

How to Sow the Seeds of Healing

Do you realize that you can promote post-abortion healing without ever talking to people about their past abortions?

You don't even have to know if someone has had an abortion. And you certainly don't have to become a trained counsellor or an expert in post-abortion issues. All you have to do is sow a few words of healing into your everyday conversations.

In every case, your goal is merely to plant the seeds of understanding, empathy, and hope that can lead to future healing. You are not trying to complete the healing process. But you can help break down some of the obstacles to healing.

In a simple, conversational way, cover the following three points:

(1) Announce that you have come to a whole new understanding of the abortion issue, including why people choose abortion and how it affects them;

(2) Express your compassion for women and men who have had abortions, knowing that they must constantly face the fear that others are judging or condemning them, and that they may be experiencing feelings of doubt and regret; and

(3) Describe how you have heard of new programs that help women and men find freedom from the burdens of secrecy and shame associated with past abortions.

For example, you might simply say, "I read an interesting article that gave me a whole new understanding of why women have abortions. I never really understood before how much pressure many are under to have an abortion.

"I also didn't realize before how much they feel judged and condemned by others. That fear of judgement can really make it hard for them to complete the healing process. Did you know that on average it takes around ten years for women to recover emotionally from a past abortion?

"The good news is that there are a lot of new programs now to help women and men who are dealing with post-abortion problems."

That's it. You have planted the seeds. Perhaps someone will ask for more information, in which case you can give them a copy of this publication or refer them to a post-abortion ministry in your area.

Just remember these three key words: understanding, compassion, and hope.

The first step, expressing understanding, respects the mind.

The second step, expressing compassion, soothes the emotions.

The third step, offering hope, feeds the spirit.

Wouldn't our world be a better place if everyone would begin to sow the seeds of understanding, compassion, and hope?

We have prepared this publication precisely to raise up people, like you, to sow the seeds of post-abortion healing. Together we can create a much more loving and healing environment for those who are burdened by a past abortion.

So use this tool. Get some extra copies of this publication to leave around school or at work, to place in the literature rack at your church, or wherever. Encourage your friends and family to read it.

If this publication has opened your heart or mind in any way, it will help others, too.

Elliott Institute

Do's and Don'ts

What to say - and what not to say -
when talking with someone who has had an abortion

DO	DO NOT
<p>Do listen patiently to everything that they have to say. Expect and allow them to repeat themselves and to bring the subject up again and again later. They are trying to sort out their feelings. Verbalising them with someone who will listen helps.</p>	<p>Don't discourage them by changing the subject.</p>
<p>Say you are so sorry that this happened to her</p>	<p>Don't think that the gestational "age" of the pregnancy determines its value and impact</p>
<p>Do reassure them that we all make mistakes, we all sin. However, all sin can be forgiven. God wants to forgive us. All we have to do is to admit that we need and desire it.</p>	<p>Don't deny that they lost a child.</p>
<p>Do allow them to vent their anger toward others. Remind them that it is a sign of even deeper hurt that lies beneath the anger.</p>	<p>Don't encourage them to blame others for the abortion. But don't push them to forgive others either, especially when they are in the initial stages of venting their anger and rage.</p>
<p>Do allow them to regret their choice. Remind that that we all learn from our mistakes. Even a negative experience can be used to help others.</p>	<p>Don't insist that they did the "right thing" or the "best thing" at the time.</p>
<p>Do encourage them to entrust their child completely to the care of God. Reassure them that, on a spiritual level, their loss is only temporary. Someday they can be with their child in heaven, and they will be able to ask for, and receive their child's forgiveness. Encourage them to attend post-abortion counselling.</p>	<p>Don't suggest that having another child "someday" can make up for the one that was lost. Future children are a blessing and comfort, but they cannot replace the child who was lost. The expectation that they can may cause parenting problems in the future.</p>
<p>Do give them a pamphlet or a contact number or website details or some other referral information. If you don't have it on hand, promise to get it to them within the week. Keep your promise.</p>	<p>Don't leave them without encouraging them, over and over again, to find and accept the help of post-abortion counsellors, Project Rachel or a Priest.</p>
<p>Do show that you care by continuing to be a sounding board for them.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid to ask them how they are doing with it in the future.</p>

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Additional material is posted at www.afterabortion.org