

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is one of the three main reasons why children run away from home.¹¹¹ Child sexual abuse has neared epidemic proportions in this country. It's estimated that a child is raped every 45 minutes in the United States.¹¹² Between 100,000 and 200,000 children are sexually abused every year. Sexual abuse or incest is a horrible sin and crime. Here are some of the signs to watch out for in either your child or someone else's.

The Physical and Psychological Effects of Sexual Abuse

Below are some of the common physical and psychological effects of child abuse:

- Confusion
- Loss of Trust
- Anger
- Fear
- Refusal to participate in favourite activity
- Change in School Performance
- Self-Injury/Graphic Play
- Feeling "Bad"
- Loss of Personal Identity
- Precocious Sexuality
- Eating Disorders
- Withdrawal
- Running Away
- Role Reversal
- Dependency
- Self-Abuse
- Acting Out
- Sexual Identity Confusion
- May Not Want to Go to a Certain Place or Visit a Certain Person
- Recurring Genital Infections or Pain in Their Genital Areas
- Sleep Problems such as nightmares, bed wetting or fear of sleeping alone
- Guilt

Studies consistently indicate that the overwhelming majority (99%) of children don't lie about sexual

¹¹¹Adele Mayer, *Sexual Abuse: Causes, Consequences and Treatment of Incestuous and Pedophilic Acts* (Holmes Beach, CA: Learning Publications, Inc., 1985), p. 7.

¹¹²Linda Tschirhart Sanford, *The Silent Children: A Parent's Guide to the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1982), p. 154.

abuse/incest. So believe them if they tell you they have been victimized.

In the event that you become aware of child or sexual abuse, consult your ecclesial arranging board for further advice and steps. Since this is such a particularly difficult crime to pinpoint, you don't want to hastily make false accusations. Conversely, you don't want to delay or dismiss the suspected behaviour. Therefore, the best rule of thumb is to verify your suspicions and consult a member or members of your arranging board for further precautions or action.

Resources

Maxine Hancock and Karen Burton Mains, *Child Sexual Abuse: A Hope For Healing* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1987)

Lynn Heitritter and Jeanette Vought, *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989)

Alice Huskey, *Stolen Childhood: What You Need to Know About Sexual Abuse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press)

Adele Mayer, *Sexual Abuse: Causes, Consequences and Treatment of incestuous and Pedophilic Acts* (Holmes Beach, CA: Learning Publications, Inc., 1985)

Susan Patterson, *I Wish The Hitting Would Stop: A Workbook for Children Living In Violent Homes* (1987 Rape and Abuse Crisis Center)

Mary D. Pellauer, Barbara Chester and Jane Boyajian, eds., *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1987)

David B. Peters, *A Betrayal of Innocence: What Everyone Should Know About Child Sexual Abuse* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1986)

Paula Sandford, *Healing Victims of Sexual Abuse* (Tulsa, OK: Victory House Publishers, 1988)

Linda Tschirhart Sanford, *The Silent Children: A Parent's Guide to the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1982)

ABORTION

Abortion

One of the consequences of pre-marital sex is pregnancy. On average, 1.6 million American teenage girls get pregnant every year. Many of these pregnancies are terminated through abortion. However, abortion is not an option for a Christian disciple. The sin of fornication need not be compounded with the sin of murder. For further information and conclusive argument and evidence that abortion is murder, please write me. Abortion cannot destroy the guilt and shame of fornication. On the contrary, it actually compounds guilt and shame.

Rather than seeking abortion, we strongly recommend either keeping the child or putting it up for adoption, preferably to a Christadelphian home. Sadly, and ironically, there are more waiting parents than there are children. Depending on the estimates, between four and 20 families are waiting to adopt each available child.¹¹³ Only about 50,000 children become available for adoption each year, although hundreds of thousands of Americans are seeking to adopt children.¹¹⁴

The antithesis of pregnancy and abortion issues is childlessness. Failure to have children can obviously create some severe difficulties and stress for couples. Please refer to the following reference materials for appropriate information dealing with this sensitive issue:

S. Borg and J. Lasker, *When Pregnancy Fails: Families Coping With Miscarriage, Stillbirth, and Infant Death* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981)

Vicky Love, *Childless is Not Less* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1984) Beth

Spring, *The Infertile Couple* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook, 1987)

Judith A. Stigger, *Coping With Infertility: A Guide for Couples, Families, and Counsellors* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1983)

Martha Stout, *Without Child: A Compassionate Look at Infertility* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985)

Everett L. Worthington, *Counselling for Unplanned Pregnancy and Infertility* (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1987)

¹¹³National Committee for Adoption, *Adoption Factbook: United States Data: Issues, Regulations and Resources* (Washington, D.C.), p. 6; *The New York Times*, December 11, 1990, b-10.

