing to write a letter (that you won't send to the person) expressing your anger and other emotions.

Your anger may be so intense and your hurt so deep that you may need to forgive that person more than once to experience complete freedom.

Up until now, we have focused on forgiving those who have hurt us. Now I'd like to revisit the question: *Have you forgiven yourself for your abortion and other actions related to it?* Perhaps you've never thought of or known the importance of forgiving yourself.

How does that question make you feel? Take a few moments to check in with what emotions you are feeling. Write in your journal if it's helpful.

Let me assure you, forgiving yourself is possible. As with forgiving others, it is a decision. It's not denying your abortion. It is a gift that every woman deserves to receive and one that your child would want you to give yourself.

Women who have been able to forgive themselves have experienced relief and serenity.

For some women, forgiving themselves happens over time. For example, I had a powerful conversation with my friend

Kerri, who experienced an abortion. I remember Kerri saying to me, “I can’t forgive myself.” The regret, self-hatred, and self-loathing over what she had done was paralyzing her. But slowly over time, she would say, “I’m beginning to forgive myself.” Kerri has still not entirely forgiven herself—she still battles different emotions—and has days of two steps forward and one step back. But Kerri has allowed herself to take that first and most challenging step of beginning the process.

The action for this step will give you some suggestions to forgive yourself. Repeat them whenever you feel a need until one day you say, “I’m free! I let go of unforgiveness! I now have peace!”

### **Actions**

- Alone or with a friend, say aloud, “I forgive myself for my abortion(s) and . . . (mention anything else).” You may not be able to forgive yourself for everything—start small if you need to.
- When standing in front of a mirror, after putting your makeup on or doing your hair, you can say, “I’ve given myself the gift of forgiveness.”
- Find a quiet place to reflect and meditate.

### **Points to Review**

- Freedom from my anger is through forgiveness, which is a decision.
- Forgiveness is not based on my feelings.

## Support After Abortion

- Forgiveness is the key to my serenity and joy, and a vital key to my hope and healing.

### Final Thought and Meditation

If you Google forgiveness quotes, you'll be amazed at how many there are! Here's just one: "Forgiving is not forgetting. It's letting go of the hurt" (Anonymous).

*"I've carried anger for too long; I'm ready to forgive and to let it all go."*

### What to Expect in the Next Key

As with my friend, Kerri, the actions of forgiveness are a process. But it is essential to take that first step. **Key 4: Moving through Grief** will help you through your grief—not around it. As you will see, that is an important and powerful distinction. You may want to review this with a friend or staff member at **Support After Abortion** listed on the back of this booklet.

## Key 4

### Moving through Grief

**You Are!** *You have the gift of adjusting to different demands made upon you. Spend thirty seconds recalling some of the times when you've successfully done just that.*

**Key 3: Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness** opened the door to acknowledging areas of anger, releasing it through forgiveness, as well as a decision to forgive, not just acting on emotions. You were asked if you had forgiven yourself for your abortion. Many emotions may have come up for you—from anger to sadness to relief. **Key 4: Moving through Grief** will once again bring up many emotions. Please take your time when going through it.

While you may have worked through the previous three keys on your own, my suggestion is to go through this key with a friend or support group.



### STEP 1

#### What Is Grief?

“Grief is a feeling of deep sorrow and sadness. Grief is painful and emotionally exhausting. Grief can leave a person feeling empty and numb. And grief is normal after a loss.”

—Alcoholics Anonymous

**Time Out:** *Every woman—including yourself—moves through her grief differently. But I want to highlight here that if you find yourself struggling with grief (about your child or any loss) or feel stuck, it would be vital for you to seek professional help. Support After Abortion will connect you to a local resource.*

A loss can be many things. It can be the loss of your employment, your reputation, or your place to live. It can be the relocation of a family member or friend, the end of a relationship, or the passing of a loved one.

After an abortion, a woman may grieve the loss of her child during or immediately after the procedure. It can also occur days, weeks, months, or even years later.

If you’re reading this and haven’t experienced grief over your abortion, please don’t close this booklet. I invite you to think more broadly. Perhaps you are grieving over the loss of a relationship as the result of your abortion. Whatever you’re feeling right now, you’re not alone—there are so many other women who have felt this same way or have been in your

## Moving through Grief

same situation. Please continue with this key as you may find it helpful in the general processing of loss.

