

SUPPORT

AFTER ABORTION



KEYS TO HOPE AND HEALING FOR MEN

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

SUPPORT

AFTER ABORTION

KEYS TO HOPE AND HEALING FOR MEN

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

© 2021 The Word Among Us Press

The Word Among Us Partners
7115 Guilford Drive, Suite 100
Frederick, Maryland 21704

<https://www.waupartners.org>

No part of this publication may be produced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other, except for brief quotations in printed reviews—without the prior permission of the author and publisher.

Made and printed in the United States of America

Key Two

You are Not Alone

“One of the most important things you can do on this earth is to let people know they are not alone.” —Anonymous

Key 1: Acknowledge Where You Are Now opened the door to acknowledging your feelings and encouraged you to begin writing things down. Now, after going through that door, you’re ready to pick up the next key: **You Are Not Alone**.

Quick question: Did you circle the emotion “loneliness” on the “Common Feelings Following Abortion” box?

Step 1

Have you had any of these thoughts: *I’ll keep it to myself, I’ll tough it out, It’s my problem, Don’t risk their judgment, or What if people knew my abortion story?* There’s a quote by an anonymous writer that says, “Even in a crowd, you are alone inside your own head.” Sometimes loneliness has nothing to do with a person’s present circumstances and everything to do with how they perceive them. It has nothing to do with how many people they have surrounding them or how many likes or followers they have on social media.

There are two great synonyms for the word “alone”: unaccompanied and disconnected. Maybe that defines how you’ve felt since the abortion. However, the truth is that you are not alone in your abortion experience, and you are not alone in feeling lonely. Countless men were shocked by the devastating effects of abortion on their emotions. They, and perhaps you, were unprepared for what they felt or continue to feel. And many times, there was an immediate feeling in the gut that something was different.

Without hesitating, some men choose to process their emotions by sharing their abortion story with a trusted friend or a counselor. Others—and they are the majority—find it incredibly difficult to share their experience. It could be because of shame, fear of people’s judgment, or fear or rejection. Whatever the reason, they choose to keep their abortion story a secret.

For any man in this last group, it takes courage to share about his involvement in an abortion. The thought of opening up and being vulnerable can cause him to feel overwhelmingly anxious or even scared. It may take several attempts to make a phone call or keep an appointment.

If that’s you, sharing what you have experienced since your abortion involvement in a safe environment can be essential to experience that **You Are Not Alone**. Many men have found it to be freeing. It can be an enormous relief. Once you take that step, you will find yourself less frozen in your pain. You may be able to move forward more easily.

Sharing what you have experienced since your abortion involvement in a safe environment can be essential to experience that **You Are Not Alone**.

Actions

- Recall a time where you felt alone. What steps did you take to help ease your loneliness?
- When have you said to a family member or friend, “I’m here for you; you’re not alone?” What was their response? How did that make you feel?

George’s Story

It was in our plan to have children. But Suzanna’s first pregnancy was just the wrong timing. We had been married for only two years when we found out she was pregnant. We were both focused on our careers and doing some traveling before we became parents. We’d both been so ambitious—something we recognized in each other when we first started dating.

I was open, however, to change that plan. I became excited at the thought of fatherhood and shared that with Suzanna. She let me know, in no uncertain terms, that she was in no way open to keeping the baby. She became very emotional about her decision. I remember her telling me, “It’s my body. It’s my choice. You don’t have a say.”

I didn’t want to be the bad guy, so I bought into everything she threw at me. I quickly found myself thinking, “She’s right. I have to be supportive.” But in my heart, I felt alone, powerless, robbed of any say, and already grieving the loss of my child.

I loved Suzanna and supported her in her decision. I drove her to the clinic and sat in my car. The silence that followed in the car ride back and weeks that followed was deafening. Life went on for both of us, but we never talked about it again.

In the years that followed, we had two sons and a daughter, in that order. While I never forgot my first child, thoughts rarely surfaced, during those busy years raising three children. I suppose I stuffed them down. Occasionally, one would slip out and I'd have “what if” thoughts—would he/she love sports like me, or favor Suzanna's delight in cooking foreign dishes or even be married now and have children?

It was only recently, when our daughter became pregnant while at college, that Suzanna and I talked about our abortion. She shared her secret feelings of regret and sadness, and I shared mine. I shared my regret that I'd not tried harder to protect her and our child. It was the first time we were completely open and honest with each other about it. That honesty deepened our relationship. After that, we found an incredible amount of healing together during counseling, during which we actually named our child.

I'm happy to say that our daughter kept her child. Suzanna and I are proud grandparents to a very fun and strong-willed granddaughter—we're so lucky.

What Did You Think?

- What did you take away from George's story?
- Can you relate to any of his personal struggles?

Step 2

I'm sure many of us have watched a YouTube video, Facebook post or news story of someone doing an act of kindness for another person. As the story evolves, you may have learned they were

Support After Abortion

prompted to serve by remembering when they received support in their own personal time of need. Having empathy, or walking in another's shoes, is why many men—who themselves have had one or more abortion experience—are now counselors or volunteers. They know the suffering of other men because they have been there themselves. These men are ready and able to speak with you when you're ready to speak with them. For information on these resources, see the back of this booklet.

