



Your Church Can Help with Post-Abortion Recovery

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Word of Hope, the unique healing ministry of LFL, serves the needs of women, men, and families who have experienced the loss of a child through abortion. It is our mission through confidential, spiritual care *To bring the healing of Jesus Christ to those whose hearts are broken by abortion.*

Over 44 million abortions have been preformed in the United States since abortions were legalized in 1973. In its wake, abortion has left millions of mothers and fathers in emotional turmoil and devastation.

Sadly, Christians faced with unwanted pregnancies choose abortion on a regular basis. Of those who have experienced abortion, studies show approximately 70 percent profess a Christian affiliation. Obviously many of these women and men are in our own Lutheran churches.

What can your church do to reach out to the Post-Abortive? Here are a few suggestions:

1. **Understand the many factors that lead women to abortion.** Pressure from others, lack of information, and the reality that many women feel that they have no other choice. This understanding enables us to avoid condemning.
2. **Understand that because abortion has been legal in the United States for over thirty years, our society now considers it normal and acceptable.** People believe it is their right and it has no consequences. Also, realize that no one is talking about the severe emotional and physical effects of abortion.
3. **Realize the cost our society has paid for legalized abortion.** We would all be shaken to our core if we fully realized the cost, in human suffering, abortion has caused since 1973—suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity, abuse of women and children.
4. **Make your church a place where people can feel safe to share their pain caused by an abortion.** There are many people in our churches who are hurting in silence and need your help. Encourage your church to talk about how people are seriously hurt by abortion. Then be ready to show compassion and acceptance toward the post-abortive person, and help them through the healing process.
5. **Be compassionate.** It is easy to stand on one's principles when you're not the one faced with the life-altering consequences of pregnancy. It is easy to say, "I would never have an abortion," until faced with a pregnancy that creates a crisis situation in your life. We know these things can happen in our families too. It is with gratitude we should say, "There but by the grace of God go I." Always be prepared to show the compassion of Christ and avoid being judgmental.
6. **Be aware of the other victims of abortion.** For every "potential" mother there is a potential father and potential grandparents. Any of these people could have coerced, forced, or participated in the decision-making process. Many times, the father or grandparents have no say in the decision, and are left with the pain and grief and the feelings of being powerless to stop it. It would seem that nearly every person in our country has been touched in some way by the devastating painful word *abortion*. Who is willing to bear the burden with them? It should be their brothers and sisters in Christ.
7. **Understand their need for forgiveness.** Many believe that because they knew it was wrong and did it anyway, it is a sin too big for God to forgive. Even if they can be convinced that it is not beyond God's ability to forgive, they are often unable to forgive themselves. Through counseling, they can confess their sin, and through the gentle urging of His Holy Spirit, accept His love. For only Christ can bring hope for the broken hearted.
8. **Receive specialized training in counseling the post-abortive person.** Training is vital in order to provide help and encouragement to the post-abortive, without causing more pain. Learn more about Post-abortion syndrome, and it's specific symptoms which are unique to this trauma.
9. **Develop a specific ministry for post-abortion healing.** Realize that the healing process can be lengthy. Have a plan in place and specific Bible study materials. *After the abortion . . . there is hope in His healing* is an excellent booklet available from Lutherans For Life. Call Word of Hope or LFL for more suggestions.
10. **Love them where they are.** Allow them to see the love, hope, and healing power of Jesus Christ. Help them to be set free to rejoice in the newness of life. When the hurting have walked through the healing process they then can speak out, impassioned to take their message of pain and healing to the world around them, perpetuating the truth of the harmfulness of abortion and the healing found only in Jesus. "*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds*" (Psalm 147:3).