

# SUPPORT

## AFTER ABORTION



### **KEYS TO HOPE AND HEALING FOR MEN**

A joint resource from *The Word Among Us Partners*  
& *Support After Abortion*.

# **SUPPORT**

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& Support After Abortion

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## Introduction to This Booklet

We are thankful you have found this *Support After Abortion* booklet. No matter how long it's been since your abortion experience, the need for healing is very real. Abortion may be a hard topic for you to speak about with people who have not been in your shoes or do not believe in the trauma you have experienced. On top of that, it may be challenging to identify or process what you are feeling because you did not physically experience the abortion. You are not alone. Many men who have had an abortion experience have suffered like you. But know also that many men have experienced healing or are on the path to healing after abortion. And you can heal too.

Every abortion experience is unique. What was your experience? You may have agreed with or coerced your partner, accompanied or abandoned her, reacted proactively or passively, or discovered only later that she had aborted your child. Whatever your involvement or lack of involvement, you can heal from the shame, anger, grief, or guilt that you may have carried through a greater understanding and acceptance of the impact of abortion in your life.

Every man's emotional response and how he thinks about his role in an abortion is different. Even if the abortion experience is not recent, you may still have negative thoughts that surface from time to time. Men often experience misplaced anger sometimes years and decades later. Perhaps you have had thoughts like:

## Introduction to this Booklet

“I did what I thought was right at the time, but . . . “

“I wasn’t given a say in the decision, but . . . “

“I want to stop thinking about what I didn’t do, but . . . “

“I want to move forward with my life, but . . . “

If you’ve had any thoughts like these, please be open to what this booklet can offer you: *keys for healing and hope*. These keys will open up healing to areas in your life that you may not have thought were impacted by your abortion involvement. Will it take courage, commitment, and openness? Yes. Will it possibly change your life? Yes!

We’d like to add a mention here that we have received invaluable contributions and critiques while writing this booklet from the Men’s Task Force at **Support After Abortion**—a wonderful organization that champions healing for all those impacted by abortion. Their contact information is on the back cover of this booklet. These men have either personally experienced abortion themselves and/or counseled men who have been involved in one or more abortions. They shared with us their perspectives about men who have suffered—some for decades—from their abortion experience and about those men who learned that support was available and the benefits of starting the healing process much sooner.

As not everyone is looking for the support offered through personal or group counseling—and perhaps that’s you—this booklet will hopefully meet you where you are now and offer you some ideas to move forward in your healing.

A lot of information at once is not always helpful. Therefore, each key is broken down into two parts and followed by action steps to help you personalize and reflect on what you have read.

## Support After Abortion

We think you will find encouragement in the stories of men who have been involved in an abortion decision and are now on their own path to healing.

Don't feel the need to rush through each key in one sitting. Take your time. Take a break if you need to: watch a movie, exercise, or distract yourself somehow. Stay with each key until you feel you are ready to move on. One key builds upon the next, so it's best to read through them in order. Revisit any of the six keys as often as you feel the need to do so. You are on your own individual journey.

A suggestion we'd like to offer is that you write down your thoughts through this journey. Use your phone, laptop, tablet, or buy a notebook. There are also blank pages at the back of this booklet you can use.

Our thoughts are with all who seek support with their abortion experience through the keys offered in these pages.

*The Word Among Us Partners  
& Support After Abortion*

# Key One

## Acknowledge Where You Are Now

*“To be successful, you’ve got to be honest with yourself.”*  
—Vince Lombardi

It’s time to dig in. If you haven’t read through the introduction yet, we encourage you to take a few minutes and do so. It is beneficial in navigating as well as understanding why each reflection is called a key.

### **Step 1.**

Think back to the times you’ve been asked, “How are you?” Did you respond, “Fine,” or, “Never been better,” even if that’s far from the truth? These are safe answers that don’t require much from us. After being involved in an abortion, it can be hard to admit that we are not fine. You may even wonder if it’s OK to talk about it. Many men have been told for many years they have no choice and no voice in an abortion decision.

**Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now** is inviting you to stop and check in with yourself by asking, “How am I really doing with my abortion experience?” Now is the time to admit your true feelings. Don’t deny them. Identifying and acknowledging where you are is a crucial key to working through your abortion experience. Many overlook this critical step.



## Support After Abortion

Right now, you might be ready—perhaps for the first time—to look at how the abortion(s) impacted you. On the other hand, you may be feeling intimidated or hesitant to start because you know it will be a painful exercise. Perhaps you want to skip it because you’ve been discouraged from acknowledging or sharing your feelings in the past. Or it could be that you don’t see the value in acknowledging your emotions. Remember, this process is at your pace. Take it as slow as you need to but don’t give up. Acknowledging where you are is a step that you won’t regret.