¹¹⁴*Ibid*, pp. 6, 159.

The media has largely been silent on the physiological and psychological effects of abortion. If you know someone who has had an abortion, the following information will be useful in counselling them. Furthermore, this is also excellent information to use to dissuade someone from obtaining an abortion.

Post-Abortion Syndrome

It's not surprising that many women suffer from the emotional and psychological distress of "post abortion syndrome."¹¹⁵ Abortion places a lot of physical stress on the body; it follows that it would also place a lot of psychological stress on a woman, too.

Dr. David Reardon, who has studied the subject of abortion thoroughly, states that these women can experience trauma and severe emotional depression as much as five to 35 years after their abortion was performed.¹¹⁶ Reardon's studies revealed some interesting patterns among women who have undergone an abortion:

1. 62% of women become suicidal following abortion
2. 20% of women attempt suicide
3. 30% of women begin drinking heavily
4. 40% of women experience nightmares
5. 20% of women suffer a "nervous breakdown"¹¹⁷

Some studies indicate that as many as 76 percent of woman suffer some form of postpartum depression after abortion. In addition, 78 percent struggle with low self-esteem. Reardon also observed that many women suppress their feelings of guilt and shame and that they can develop such psychosomatic illnesses as abdominal discomfort, vomiting, pruritus vulvae, dysmenorrhea, frigidity, headaches, fatigue, ulcers in addition to extreme anxiety and paranoia.¹¹⁸

The Report on the Psychological Aftermath of Abortion also reiterated many of Reardon's observations:

The list of psychological abreactions [later responses] to induced abortion is lengthy and worthy of explication [explanation]: guilt, depression, grief, anxiety, sadness, shame, helplessness and hopelessness, lowered self-esteem, distrust, hostility toward self and others, regret, sleep disorders, recurring dreams, nightmares, anniversary, reactions,

¹¹⁵Vincent M. Rue, et. al., A Report on the Psychological Aftermath of Abortion (presented to C. Everett Koop by the National Right to Life Committee) September 15, 1987, (Washington, D.C.: National Right to Life Committee, 1987). Appendix One summarizes 90 studies.

¹¹⁶Reardon, *Aborted Women*, p. 116.

¹¹⁷Reardon, *Aborted Women*, pp.23-24.

¹¹⁸ [ibid, pp. 130-131.

psychophysiological symptoms, suicidal ideation and behaviour, alcohol and/or chemical dependencies, sexual dysfunction, insecurity, numbness, painful re-experiencing of the abortion, relationship disruption, communication impairment and/or restriction, isolation, fetal fantasies, self-condemnation, flashbacks, uncontrollable weeping, eating disorders, preoccupation, confused and/or distorted thinking, bitterness, and a sense of loss and emptiness.¹¹⁹

Several studies indicate that as many as 51 percent of all women have flashbacks of the aborted baby at unexpected times.

Contrary to what many think, there is documented proof that there are both psychological and physical risks involved when a woman undergoes an abortion. Some of the physical risks include:

1. **Infection**

- Endometritis
- PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)

Note: Infections are reported in 30 percent of all abortions.

- Tissue Retention

Bleeding

- Uterine Perforation
- Uterine Atony
- Severe loss of blood and clotting factors called Disseminated Intravascular Coagulation (DIC)
- Retained products of conception
- Bowel Laceration
- Bladder Laceration

2. **Damage To Cervix**

- Tears to tissue
- Bleeding
- Cervical Trauma

4. Missed Ectopic Pregnancy

5. Anaesthesia Complications (convulsions, shock and cardiac arrest resulting from toxic reactions)

¹¹⁹Vincent M. Rue, et. al., A Report on the Psychological Aftermath of Abortion, op. cit., p. 7.