We will look at four steps in the grieving process: acknowledge, accept, connect, and adapt.

It is first necessary to *acknowledge* where you are with the loss to move through grief. Acknowledging the loss of a child and any other related losses will allow you to express how your grief is making you feel. It is a crucial step to experiencing peace amidst your pain and grief. You will show strength by not avoiding these feelings or sweeping them under the rug. In **Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now**, you were encouraged to identify your emotions. These emotions might include deeper feelings such as: feeling lost, feeling empty, stress or anxiety, disbelief, or helplessness.

- Take a moment to ask yourself, “Where am I with acknowledging the loss of my child?”
- Take a moment to ask yourself, “Where am I with acknowledging any other losses I have experienced (e.g., the end of a relationship)?”

The next step in coping with grief is to *accept* the loss of your child to abortion. One of life’s hard truths is that we cannot change our reality, however much we may want. It is not easy, but it is important to stay in the present. This doesn’t mean you cannot be sad or relieved or have other feelings. It means that you embrace the truth about what happened and live in the now.

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- Take a moment to ask yourself, “Where am I with accepting the loss?”

### Actions

- Make yourself feel comfortable and safe. Put on music that relaxes you and sit in a comfortable position.
- Journal about acknowledging and accepting your loss.

Now it's time to read Chloe's Hope Story.

### Chloe's Hope Story

Jack and I were just about making ends meet when we found out I was pregnant. Our reaction was the same: “There’s no way we can afford a baby. We’ve got to get some savings behind us first. We are just not ready to be parents.”

Then followed one of the most uncomfortable conversations we have ever had. Without discussing other options, we agreed to “take care of the problem.” The next few days of waiting were terrible. I had such a hatred for what I was about to do. Deep down, I knew that abortion was just not the answer. Jack got me through those days by assuring me, “This is the right decision for our marriage and future.”

I cried through the whole process. Not due to the physical pain, but because of the overwhelming grief I had over the loss of my baby. I remember shouting out, “What am I doing?!” At work and with friends, I kept up appearances that I was okay. But when I wasn’t filling my day with being busy, I was bombarded with thoughts of self-hatred,

especially, “You have no right to grieve or cry because it was your decision.”

These lies continued off and on for the next ten years and through the births of two beautiful daughters. That all changed when I went with a friend to a grief counseling session following her young nephew’s accidental death. Everything talked about, I applied to the loss of my child. I cried with my friend for her loss, but I was also weeping for mine. I learned that I am entitled to grieve. And yes, I can release the tears that I had held back for so many years.

With the help of a therapist, I was able to work through the grieving process. Now, whenever I think of my “first” child, I have peace.

### **What Do You Think?**

- What did you take away from Chloe’s story?
- Why was identifying her loss healing for Chloe?

### **STEP 2**

I want to begin this step with what I hope will be two comforting thoughts. First, the pain of grief that a woman experiences days or weeks after her abortion will lessen. Second, future pain—perhaps months or years later—triggered by attending a baby shower or the wedding of someone around the age her child would have been will also lessen.

Some women have chosen to express love for their child by finding ways to *connect* with the loss by honoring their child. For others, they have heard about doing this, but it just wasn’t

## Support After Abortion

something they wanted to do. Perhaps they were even advised that it wouldn't be helpful to their healing. I have found that this is vital to having closure over the loss.

### Honoring Your Child

There are different ways to honor your child. Choosing a name for your child is something some women have found helpful. Think of what name you would like to give your child. You could even chat with a friend about your favorite names. After deciding upon a name(s), take a moment to say to your child, "I'm naming you \_\_\_\_."

Another suggestion would be to write a letter to your child, compose a poem, or draw a picture in your journal. Only you will see it. Write whatever is on your heart. Or perhaps give your favorite charity a gift, plant a tree in your child's honor, buy yourself a bunch of flowers, or light a candle from time to time. If you like jewelry, perhaps treat yourself to a special ring, necklace, or pin. Do whatever brings you peace, comfort, and joy as you think about your child.

