

Abortion's Effects on **RELATIONSHIPS**



A Woman's Partner

Nearly half of women in one study said abortion had "significantly altered" their relationship with their partner. Breakups are common, even among couples with previously stable relationships.

Her Parents

If a woman's parents coerce her to abort, the parent-child relationship is likely to be damaged. If kept a secret, abortion can put distance between parent and child.

Her Other Children

Women who have abortions are more likely to abuse their other children. Not surprisingly, children of aborting women have higher rates of behavior problems.

Future Partners

Past abortions may be kept secret from husbands out of fear of judgement or rejection, though hesitancy to discuss the event creates distance. Women may become anxious or uncomfortable with sexual activity. Others may become promiscuous.

Other Relationships

Women may become pessimistic about life in general and avoid people and situations that remind them of the abortion.

REGRET & ABANDONMENT

Abortion advocates will tell you that the most immediate emotional reaction a woman has to her abortion is one of relief — relief that the crisis is over, relief that she can get on with her life. While this may reflect her state of mind when others are urging her on and she is struggling to justify her decision in the immediate aftermath, polls and studies indicate many women end up regretting that decision in the weeks, months, or years that follow.

A 1989 Los Angeles Times survey found 56% of women who had abortions felt guilty about them, and 26% mostly regretted the abortion. Studies suggest that these numbers may be low, since negative reactions may be delayed, not surfacing for 5 or 10 years.

Despite his promises, a woman's partner often leaves after the abortion. The clinic staff is gone, and the woman has no desire to return to the place she associates with failure. Even friends who know hesitate to bring up the subject. This means, however, that she often deals with her pain, her doubts, her questions all alone.

POST-ABORTION SYNDROME

Professional counselors who have worked with women who have had abortions have recognized a cluster of reactions that fit the model of a post-traumatic stress disorder, a psychological dysfunction resulting from a traumatic experience which overwhelms a person's normal healthy defense mechanisms. Some of the symptoms they have found to be typical are:

- intense fear, anxiety, sense of helplessness**
- feeling of loss of control**
- emotional numbing, difficulty recalling event**
- guilt, pain, grief, depression**
- irritability, angry outbursts, aggressive behavior**
- sleep difficulties, sexual dysfunction**
- flashbacks, nightmares, anniversary reactions**
- withdrawal from relationships, avoidance of children**
- pessimism regarding future**
- drug, alcohol abuse, suicidal thoughts**

REAL HUMAN COST: Studies examining the records of over 50,000 California Medicaid patients from 1989-1994 found women who aborted having 2.6 times more psychiatric admissions in the first 90 days following pregnancy than women giving birth and 17% higher mental health claims over the following four years.

Self Abuse & **SUICIDE**



Self-Destructive Acts

For some women, abortion appears to lead to eating disorders such as binge eating, bulimia, and anorexia. Others become reckless, or attempt to cut or injure themselves.

Smoking

Women who have abortions are twice as likely to become heavy smokers and are more likely to continue smoking during subsequent pregnancies, increasing the risk of developmental malformations or fetal death.

Substance Abuse

Greater alcohol abuse has been found among women having abortions, bringing with it greater risk of violent behavior, divorce, auto accidents, and job loss. After their abortions, women are also more likely to abuse drugs, exposing them to other health and safety risks.

Suicide

More than half of women reporting post abortion problems say they have thought of suicide, with 28% actually attempting it. Government researchers in Finland found the suicide rate for women having abortions was three times the national average and nearly six times what it was for women giving birth.

Full documentation and additional info available at
www.nrlc.org

ABORTION'S Psycho-Social Consequences