

# Trauma

## Teach:

*"The deep fear behind every loss is that we have been abandoned by the God who should have saved us. The transforming moment in Christian conversion comes when we realize that even God has left us. We then discover it was not God, but our image of God that abandoned us.... Only then is change possible."*  
- Craig Barnes

**Psychological Trauma:** *a startling experience which has a lasting effect on mental life*

## **Types of Trauma**

1. War - Post Vietnam Stress Disorder (many rejected when return home)
2. Death of Loved One
3. Rape/Assault
4. Catastrophic Event (earthquake)
5. Childhood Molestation
6. Abortion / Miscarriage –Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS)
7. Accidents - Physical impairments
8. Divorce

## **Results of Trauma**

- Guilt
- Anxiety/worry
- Emotional Numbing
- Depression and suicidal thoughts
- Eating Disorders
- Alcohol or Drug Abuse

## **Questions:**

Have you experience an event that is outside the range of usual human experience?

Or an event that was seriously distressing

Serious threat to one's life or physical integrity

Serious threat or harm to one's children, spouse, or other close relatives

Sudden destruction of one's home or community (ex. Fire)

Being involved as another person is being seriously injured or killed

Do you have?

- a. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event (smells, song make you remember).
  - b. Recurrent distressing dreams of the event (soldiers).
  - c. Sudden acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring
  - d. Illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative (flashback) episodes
  - e. Intense psychological distress at exposure to events that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event, including anniversaries of the trauma (ex. 911).
  - f. Persistent **avoidance** of activity associated with the trauma or numbing of general responsiveness (not present before the trauma).
  - g. Persistent symptoms of increased **anxiety** (not present before the trauma).
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep.
  - Irritability or outbursts of anger.
  - Difficulty concentrating.
  - Hyper-vigilance.
  - Exaggerated fear (physical reaction upon exposure to events that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event e.g., a woman who was raped in an elevator breaks out in a sweat when entering any elevator).

Have you had an abortion?

- inability to process the fear, anger, sadness, and guilt surrounding her abortion experience.
- The inability to grieve the loss of her baby.
- Failure to come to peace with herself, God, and others involved in the abortion decision.

# Grief Process

## 1. Denial

## 2. Anger

*"Anger is part of the natural process"*

Toward ***Themselves, Person, God***

## 3. Bargaining

"An attempt to regain or make up for what was lost"

-I'll never do it again

-Bargaining with God, "I'll be a missionary in Africa."

## 4. Depression

-Resignation to the inevitable, or to God's power

-Move on through doing these three things even when they don't feel like it:  
spiritual, relational, and recreational.

## 5. Acceptance

-Requires a giant leap of faith

-Need to walk through forgiveness before acceptance can begin.

- a. Now able to talk about it.
- b. Able to face the future, realizing life goes on.
- c. They have forgiven and received forgiveness.
- d. Have a sense of peace and closure.

## Healing from Abortion:

-Letter written to the child. (Possibly to father, doctor, parents)

-Name the child

-May want a memorial service for closure (ex. Hold still born child, put on clothes, put in a blanket).

### **-Forgiveness**

After responsibility has been recognized

Accept forgiveness from God, the child and themselves.

## Healing from Abuse

**Sexual Abuse:** *Any contact or interaction (visual, verbal, or psychological) between a child/ adolescent (weaker person) and an adult (stronger person) where the child/ adolescent (weaker person) is being used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or any other person -- Allender*

### **A Safe Place**

- Knowing they are free to share anything
- Unconditional acceptance
- No Condemnation

### **The Exchanged Life**

- God's acceptance and forgiveness releases from guilt
- New identity releases from shame.
- Forgiveness exercise releases the hurt from past
- Surrender releases from fear of the future.

### **Honest Acknowledgement of Emotions**

- Satan's weapons:
  - Secrecy (Satan will continue to accuse)
  - Shame (results in PBA)
  - Isolation (suppress emotions)Ex. Lioness stalking her prey, see if one wounded, isolate, and attack.
- Godly Responses:
  - Recognize (Walk in the light)
  - Experience (Be angry and sin not)
  - Share (Speak the truth in love)

## **The BECOMERS Nine-Step Recovery Program (See Attachment)**

## **Misconceptions of Dealing with Abuse**

- Forgive and Forget (Or else God won't forgive you)
- Pressured Love, Passionless obedience (Doormat mentality)
- Quick Cures (Cast out demons)
- Get on with life (Denial)

## **Excuses by the Abuser**

- He/she was abused as a child (don't justify it)
- Spouse wasn't meeting needs
- Drunkenness or drugs
- Love (fell in love with them, date rape)

## **Healing Involves Time**

- No instant fixes (we speak of growth not recovery, because they won't ever "get over it". Our total recovery is in heaven)

## **Grief process is essential**

- e. From months to years
- f. God will direct the process (Phil 1:6)

Rom. 8:37 *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.*

**\*watch Nooma – Matthew**

### **Suggest Resources:**

**The Wounded Heart (sexual abuse)**

**My Companion Through Grief**

**Seeing in the Dark (Depression)**

## Appendix A

### Pre-interview Written Abortion History

(To be filled out by patient as part of routine pre-counseling questionnaire.)