**A Memorial Moment:** Some women have found it comforting to have a *memorial moment* dedicated to their child. At a meaningful place—a quiet garden, a beach, a scenic overlook, or beside a beautiful waterfall—she expresses her thoughts and words of love for her child, and perhaps reads a poem, or plays a favorite song. She may choose to lay flowers or to let off a balloon on which she has written a message to her child. These are such precious intimate moments for a mother and her child.

## Moving through Grief

The fourth point to coping with grief is to *adapt* to the loss of your child to abortion. Connecting with your grief and honoring your child doesn't mean that you are going to forget your child. Adapting your thought patterns, entering fully into the flow of your life, and caring concern for others do not mean you will forget your child. The love you have for your child won't lessen: if anything, your new serenity and ways of thinking will help your love to grow deeper.

My friend Karin, who experienced an abortion, beautifully illustrates how she views her grief: "It wasn't until I went through an abortion healing program that I found out how much healing I needed. Grief is hard. It's not an easy process to go through. Grief is one thing you can't go over, under, or around; you must go through."

### **Actions**

- Journal any other thoughts about this key.
- Make a plan to meet up with a friend(s) to do something fun—a movie, a meal, a hike, or any other positive activity you enjoy!

### **Points to Review**

- Grief is a natural response to my loss. Everyone grieves differently; there is no right or wrong way for me to grieve.
- The four points for lessening the pain of grief are to: acknowledge, accept, connect, and adapt.

## Support After Abortion

### Final Thought and Meditation

This may have been a heart-wrenching key for you to work through. But be encouraged by this quote: “Grief is like a ball of string. You start at one end and wind. Then the ball slips through your fingers and rolls across the floor. Some of your work is undone, but not all. You pick it up and start over again, but you never have to begin again at the string’s end. The ball never completely unwinds. You’ve made some progress.” —Anonymous

*“I trust that I am safe and supported to begin walking through my grief.”*

### What to Expect in the Next Key

Moving through your grief is a process, and you are so strong for taking steps to begin this process. **Key 5: Walking in Confidence and Hope** will give you positive steps to reframe negative thoughts that are common for everyone.

## Key 5

### Walking in Confidence and Hope

**You Are!** *You are an amazing woman who has already chosen to take four necessary steps toward healing. Spend thirty seconds thinking about the things you are grateful for.*

**Key 4: Moving through Grief** opened the door to help you release some of your grief and sorrow. You did this by acknowledging, accepting, connecting, and adapting to your life today. Of course, it is so important to remember that grief looks different for everyone.

#### **STEP 1**

*Confidence* is believing in yourself. *Having hope* is believing that a positive outcome is possible. Take a few moments to check on your *confidence* and *hope*. How many “light bulb” moments have you experienced since you began this booklet? Transformation does not have to be a drastic change—it is often as subtle as a different way of thinking. Take a moment to write any shifts or other ways of thinking in your journal.

A challenge for some women after abortion is how to continue to walk in confidence and hope for continued healing.



## Support After Abortion

This may include you, which is why this key will lay out a plan to find and keep your confidence.

*Recognizing your thoughts.* Try thinking of nothing for just a few minutes, and you'll see that it's impossible. Thoughts roll in and out of our minds—good, bad, and indifferent.

It is especially important as you continue your healing process to be aware of your thoughts and decide which ones to entertain and which ones to reject. That's because not everything that pops into your head will further your journey of healing. Of course, it's impossible to completely stop your thoughts, but it is important to recognize negative thoughts and discard them.

*Pausing throughout your day.* A helpful way to protect the ground you have made in your healing is to begin to take short breaks throughout your day and ask yourself, "What have I been thinking?" Be sure to look for encouraging or motivating thoughts—not just the negative ones.

*Thoughts that steal hope.* The more you become conscious of your thought patterns, the easier it will be to acknowledge the discouraging thoughts that often arise from your subconscious and steer you off course: thoughts that cause you pain, sadness, anxiety, irrational fears, or are negative or self-defeating, or those thoughts that rush in and overwhelm you. Then there are the "what if" thoughts about your child and your abortion experience. These can flow out of regret for your abortion. It's important to grieve the "what if" thoughts and lost potential and opportunities for both you and your child, but it's not healthy to stay there.

Many people in various support programs have found power in accepting the things outside their control and the things they cannot change. There is relief in allowing this concept to travel from your head to your heart. It is helpful to remind yourself that you cannot control other people's thoughts or actions.

