

Abortion & Mental Health: Reconsideration of the Evidence & the Need for Compassionate Care

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Hope Renewed

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Three Good Reasons to Avoid Talking about Abortion

- Fear of Death
- Fear of Failure
- Fear of Rejection



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1. What are the mental health outcomes of abortion?
2. What are the risk factors for adverse postabortion psychological problems?
3. Can abortion be traumatic & what is its clinical course?
4. What can you do to help?

Presentation Questions

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Basic Assumptions

- The *patient's perception* of her/his abortion experience is determinative.
- Abortion is a violent and intentionally caused *human death event* which for some can be experienced as traumatic and can cause serious and lasting adverse mental health outcomes.
- If abortion is perceived as violating one's moral code or religious values, a *moral injury* can occur with its attendant sequelae.

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Methodological Strengths of Recent Post-abortion Research

Over the last 15 years:

- larger samples, many nationally representative
- Pre-abortion mental health statistically controlled
- Controls instituted for personal & situational variables, e.g., reproductive hx, support, violence
- Prospective data collection
- Use of appropriate control groups
- Use of validated mental health measures
- Lower attrition rates in longitudinal studies

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