If you haven't shared your struggles—or haven't told your complete story—it might be time to identify why. Remember, the goal is to know in your heart and mind that you are not alone. If you are an analytical person, you might find it helpful to make two columns on a piece of paper. At the top of the first column, write, "Reasons I Should Share My Story," and on the other, "Reasons I Shouldn't Share My Story." Then brainstorm and fill in the columns. Your answers will become clear.

Sharing a story for the first time can be emotional. Releasing the tension held for months or years is healthy though. Don't rehearse it before you speak. It's OK to say, "I don't know where to start." If you want to tell someone but know you just can't do it face-to-face, consider a phone call, talking with an online support group, or writing your story out and reading it to someone you can trust. The point here is to get it *out* that first time.

There is so much power in bringing your abortion journey into the light with someone you trust and who will respect and keep all that you share confidential. It gets this truth into the open: "Yes, my abortion experience has impacted me, and I need help." Does someone you trust to share your story with come to mind?

Loneliness has tentacles like a jellyfish, and it's an emotion that some men find difficult to admit. You may have found that it

zaps your energy and motivation or causes confusion or depression. It can affect your confidence, impact your social life, or cause fear of entering or keeping up with relationships. Sadly, the list goes on to also include substance abuse or activities that will numb your suffering.

It's essential to take time to take care of yourself, especially if you have a demanding work schedule, busy home life, or both. Consider asking yourself:

- Am I eating a diet that will keep my body healthy?
- Am I getting regular exercise?
- Am I getting enough sleep?
- Is there an activity that I could do with a good friend?
- What project or hobby is waiting for me to pick it up?

Actions

- Prioritize the bullets above, choose one, and begin to make progress on it.
- Write a note to yourself that reads, "I am NOT alone!" Display it somewhere like on a bathroom mirror or on your laptop or phone background.
- Make notes of *anything* directly or indirectly related to this key.

Points to Review

- Sharing my story is crucial because it shows me that I am not alone and allows someone to accompany me on my healing journey.

Support After Abortion

- It is critical to be *kind to myself* and take care of my mind and body.

Final Thought and Meditation

I'd like to leave some encouraging words from Bill, a man who has walked in your shoes: "One of the best decisions I've made was sharing about my abortion story. Looking back, I realize it was crucial to being able to process my emotions."

"You are not alone in this. As brothers we will stand, and we'll hold your hand." —Mumford and Sons

What's Next?

Loneliness is powerful, but it is not always based on the truth. You are not alone in your experience. **Key 3: Freedom from Anger through Forgiveness** will address another powerful emotion you may experience over the abortion—anger.

Start Your Support Here

Support After Abortion (SAA)

844-289-HOPE (4673)

supportafterabortion.com

National Agencies

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

212-870-3400

www.aa.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

818-773-9999

www.na.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

www.thehotline.org

National Human Trafficking Hotline

888-373-7888

Text 2 337 733

www.humantraffickinghotline.org

Support After Abortion

Co-Dependents Anonymous

888-444-2359

www.coda.org

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network

800-656-4673

www.rainn.org

National Alliance on Mental Health

800-950-6264

www.nami.org

Grief Resource Network

828-726-9554

www.griefresourcenetwork.com-crisis-center/hotlines

Grief Anonymous

www.griefanonymous.com

American Pregnancy Helpline—Miscarriages

866-942-6466

www.thehelpline.org

Crisis Text Line

Text 74174

www.crisistextline.org

Start Your Support Here

Faith Based Agencies

Project Rachel: Hope After Abortion

888-456-HOPE (4673)

www.hopeafterabortion.org

Esperanza Posaborto

888-456-HOPE (4673)

www.esperanzaposaborto.org

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

877-HOPE-4-ME

www.rachelsvineyard.org

Lumina/Hope & Healing After Abortion

877-586-4621

www.postabortionhelp.com

Project Joseph

469-720-2273 (CARE)

healing@projectjosephdallas.org

Men and Abortion

513-729-3600

www.menandabortion.net

Online Support

Abortion Changes You

www.abortionchangesyou.com

Support After Abortion

Prayer Lines

Christian Broadcasting Network with the 700 Club

Prayer Line

800-700-7000

www.1.cbn.com

Joy FM Prayer Line

877-800-7729

www.florida.thejoyfm.com

Trinity Broadcasting Network Prayer Line

888-731-1000

www.tbn.org

Daystar Prayer Line

800-329-0029

Bethel Church Prayer Line

530-255-2066

www.bethel.com/ministries/healing-rooms/

Breakthrough Prayer Line

800-424-8644

Life Outreach International Prayer Line

800-947-5433

www.lifetoday.org

Start Your Support Here

Morris Cerullo Prayer Line

866-756-4200

www.mcwe.com

Crossroads Prayer Line

866-273-4444

www.crossroads.ca

Family Broadcasting Corporation Prayer Line

800-365-3732

www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com

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.

SUPPORT

»» AFTER ABORTION

SUPPORT AFTER ABORTION

844-289-HOPE (4673)

<https://www.supportafterabortion.com>

the **WORD**
among us®
Partners

The Word Among Us Partners
888.633.1084 (Toll Free)
<https://www.waupartners.org>

\$5.99

ISBN 978-1-59325-593-0



9 781593 255930