This exercise is no small feat, and if you’ve picked up this booklet, you certainly have great strength in you. Go at your own pace. Everyone’s needs are different. Try to remember that on the other side of your pain is healing. Keep your hope alive and keep pushing forward. The reward far outweighs the pain.

After an abortion experience, many men have tried to hide or repress their feelings or thoughts. These feelings can be different for everyone—they could include guilt, shame, despair, or a combination of all of these. Everyone is unique. For some, these feelings may feel too overwhelming, and it may seem like addressing them will just drudge up the past. However, while feelings may lessen over time, they won’t just go away. They may always be just under the surface. Refusing to face feelings surrounding a loss such as through abortion can lead to unhealthy behaviors, as you will read about in Christopher’s story (on page 10).

Every man experiences a range of thoughts and feelings. They may get weaker or stronger when you are having memories of your abortion experience. You may find that certain dates, places, or people are triggers of these memories. If you find yourself becoming overwhelmed, reach out to **Support After Abortion** listed on the back of this booklet.

## Acknowledge Where You Are Now

Now it's time to take a pen or pencil to begin the first action part of this key.

### Common Feelings Following Abortion

- |              |               |                 |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • Anger      | • Guilt       | • Despair       |
| • Relief     | • Fear        | • Numbness      |
| • Shame      | • Self-hatred | • Powerlessness |
| • Depression | • Optimism    | • Failure       |
| • Loneliness | • Regret      | • Exhaustion    |

### Actions

- Circle the feelings you have experienced.
- Add others not listed that come to mind.
- Highlight or put an \*asterisk by your three strongest emotions.

The emotions you've just acknowledged are real and valid. They are part of where you are right now. Healing can truly begin when we are honest about where we are today. This level of self-honesty may trigger anger, and it's okay to express that in a healthy way. But also give yourself permission to cry, especially if you haven't done so before. Crying is very healing.

If you're thinking, "I don't know what I'm feeling," that is also an authentic and common experience. You've started the healing process! Other men have become numb and don't know what they are feeling. They just know something isn't right. Be patient with yourself and read over the "Common Feelings Following Abortion" box again. Emotions come and go, and you may identify with some of these in time.

### Christopher's Story

Sometimes life is predictable. You can see the good and the bad coming. But there's no way I was prepared for what happened—being involved in an abortion. Or should I say, “Making sure an abortion happened.” Because the truth is, I pressured my girlfriend into having one.

I was living on my own, just three years out of high school and working two jobs to afford my apartment. My friend introduced me to Ginny. We dated for about six months when I asked her to move in. It was fast, but we were in love. Ten months later, when she told me about her positive pregnancy test, I was filled with fear and panic. I blamed her for the pregnancy and refused to listen to her or what she wanted. She wanted to keep the baby, but I thought I knew what we had to do.

Without her knowing, I made an appointment at an abortion clinic I found online. It was easier than I thought—I just needed her information and insurance. I told her that if she wanted us to stay together, she had to get an abortion. I know it hurt her, but in my mind, it was the only option.

I dropped off Ginny at the clinic and drove around the area, listening to music and biding my time until I could pick her up a few hours later. Once we got home, she cried uncontrollably and wouldn't talk to me, but all I felt was a massive weight off my shoulders. I knew it was the end of our relationship. Three weeks later, Ginny moved out, and I put the whole thing behind me.

That is, until about two years later, when I was on Facebook. I got a suggestion about “people you may know.” There was Ginny. With a little digging, I found out she had a newborn son. Suddenly, my world came crashing down on me as I thought,

“That could have been my son.” I felt waves of guilt, shame, and enormous regret. I hated myself for forcing Ginny to abort our child. I didn’t know what to do with all the overwhelming feelings. I did the only thing I could think of to escape the stress—I bought a bottle of vodka, and downed it. And I kept doing that for the next five years.

It wasn’t until I landed in Alcoholics Anonymous that I started to process and work through my past. I can’t undo it—but I also can’t shut the door on it. It took a lot of work with my sponsor and other men in the program, but now I can be of service to others and be there for another man if he’s gone through something similar.

## **What Did You Think?**

- What did you take away from Christopher’s story?
- Are there any similarities with your story?

## **Step 2.**

Have you ever had a thought, and then moments later you couldn’t remember what it was or what you were thinking at all? That’s why it’s helpful to get into the habit of taking notes. You’re going to have a lot of thoughts, and some of them will be powerful. You will not want to forget them!

No one will see what you write unless you choose to share it. You can be 100 percent real and honest. This includes any negative self-thoughts like *I can’t move forward*, *I won’t heal*, or *I can’t forgive myself*. There is no right or wrong way to write

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your thoughts. It's all about what you want to express. It's a good idea to date each entry.