You might want to journal any extremes in your thought patterns, noting when you had them and where you were. Other notes might include why you gave them your time and consideration, how powerful they were, and why they were so hard to resist.

*Under a microscope.* When you catch one of these stray discouraging thoughts—as well as the situation that triggers it—your next job is to examine it. Is it true? Does it mesh with the truths about what you now believe about your identity and self-worth? What emotions does it evoke?

*Get out.* If the thought doesn't belong in your mind, send it away by choosing to replace it with **positive thoughts**. Perhaps reread some of the *You Are* affirmations at the beginning of each key or recall some of your other strengths—they are numerous. Then watch the unhelpful thoughts lose their power.

By frequently examining her thoughts, a woman healing from an abortion experience can keep herself from getting derailed by distractions and lesser concerns. These lead her away from the fullness of life that she wants for herself and others.

*Yes, you can!* Isn't it exciting that you really can walk in confidence and hope? It takes time and practice to be aware of your thoughts. I hope you are up for this new way of thinking.

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### Actions

- Journal about some of the ways you are walking in confidence and hope.
- Consider reading your entry to someone who knew how you were feeling.

Now it's time to read Chelsea's Hope Story.

### Chelsea's Hope Story

My boyfriend, Stephen, was a lawyer, and I was climbing the corporate ladder of a well-known company. After a busy week, there was nothing we enjoyed more than going on a hike, cooking together, watching movies, and just hanging out.

Stephen and I had been together for a year and a half when I became pregnant. I was horrified and couldn't believe this bad luck. Knowing how this would affect my career, I immediately looked up an abortion clinic. Although Stephen asked several times, "Chelsea, are you okay?" I decided not to tell him, reasoning that he already had enough stress in his life at work, and after all, I believed that it was my problem.

I purposefully scheduled the abortion for the long Labor Day weekend and asked my sister to take me. I'll forever remember that Friday afternoon. The nurse gave me not only sedatives but laughing gas, and I remember laughing during the procedure. How could I laugh when I was killing my baby? Afterward, I felt guilt, shame, and horror at what I'd done.

Memories of the procedure and my laughing were frequent and vivid. I'd never heard of the adverse effects of an abortion.

Work absorbed my mind much of the day, but I was hit with negative self-thoughts when driving alone or at night. I felt powerless in controlling them. I also began to have problems making decisions at work and at home—I'd already made one terrible mistake and dreaded making another.

One positive decision I did make was to tell Stephen about his child. I don't know where I got the courage, but his compassion showed me another side of him. He encouraged me to seek counseling, which helped me begin the healing process, initially over the phone and then face-to-face.

### **What Do You Think?**

- What are you taking away from Chelsea's story?
- How did she try to hide her memories?

### **STEP 2**

Now we're taking a step further, from thoughts to memories. There is a difference between the two. Memories are more long-term than thoughts and are based on events that happened in the past. Memory is stored information that we can recall.

A woman may have many stored memories surrounding her abortion: the day she discovered she was pregnant; the reactions of the child's father, parents, and friends; the dilemma of making the decision to go to the abortion clinic; the actual procedure; and the days following.

These memories can keep her from being able to walk in confidence and hope. Sometimes the flashbacks resurface at

## Support After Abortion

night and replay like a video, zapping her tranquility and robbing her of sleep. These memories and flashbacks are like chains that can hold her back from moving on and living with confidence and hope.

If painful memories like these are frequent or are impacting your quality of life, or if you are experiencing nightmares or constant flashbacks related to your memories, please seek help from a professional. These are painful but common symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and must be handled in cooperation with a healthcare provider. If new memories surface—which is part of the healing process—don't become despondent. Rather, quickly get support by telling someone. For immediate, real-time support, contact **Support After Abortion**. Contact information is at the back of this booklet.

The story below may help you understand how controlling memories can be.

An elephant trainer was showing a visitor around the zoo. The visitor noticed an enormous elephant with a small chain around one ankle. The chain was staked to the ground, and its links were thin. "I'm curious," said the visitor. "How can such a weak chain hold such a large animal?" The trainer replied, "Well, it doesn't." He explained: "When an elephant is born, we place a chain like this one around his ankle. No matter how much the baby elephant pulls, he can't break the chain or pull out the stake. At some point, he stops trying. By the time he's fully grown, he's still being held by that same chain. It's not the chain that holds him, though. It's the memory of the chain."

