

What Are The Symptoms?

Women suffering from PAS may exhibit many of the classic signs of PTSD:

- *Anxiety disorders*
- *Irritability*
- *Outbursts of anger or rage*
- *Aggressive behavior*
- *Difficulty concentrating*
- *Nightmares or sleeping disorders*
- *Recurrent and intrusive thoughts about the abortion or aborted child*
- *Flashbacks to the abortion experience*
- *Feelings of intense grief or depression on the due date of the aborted pregnancy or the anniversary of the abortion*
- *Repression or denial of feelings about the abortion*
- *Efforts to avoid activities or situations which remind them of the pregnancy or the abortion*
- *Withdrawal or estrangement from others, especially those involved in the abortion decision*
- *Inability to maintain loving and trusting relationships*
- *A sense of hopelessness or futility about the future*
- *Diminished interest in previously enjoyed activities*
- *Drug or alcohol abuse*
- *Suicidal thoughts or acts*

LEGAL, MEDICAL & EMOTIONAL HELP

- Are you **HURTING** after an abortion?
- Were you **FORCED** to have an abortion against your will?
- Did someone at the abortion clinic **LIE** to you?

**Don't suffer in silence.
The help you need is
CONFIDENTIAL and
FREE. Call today.**

1-800-401-6494

Local Resources:



PROBLEMS AFTER ABORTION

Post Abortion Syndrome
Are *you* at Risk?

What is Post Abortion Syndrome?

There are many negative emotional reactions that have been associated with abortion. Some women experience “impacted grieving,” which includes an inability to complete the grieving process. Other women experience specific self-destructive tendencies, including eating disorders, sexual dysfunction, or substance abuse.

A widely used term for these emotional problems is “post-abortion syndrome” or PAS. Actually, post-abortion syndrome has been proposed as a specific diagnosis for those women who experience a specific, related set of emotional problems. PAS is proposed as a subset of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) when PTSD is the result of an abortion.

A New Beginning

You are hurting. Maybe it's a vague ache deep inside. Or maybe your abortion left you emotionally drained and distraught. You are not alone. Many women are suffering as you are, yet some of us have been able to work through our heart ache.

Deeply buried emotions may erupt when you are most vulnerable. The exact way you experience grief over the loss of your child will be unique to you. The point of crisis occurs most often between 2 and 5 years after the abortion. Yet, for some the crisis is immediate; for some it occurs 20 or 30 years later. But don't despair, there is help.

Don't Trivialize Your Grief

Your grief is a healthy sign—a sign that you are facing realities. Your tears will help cleanse you. The first step toward being healed of emotional wounds is to admit that they exist and admit where they come from. You have the right to grieve. If you lost your child in an accident or miscarriage, everyone would expect you to grieve. You may be surprised to find yourself grieving over the loss of your child, since it was your voluntary choice. You may be told by your doctor, boyfriend, by “family planning” personnel that you shouldn't grieve — and this may make you feel even more foolish, selfish or guilty for the feelings you experience.

Your grief is not only real, it is normal. When you become pregnant, your body undergoes changes. Your body and mind prepare for the birth. Abortion stops this natural process. It greatly disturbs your mental state. After an abortion, it is normal to experience a sense of loss, emptiness and grief. It is important for you to realize that you are responding as you should to a tragic life experience. The fact that you contributed to the abortion only increases your need to grieve.

Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself

You made a very important decision at a time when changes in your body made decision making very difficult. Others around you probably helped influence you to make the decision you did. Your parents, your boyfriend, and your friends probably all had their effect on your decision. You may have made an earnest effort to end their concern, embarrassment, pain, or anger.

Counselors at a family planning clinic may not have given you enough information for you to make an informed decision. Maybe they didn't tell you enough about the possible complications and even less about the emotional turmoil abortion causes. They told you little about the abortion procedure and nothing of the pain your child would suffer. It is likely that you did not make your decision based on adequate information.

It is natural to be angry with people close to you who should have been supportive at a difficult time in your life. But anger only develops into rage or bitterness. You cannot heal emotionally while allowing those destructive feelings to continue.



HOPE
FOR HARD TIMES

**Rebuilding your life
after abortion:
rachelsvineyard.org**