The very act of writing things down may help you become aware of the impact of the abortion on your life. Together with reflection and meditation, it is a profound and impactful tool. As you write things down, some emotions may come to mind that perhaps were hidden in your subconscious. Writing can also

The very act of writing things down may help you become aware of the impact of the abortion on your life. Together with reflection and meditation, it is a profound and impactful tool.

be beneficial if you're feeling numb or finding it hard to acknowledge your emotions.

When you write, try to put your phone on silent and find some personal space. It might be at the office, in your den at home, or even in the garage, in the backyard, or in a shed.

The important thing is that it's a place you feel comfortable.

These notes will be an excellent record of the transformation that will take place in your life in the coming days and weeks.

### Actions

- Make notes of why you are working through this booklet.
- Think about what you have found helpful about **Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now.**

## Points to Review

- I need to be aware of what I'm thinking and feeling.
- Self-honesty is an important key that will lead me to experience hope and healing.

## Final Thought and Meditation

In this key, you may have discovered some challenging or painful emotions. Great job persevering. Until you have time to begin the second key, keep your eyes on your goal of healing and why you are going through this process. Recall some of the things you've discovered about yourself. You are stronger than you know.

*“You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.” —C. S. Lewis*

## What's Next?

You've taken the first step in healing. **Key 2: You Are Not Alone** will help you begin working through what you've identified. Stay the course.

# Start Your Support Here

Support After Abortion (SAA)

844-289-HOPE (4673)

[supportafterabortion.com](http://supportafterabortion.com)

## **National Agencies**

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

212-870-3400

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

818-773-9999

[www.na.org](http://www.na.org)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

National Human Trafficking Hotline

888-373-7888

Text 2 337 733

[www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org)

## Support After Abortion

Co-Dependents Anonymous

888-444-2359

[www.coda.org](http://www.coda.org)

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network

800-656-4673

[www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org)

National Alliance on Mental Health

800-950-6264

[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

Grief Resource Network

828-726-9554

[www.griefresourcenetwork.com-crisis-center/hotlines](http://www.griefresourcenetwork.com-crisis-center/hotlines)

Grief Anonymous

[www.griefanonymous.com](http://www.griefanonymous.com)

American Pregnancy Helpline—Miscarriages

866-942-6466

[www.thehelpline.org](http://www.thehelpline.org)

Crisis Text Line

Text 74174

[www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)



**Faith Based Agencies**

Project Rachel: Hope After Abortion  
888-456-HOPE (4673)  
[www.hopeafterabortion.org](http://www.hopeafterabortion.org)

Esperanza Posaborto  
888-456-HOPE (4673)  
[www.esperanzaposaborto.org](http://www.esperanzaposaborto.org)

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries  
877-HOPE-4-ME  
[www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org)

Lumina/Hope & Healing After Abortion  
877-586-4621  
[www.postabortionhelp.com](http://www.postabortionhelp.com)

Project Joseph  
469-720-2273 (CARE)  
[healing@projectjosephdallas.org](mailto:healing@projectjosephdallas.org)

Men and Abortion  
513-729-3600  
[www.menandabortion.net](http://www.menandabortion.net)

**Online Support**

Abortion Changes You  
[www.abortionchangesyou.com](http://www.abortionchangesyou.com)

## Support After Abortion

### Prayer Lines

Christian Broadcasting Network with the 700 Club

Prayer Line

800-700-7000

[www.1.cbn.com](http://www.1.cbn.com)

Joy FM Prayer Line

877-800-7729

[www.florida.thejoyfm.com](http://www.florida.thejoyfm.com)

Trinity Broadcasting Network Prayer Line

888-731-1000

[www.tbn.org](http://www.tbn.org)

Daystar Prayer Line

800-329-0029

Bethel Church Prayer Line

530-255-2066

[www.bethel.com/ministries/healing-rooms/](http://www.bethel.com/ministries/healing-rooms/)

Breakthrough Prayer Line

800-424-8644

Life Outreach International Prayer Line

800-947-5433

[www.lifetoday.org](http://www.lifetoday.org)

## Start Your Support Here

Morris Cerullo Prayer Line

866-756-4200

[www.mcwe.com](http://www.mcwe.com)

Crossroads Prayer Line

866-273-4444

[www.crossroads.ca](http://www.crossroads.ca)

Family Broadcasting Corporation Prayer Line

800-365-3732

[www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com](http://www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com)

# Notes Pages

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# There Is Support After Abortion

If you are a man that has been affected by an abortion experience, this booklet can help you. You are not alone in how you are feeling right now. Many men have been affected by abortion and have gone through a range of emotions and differing experiences and are now on the path to hope and healing. You will find their stories and the steps they took in this booklet.

If you want to speak to someone right now, contact **Support After Abortion**. Our staff is here to help you and provide you with compassionate care that leads to healing and restoration.

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844-289-HOPE (4673)

<https://www.supportafterabortion.com>

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