1. Have you ever had an abortion? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no
2. If yes, what type? \_\_\_\_ vacuum aspiration \_\_\_\_ saline \_\_\_\_ D&C \_\_\_\_ other (if other, specify type \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Where did the abortion take place? \_\_\_\_ doctor's office \_\_\_\_ hospital \_\_\_\_ abortion clinic \_\_\_\_ other  
(specify) \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many abortions have you had? \_\_\_\_ one \_\_\_\_ two \_\_\_\_ three \_\_\_\_ other
5. Which abortion did you just describe? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Date(s) of abortion(s):
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_ year
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_ year
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_ year
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_ year

In the most recent procedure:

Did you remain hospitalized? \_\_\_\_ If yes, how long? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the abortion cause other medical problems? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Did the abortion cause noticeable emotional or psychological problems? \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no

Taken from The Morning After by Terry Selbey  
Baker Book House

## Abortion Procedures

### **Manual Vacuum Aspiration: up to 7 weeks after last menstrual period (LMP)**

This surgical abortion is done early in the pregnancy up until 7 weeks after the woman's last menstrual period. A long, thin tube is inserted into the uterus. A large syringe is attached to the tube and the embryo is suctioned out.

### **Suction Curettage: between 6 to 14 weeks after LMP**

This is the most common surgical abortion procedure. Because the baby is larger, the doctor must first stretch open the cervix using metal rods. Opening the cervix may be painful, so local or general anesthesia is typically needed. After the cervix is stretched open, the doctor inserts a hard plastic tube into the uterus, then connects this tube to a suction machine. The suction pulls the fetus' body apart and out of the uterus. The doctor may also use a loop-shaped knife called a curette to scrape the fetus and fetal parts out of the uterus. (The doctor may refer to the fetus and fetal parts as the "products of conception.").

### **Dilation and Evacuation (D&E): between 13 to 24 weeks after LMP**

This surgical abortion is done during the second trimester of pregnancy. At this point in pregnancy, the fetus is too large to be broken up by suction alone and will not pass through the suction tubing. In this procedure, the cervix must be opened wider than in a first trimester abortion. This is done by inserting numerous thin rods made of seaweed a day or two before the abortion. Once the cervix is stretched open the doctor pulls out the fetal parts with forceps. The fetus' skull is crushed to ease removal. A sharp tool (called a curette) is also used to scrape out the contents of the uterus, removing any remaining tissue.

### **Dilation and Extraction (D&X) (partial-birth abortion): from 20 weeks after LMP to full-term**

This procedure takes three days. During the first two days, the cervix is stretched open using thin rods made of seaweed, and medication is given for pain. On the third day, the abortion doctor uses ultrasound to locate the legs of the fetus. Grasping a leg with forceps, the doctor delivers the fetus up to the head. Next, scissors are inserted into the base of the skull to create an opening. A suction catheter is placed into the opening to remove the brain. The skull collapses and the fetus is removed.

### **RU486, Mifepristone (Abortion Pill) Within 4 to 7 weeks after LMP**

This drug is only approved for use in women up to the 49th day after their last menstrual period. The procedure usually requires three office visits. On the first visit, the woman is given pills to cause the death of the embryo. Two days later, if the abortion has not occurred, she is given a second drug which causes cramps to expel the embryo. The last visit is to determine if the procedure has been completed. RU486 will not work in

the case of an ectopic pregnancy. This is a potentially life-threatening condition in which the embryo lodges outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tube.

If an ectopic pregnancy is not diagnosed early, the tube may burst, causing internal bleeding and in some cases, the death of the woman.



## Suggested Letter to unborn Child

Dearest child,

I don't know how to begin writing this letter to you. I hope it's OK to think of you as a girl, because I always believed in my heart you were. You know, I only had your two brothers after I was pregnant with you, and I always wanted a daughter. I would have named you Dawn, and when I picture you, I see you with blue eyes, just like mine . . .

Baby Dawn, what can I say to tell you how sorry I am that I don't have you to hug or to dress or to put ribbons in your hair? I was so young and frightened when I found out you were growing inside of me. I allowed some foolish people to talk me into killing the only daughter I ever had, and I have to live with that for the rest of my life.

I'm so happy you're with Jesus now. For a long time now, Heaven has seemed like a real scary place because I was afraid of seeing you again, but lately I've begun to understand that you understand and have forgiven me. I can't wait to hold you one day.

Goodbye, my precious daughter,

## A Pre-born Child's Conversation With Their Heavenly Father

*Father God, when is my mommy going to be here?*

**Soon. My child, soon.**

*Can you tell me how long?*

**There is no measure of time with me my child. She is busy  
right now doing the work I've given her to do.**

**When all that is done, she'll be here.**

*Is she going to know me when she gets here?*

**Yes, my child, I'll let her know.**

*What does she look like, Father God?*

**Why she looks a lot like you my child. The same color hair,  
the same eyes, the same nose; you resemble her a lot.**

*What do you think she's going to do when she sees me?*

**She will run to you, take you in her arms, and love you just as  
any other loving Mother would do.**

*Father God, why has she never held me in her arms before?*

**Why she never had the chance to do so, my child.**

*Why did she never have the chance, Father God?*

**I don't remember, my child.**

**Heb. 8:12** – “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more”

## The BECOMERS Nine-Step Recovery Program

- Step One: I recognize that I am powerless to heal the damaged emotions resulting from my sexual abuse, and I look to God for the power to make me whole.
- Step Two: I acknowledge that God's plan for my life includes victory over the experience of sexual abuse.
- Step Three: The person who abused me is responsible for the sexual acts committed against me. I will not accept the guilt and shame resulting from those acts.
- Step Four: I am looking to God and His word to find my identity as a worthwhile and loved human being.
- Step Five: I am honestly sharing my feelings with God and with at least one other person to help me identify those areas needing cleansing and healing.
- Step Six: I am accepting responsibility for my responses to being sexually abused.
- Step Seven: I am willing to accept God's help in the decision and the process of forgiving myself and those who have offended me.
- Step Eight: I am willing to mature in my relationship with God and others.
- Step Nine: I am willing to be used by God as an instrument of healing and restoration in the lives of others.

Taken from: *Helping Victims of Sexual Abuse* by Lynn Heitritter & Jeanette Vought

## **Bibliography**

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