### Question following the Elephant Story

What are you taking away from this story?

As you already know, the power to break the chains of distressing memories about your abortion lies in sharing your story. I hope you have already experienced dramatic healing by doing so.

At the beginning of this *key*, you read that *hope believes that a positive outcome is possible*. I am sure you've seen many positive results since the first key. A remarkable trait of hope is that it has no end. You can believe that you will continue to experience more and more healing from your abortion. One woman who shared her story said, "I'm excited by the thought that there's no end to my journey of healing!"

What hope requires is courage and perseverance. Allow the memories of transformations spur you on to seek more! Keep your hope alive by being grateful for the healing you have already received. Congratulate yourself for even the smallest steps forward and remember that healing is a process. Focus on your goals and not on any setbacks or failures, find supportive friends, accept what you can't change, and look for ways to laugh!

### Actions

- Journal your answer to the elephant story question.
- Journal your thoughts about this key. Remember that you could include poems, sketches, etc.

## Support After Abortion

### Points to Review

- I can be chained by memories of my past that can prevent me from moving forward.
- Knowing what I'm thinking during my day will significantly help the process of healing after my abortion.

### Final Thought and Meditation

Your healing is a continuous journey. If you continue to be mindful of your thoughts and stay positive to move forward in your healing, you can be transformed. This transformation is a process, and it begins with thinking about things differently.

*"I'm on the road to healing, and I will try to be patient with myself and open with others."*

### What to Expect in the Next Key

Remember that everyone gains confidence and hope at their own pace. Keep taking the steps and actions that will help you along your path to healing. **Key 6: Giving Hope to Others** offers actions to further your healing—helping and connecting with those who are walking in your shoes.

## Key 6

### Giving Hope to Others

**You Are!** *You have much to offer others, and your abortion doesn't define you. Spend thirty seconds thinking about when you did something positive for someone else and how that made you feel.*

You have now used five keys to open doors to further your own hope and healing. Now you are about to take up **Key 6: Giving Hope to Others**. As you will see, your story and your experience can be the key to helping other women start their own healing journey.

#### **STEP 1**

Here's a story about sharing hope and healing that I think will make you smile. (Adapted from *The Star Thrower*, by Loren Eiseley)

A man took his morning walk along a beach when he noticed hundreds of starfish washed up just above the waterline. He didn't think much about it until a little farther along, he saw a young girl throwing starfish one at a time back into the ocean. "Why are you doing that?" he asked, somewhat



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cynically. “Because,” said the girl, “I want them to have the chance to live.” “Oh, don’t waste your time; there are so many, you won’t make any difference,” he said. But the girl bent down, picked up another starfish, and with a big swing of her little arm, tossed it back into the ocean. Then turning to the man, she said, “It made a difference to that one.” The man stopped, thought, and joined the girl in tossing starfish into the ocean. Others saw what they were doing and soon joined in.

### Question following the Starfish Story

- What are you taking away from this story?
- How did the girl’s response, “It made a difference to that one,” make you feel?

It is such a great feeling when we realize our words or actions have made a difference in someone’s life. I’m sure you can think of ways you’ve been touched by another’s thoughtfulness and how others have been touched by your words or actions.

Just like the girl throwing starfish back into the ocean, you have an opportunity to make a difference in someone’s life—one person at a time.

Often, opportunities to make a difference in someone’s life come in unexpected ways. Remember how I mentioned in the second key how other women know something of what you were feeling because they had walked in your shoes? Well, you may find opportunities to *pay it forward* by saying, “I know how you feel; I’ve been there—you’re not alone,” to a woman who

opens up to you about her abortion. Think about all the comfort, reassurance, and hope she will receive through your care.

One woman, Susan, had an opportunity to give hope and care while having coffee with a friend. Suddenly her friend said, “Please stop, Susan. What I’ve got to say may shock you. Two months ago, I had an abortion.” Another woman, Grace, was waiting for a delayed flight at an airport. When she eventually boarded, a woman with whom she had briefly spoken sat next to her. By the end of the flight, the woman had shared her heart about her abortion.

