

### Risk Factors (cont.)

- Fetal abnormality or other medical indications for the abortion
- Commitment or attachment to the pregnancy
- Advanced stage of pregnancy
- Putting great effort into keeping the abortion a secret for fear of stigma
- Usual coping style is denial and repressing thoughts
- Unresolved past losses and perception of abortion as a loss
- Past or present sexual, physical, or emotional abuse
- Preexisting experience of trauma
- Expecting depression, severe grief or guilt, and regret after the abortion
- Disbelief in their ability to do what it takes to produce a positive outcome

### Preabortion "Counseling"

- Context: often group counseling not individual
- Time limitation: 5 – 10 minutes
- No pre-procedure meeting with provider
- Misinformed consent
- Misinformation re fetal development & uterine contents, alternatives, risks & benefits
- Nonprofessional counselor doing "counseling"
- Significant conflicts of interests - \$ beforehand
- Discouragement of alternatives
- Encouraged to act immediately
- Decision facilitation v. decision exploration

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### Nature of Abortion Decision Making

- High degree of pressure
- Moderately high degree of ambivalence
- Conflicted conscience
- Conscious doubts
- Crisis management by fear & inexperience
- Conflicted maternal attachment with child in utero
- Cognitive & emotional distortion
- Misinformation & fear of no other good choice

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### Preabortion Circumstance Variables in a Sample of 548 Women Who Aborted in the U.S. & Russia

	U.S.	Russia
Had counseling beforehand	29%	64%
Needed more time to decide	52%	33%
Counseled on alternatives	18%	49%
Pressured to abort	64%	37%
Believed abortion immoral	51%	51%
Believed preabortion counseling adequate	11%	63%
Partner supportive	24%	51%
Ambivalent	54%	38%

SOURCE: Rue, Coleman, Rue & Reardon (2004) *Medical Science Monitor*, 10(10) SR5-16.

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### Abortion Decision Conflict Linked to PTSD

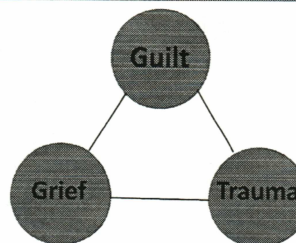
- Abortion decision conflict (51% of women and 53% of men)
- Abortion decision conflict predicts Sx of PTSD for women & men
- Inadequate pre-abortion counseling predicted relationship problems & PTSD Sx
- Abortion experienced as "high" to "overwhelming" stress (78% of the women and 71% of the men)

SOURCE: Coyle, Coleman & Rue (2010) Inadequate pre-abortion counseling and decision conflict. *Traumatology*, 16:16-30.

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### Common Clinical Realities Following Abortion



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