

## Help after Abortion

A crisis pregnancy is hard, but living with the knowledge that you took the life of your child or that you pressured someone to abort her baby is much worse. Abortion wounds the soul, and the spiritual and emotional pain is deep and long lasting. No one is the same after abortion. One woman said, "A part of me died when my baby died."

Immediately following the abortion, research indicates that most women experience relief not to be pregnant. They try to resume their lives as though nothing happened. The guilt, shame, regret, and longing for the unborn baby may not surface for years; however, when it does, women can spiral into deep depression and self destructive behavior. Some become suicidal.

Research by David Reardon at the Elliot Institute in Springfield, Illinois, reveals that women who are raised in Christian families -- and especially those women who go against their own pro-life beliefs and abort their babies under pressure from their parents or the baby's father -- are at higher risk of post-abortion stress than women who grow up without a faith tradition.

Women usually have difficulty forgiving themselves for the abortion. Men who wanted their partners to abort -- and those who tried but failed to persuade their partners not to abort -- may also have a hard time. Abortion negatively affects the couple's relationship and impacts relationships with parents, siblings and other children.

WomenSource refers women and men in abortion pain to local post-abortion outreaches that help people process their abortion experiences and grieve for their children in a safe, supportive atmosphere. Surrounded by knowledgeable professionals and compassionate people who have experienced -- or are in the midst of -- abortion pain, participants learn that they are not alone in their grief and pain and that others as wounded as themselves have found healing, acceptance and peace. These programs have helped hundreds of women and men:

- ❖ **Rachel's Vineyard is a weekend retreat that promotes spiritual healing after abortion.** These retreats are offered in nearly every state and in many foreign countries. There are two Rachel's Vineyard Retreat Teams in MN. The next retreat is August 7-9. Visit [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org) for more information or to register, call Nancy Bloom at **952-882-2072** or email her at [rvr-nancy@usfamily.net](mailto:rvr-nancy@usfamily.net)
- ❖ **Conquerors is a 12-week support group for people in abortion pain.** It's offered locally three times a year by New Life Family Services. There are separate Conquerors groups for women and men. For a description of this program, visit: <http://www.newlifefamilyservices.com/support/conquerors.htm>. To register or for more information, call the Director of Conquerors at **612-866-7643 ext. 163** or email her at [douglass.therese@nlfs.org](mailto:douglass.therese@nlfs.org)
- ❖ **The Marian Project provides confidential, one-to-one post-abortion support from women who have experienced the pain of abortion and experienced hope and healing through a formal abortion recovery program.** The support can be face-to-face or by phone or email. The Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis administers this program. Occasionally, they also offer 8 weeks of free group therapy to post-aborted women. The groups are facilitated by a licensed psychologist and licensed social worker who has counseled many post-aborted women and men in their private practices. Call Sonya, 651-291-4515, for information or a referral.