For each woman that Susan and Grace encountered, her abortion was her *dark secret*. They hadn’t told anyone because of reasons that you know only too well. They didn’t know that healing begins with sharing their stories with a trusted friend—or even a stranger.

You now hold a key that could change a life. You know that no woman needs to suffer alone. You can be there for them—in person or through social media. You also know of **Support After Abortion** staff that can help them process their emotions. And you can even give a copy of this booklet to them.

You don’t have to talk about your abortion if you are not ready. It is crucial so that you don’t cause further harm to yourself and others. You’ll know when the time is right for you. Someone initially may just need a friend who understands—listening may be the best thing you can do!

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### Actions

- Journal about some of the ways you have been touched by another's thoughtfulness. You might even want to send a text or make a phone call to thank someone. By reaching out in this way, you could make their day!
- Journal about how you feel about *paying it forward* and bringing hope one-on-one to a woman suffering from her abortion.
- Is there anyone suffering from an abortion that you know you could support by your understanding and compassionate listening?

Now it's time to read Paige's Hope Story.

### Paige's Hope Story

It's still hard for me to share what happened to me. But often, when I do, someone will say, "You just told my story."

It begins with my love for the US military and my excitement to be deployed overseas for two years. I was fascinated by the differences in our cultures and took advantage of any leave to go explore.

On that fateful evening, I had almost reached the barracks when a group of men came rolling out of a bar. Before I knew it, one of them grabbed my arm and dragged me into a side alley where I was violently raped.

How I got back to my room, I'll never know. I felt so violated and cried uncontrollably on and off for weeks. After three months, my pregnancy showed. This was around the time

that my niece, Gwen, flew out for a two-week vacation. She was horrified and begged me to report the rape, but I refused.

Although I didn't want an abortion, I just couldn't go through with the pregnancy. I knew telling my parents that I had a child by rape would have devastated them. It had to be my dark secret.

I traveled back to the US on planned leave and went to the clinic for the procedure. My heart was broken at the thought of what I was doing to my baby. I left there in a daze and was plagued with guilt, what ifs, loneliness, and no self-worth.

My responsibilities were changed, and I stayed stateside. Five years later, I found a flyer in an airport restroom about support and healing from abortion. Amazing. The healing I longed for was a phone call away. As part of my ongoing healing, I now wear a necklace with two small hearts intertwined. I continue to share my story and how I'm feeling with my therapist and my new sisters in my support group.

### **What Do You Think?**

- What did you take away from Paige's story?
- What are some things you related to?

### **STEP 2**

Just like you read in Paige's story, many women begin sharing their stories in small groups to give others hope that they are not alone. In small support groups, the confidentiality of "What is shared here, stays here" is always stressed. But outside of that arena, if sharing your story with friends, ask them

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to respect your confidence by not mentioning it to others. It is your story to communicate with each person who is trusted to hear it.

You'll know when you're ready to begin telling your story. Be willing to be vulnerable and to be yourself. There is no right or wrong way to share. You'll know what to say and how much to say.

This brings me to an important question that you may or may not feel ready to consider. If you are not prepared to answer it, do not put pressure on yourself. The question is:

- *Who is there that should know about your abortion?*  
Perhaps the father of your child, your present spouse or partner, or a family member?

Take a moment to think about this question. Perhaps write in your journal the names of people who come to mind. Consider how you would want to approach them. You could seek input about doing this from a trusted friend or counselor. Remember:

You'll know when you're ready to begin telling your story. Be willing to be vulnerable and to be yourself. There is no right or wrong way to share. You'll know what to say and how much to say.

if this thought makes you feel uncomfortable, then perhaps now is not the time to move on to it.

If you're invited to share with a broader audience, you may well be revealing others' stories. Your story is their story too. A question to ask is, "Would sharing my story cause anyone harm, loss of reputation, or cause listeners to

make judgments?” If it does, you can always decline the invitation to protect the interests of others.

Another point: if you are accepting an invitation to share beyond a small support group setting, you ought to mention it ahead of time to anyone involved in your abortion.

That said, are you ready to begin thinking about *paying it forward*? Have you ever thought of the positive impact you could have on another woman’s life? It is such a privilege to bring hope to another person. It will give you such joy and even further your own healing.