6. Pulmonary Emboli (obstruction of the pulmonary artery)
7. Venous Thrombophlebitis (inflammation of a vein developing before a blood clot) 6. Death

There are also future complications associated with abortion:

1. Infertility or Sterility (3-5%)
2. Bleeding
3. Ectopic Pregnancy (400% increase)
4. Placenta Previa
5. Subsequent Miscarriages (twice as likely after undergoing abortion)
6. Fetal Malpresentations (breech births)
7. Premature Births More Likely (15% compared with usual 5%)
8. Early Infant Death (2-4 times greater chance of occurring after undergoing abortion)
9. Stillbirth
10. Infections
11. Shock
12. Coma
13. Fever/cold sweats
14. Intense Pain
15. Loss of Organs
16. Insomnia
17. Loss of Appetite
18. Constant Swallowing
19. Vomiting
20. Gastro-Intestinal Problems
21. Cervical Stenosis
22. Cervical Incompetence
23. Anaemia
24. Peritonitis
25. Blood Clots
26. Emotional and Psychiatric Stress
27. Depression
28. Psychosis

Note: In one national study, 90 percent of all women who received an abortion experienced moderate to severe emotional and psychiatric stress.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Reardon, *Aborted Women*, p. xxiv.

About 10 percent of these women require psychiatric hospitalization."

29. Suicide

Psychological Effects Of Abortion

Some comprehensive studies have uncovered the psychological effects that abortion has on women.¹²² The results are noted below:

The Conquerors' Study

Symptom	Percentage of Women Who Experienced This Symptom
1. Feel Guilt	90%
2. Anxiety in General	79%
3. Nervousness	66%
4. Worry That God Will Forgive	62%
5. Drew Close To God	62%
6. Alienation From God	49%
7. Fear of Medical Exams	41
8. Fear of Sexual Intercourse	37%
9. Fear of the Future	32%
10. Feel Anger Towards God	28%
11. Fear of Medical Personnel	24%
12. Fear of People	22%
13. Fear of Sounds of Abortion	21
14. Fear of Crowds	16%
15. Non-Specific Fears	24%

The Speckhard Study

The Speckhard Study revealed many of the same fears that the Conquerors' Study did, plus some others:

¹²¹ Ibid, p. xxv.

Symptom	Percentage of Women Who
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¹²² One of the most comprehensive study was issued by Vincent M. Rue, et al., A Report on the Psychological Aftermath of Abortion (presented to C. Everett Koop by the National Right to Life Committee) September 15, 1987, Washington D.C.: National Right to Life Committee, 1987. Appendix One summarizes 90 studies.

Experienced This Symptom

1.	Fear That Others Will Learn of Your Abortion	89%
2.	Distrust of Men	58%
3.	Feelings of Anxiety	54%
4.	Distrust of Others	50%
5.	Fear of Retributive God	50%
6.	Fear of Future Infertility	46%

Other Symptoms Cited Included:

- Eating Disorders
- Loss of Appetite
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Suicidal Impulses
- Sense of Loss
- Unfulfillment
- Mourning
- Regret and Remorse
- Withdrawal
- Loss of Confidence
- Loss of Self-Esteem
- Preoccupation With Death
- Hostility
- Self-Destructive Behaviour
- Despair
- Helplessness
- Preoccupation with *would be* due date
- Intense Interest in Babies
- Thwarted Maternal Instincts
- Loss of Interest in Sex
- Inability to Forgive Self
- Nightmares
- Frustration
- Child Abuse
- Feel Exploited

Counselling

The steps to overcome these problems include:

- confession of your sin
- seek God's forgiveness and your own forgiveness

Scriptural Wisdom and Practical Help For Surviving Troubled Times

Scriptural Wisdom and Practical Help For Surviving Troubled Times

- compassion and moral support
- physical check-up

- prayer
- meditation
- if necessary, seek counsel of professional who also has Christian perspective and values

Resources

John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *When Does Life Begin? And Another 39 Tough Questions About Abortion* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1989)

Francis J. Beckwith and Norman L. Geisler, *Matters of Life and Death: Calm Answers to Tough Questions About Abortion and Euthanasia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991)

John Jefferson Davis, *Abortion and the Christian: What Every Believer Should Know* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1984)

Michael Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church: Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982)

George Grant, *Grand Illusions: The Legacy of Planned Parenthood* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1988)

Howard J. Osofsky and Jay D. Osofsky, *The Abortion Experience: Psychological & Medical Impact* (Hagerstown, MD: Harper & Row, 1973)

David C. Reardon, *Aborted Women Silent No More* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1987)

Teri and Paul Reisser, *Help for the Post-abortion Woman* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1989)

Anne Speckhard, *Post-Abortion Counselling: A Manual For Christian Counsellors* (Falls Church, VA: Christian Action Council, 1987)

The Psycho-Social Aspects of Stress Following Abortion (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1987)

R. C. Sproul, *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1990)

Jeanette Vought, *Post-Abortion Trauma: 9 Steps to Recovery* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991)