Isn’t it incredible to think that your story could be the key to open a door for another’s healing? How we all need each other on this journey of life! You’ll be amazed at how opportunities will come to share your story. Remember the stories of Susan, Grace, Paige, and the girl tossing starfish back into the ocean? They were changing one life at a time. And I’m confident that when the time is right, you will be too.

## **Actions**

- Take a picture of the resources and support organizations starting on page 55. Then you’ll have it at your fingertips to pass onto others.
- Think of where you can share a PDF or print copy of this booklet for others to view.

## Support After Abortion

### Points to Review

- I can change one life at a time for any woman suffering from her abortion. Because she knows that I've walked in her shoes, I will assure her that she's not alone.
- There are different platforms on which to share my story.

### Final Thought and Meditation

“You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.”—C. S. Lewis.

*“I choose to move forward with my life and offer hope whenever I can.”*

### There Is More for You

Please don't think of this as the final key. That's because I hear the rattling of many other keys that will open more and more doors for you on your healing journey in the coming days, weeks, months, and years. You'll know what they are. Please pick them up for yourself and share them with other women recovering from an abortion.

# Start Your Support Here

## **National Agencies**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

212-870-3400

<https://www.aa.org>

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

818-773-9999

<https://www.na.org>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

<https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

<https://www.thehotline.org>

National Human Trafficking Hotline

888-373-7888

Text 2 337 733

<https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org>

Co-Dependents Anonymous

888-444-2359

<https://www.coda.org>



## **Support After Abortion**

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network

800-656-4673

<https://www.rainn.org>

National Alliance on Mental Health

800-950-6264

<https://www.nami.org>

Grief Resource Network

828-726-9554

<https://www.griefresourcenetwork.com-crisis-center/hotlines>

Grief Anonymous

<https://www.griefanonymous.com>

American Pregnancy Helpline – Miscarriages

866-942-6466

<https://www.thehelpline.org>

Crisis Text Line

Text 74174

<https://www.crisistextline.org>

### **Faith Based Agencies**

The National Office of Post-abortion

Reconciliation and Healing

1-800-5WE-CARE

<https://www.noparh@juno.com>

## Support

Lumina/Hope & Healing After Abortion

877-586-4621

<https://www.postabortionhelp.com>

Project Joseph

469-720-2273 (CARE)

<https://www.healing@projectjosephdallas.org>

Men and Abortion

513-729-360

<https://www.menandabortion.net>

Esperanza Posaborto:

888-456-HOPE (4673)

<https://www.esperanzaposaborto.org>

### **On-Line Support**

Abortion Changes You

<http://www.abortionchangesyou.com>

### **Prayer Lines**

Christian Broadcasting Network with the 700 Club

Prayer Line

800-700-7000

<https://www.1.cbn.com>

Joy FM Prayer Line

877-800-7729

<https://www.florida.thejoyfm.com>

## Support After Abortion

Trinity Broadcasting Network Prayer Line

888-731-1000

<https://www.tbn.org>

Daystar Prayer Line

800-329-0029

Bethel Church Prayer Line

<https://www.bethel.com/ministries/healing-rooms/>

530-255-2066

Breakthrough Prayer Line

800-424-8644

Life Outreach International Prayer Line

800-947-5433

<https://www.lifetoday.org>

Morris Cerullo Prayer Line

866-756-4200

<https://www.mcwe.com>

Crossroads Prayer Line

866-273-4444

<https://www.crossroads.ca>

Family Broadcasting Corporation Prayer Line

800-365-3732

<https://www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com>















# There Is Support After Abortion

If you have been affected by an abortion experience, this booklet can help you. You are not alone in how you're feeling right now. Many women after abortion have gone through a range of emotions and differing experiences and are now on the path to hope and healing. You will find their stories and the steps they took in this booklet.

If you want to speak to someone right now, contact **Support After Abortion**. Our staff is here to help you and provide you with compassionate care that leads to healing and restoration.

**SUPPORT**  
»» AFTER ABORTION

**SUPPORT AFTER ABORTION**

844-289-HOPE (4673)

<https://www.supportafterabortion.com>

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ISBN 978-1-59325-538-1



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