



# **Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook**

## **Take My Yoke & Learn from Me**

**Matthew 11:29**

**By Sydna Massé**

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

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

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## Conference Schedule

### Thursday October 10, 2024 – In-Depth Day

8:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. - *Attendee Conference Check-In*

10:45 – 12:45 p.m. – Keynote #1 – *Devotions, Speaker Introductions & Post-Roe Update* - **Sydna Massé**

12:45 – 1:45 - Lunch

1:45 - 3:15 p.m. – Workshop Session A

3:15 – 3:30 - Break

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. – Workshop Session B

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. - Dinner

6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Keynote #2 – *Establishing Men's Ministry* – **Becky Anderson and Sydna Massé**

7:30 p.m. – Conference Release

### Friday, October 11, 2024

9:00 – 9:25 a.m. - *Random Acts of Card Kindness* – **Sydna Massé**

9:25 – 10:15 a.m. - Keynote #3 – *Questions & Answers*

10:15 – 10:30 a.m. – Break

10:30 - 11:45 a.m. - Workshop Session C

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11:45 – 12:00 p.m. - Break

12:00 – 12:45 p.m. – Lunch

12:45 – 1:45 p.m. - Keynote #4 – *Navigating  
New Pro-Life Frontiers: Frozen Embryos,  
IVF and Cryogenic Orphanages - The Strege Family*

1:45 – 2:00 p.m. - Break

2:00 - 3:15 p.m. - Workshop Session D

3:15 – 3:30 p.m. - Break

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. – Keynote #5 - *Microchimerism  
and Epigenetics: The Hidden Biology of Abortion  
Trauma - Sydna Massé*

5:00 p.m. – Conference Release – Dinner on own or leftovers!

## Saturday, October 12, 2024

8:30 a.m.- 8:45 a.m. Devotions – *Broken but Restored* –  
Suzanne Reed

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. - Break

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. - Workshop Session E

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. - Break

10:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. - Keynote 5 – *When They Abort  
Anyways: Handling Your Emotions* – Sydna Massé

12:00 – Conference Close

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## Live Presentation Schedule & Topics:

### Thursday, October 10, 2024

10:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. – **Keynote #1** – *Devotions, Speaker Introductions & A Post-Roe Update* - Sydna Massé

1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. – **Workshop Session A2** - *Spiritual Warfare Unveiled: Understanding and Safeguarding Your Ministry Efforts* – Sydna Massé

3:30 p.m. -5:00 p.m. – **Workshop Session B1** - *Reclaiming Intimacy: Sex, Abortion and Marriage* – Karen Fifer

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. **Keynote #2** – *Establishing Men's Ministry* – Becky Anderson & Sydna Massé

### Friday October 11, 2024

9:00 – 9:15 – Devotions -

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. - **Keynote #3** – *Questions & Answers*

10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. - **Workshop Session C3** - *Faith-Fueled Fundraising: A Guide for Pregnancy Centers* – Becky Anderson

12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. - **Keynote #4** – *Navigating New Pro-Life Frontiers: Frozen Embryos, IVF and Cryogenic Orphanages* – The Streges

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. - **Workshop Session D2/D3** - *Adoption Redefined* – Sydna Massé, Hannah & Marlene Stregé

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – **Keynote #5** - *The Hidden Biology of Abortion Trauma* – Sydna Massé

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**Saturday, October 12, 2024**

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 – Devotions – Suzanne Reed

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. - **Workshop Session E3 - E1** –  
Abortion Recovery Tract – *Empowering Your Ministry:  
Leveraging the Ramah Institute and Her Choice to Heal  
Websites* – Sydna Masse

10:45 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. - Keynote #6 – **When They Abort  
Anyway/Memorial Service** – Sydna Massé

**KEYNOTE 1 – *Abortion Recovery Post Roe***  
**Thursday, October 10, 2024**

**Revision Summary**  
**Her Choice to Heal Post Roe Version**

"Her Choice to Heal" (HCTH) has undergone significant revisions in 2009 and 2024, with the latest update necessitated by the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and the rise of medication abortions. Here's a detailed look at the changes:

**Prologue & Final Note Section Updates:**

**Prologue:** Now includes a deeper exploration of the effects of medication abortions, which have increased from 30% in 2009 to 70% of all abortions. It discusses the emotional, spiritual, and physical impacts, highlighting the immediate confrontation with the fetus's humanity which often leads to quicker help-seeking behavior compared to surgical abortions.

**Final Note:** Reflects on the societal shift post-Dobbs decision, addressing the increased feelings of regret among women due to the change in abortion's legal status and the intensified social media discourse on abortion.

**Terminology and Content Adjustments:**

- Replaced "Lord" with "God/Jesus/Holy Spirit" for clarity among younger readers less familiar with biblical terms.
- Updated "post-abortion syndrome" to "Abortion PTSD" for contemporary relevance.
- Removed outdated statistics to maintain the book's timelessness, acknowledging the challenges in obtaining

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accurate abortion numbers post-Roe, especially with mail-order medication abortions.

## Chapter-Specific Changes:

- **Chapter 7 - A River of Tears:** Introduces the concept of "microchimerism," where cells are exchanged between mother and fetus, providing comfort through the scientific fact that a mother retains her child's cells.
- **Chapter 10 - Where Do I Go from Here:** Discusses the link between abortion and increased breast cancer risk, particularly for women who terminate their first pregnancy. It includes personal insights from the author's experience with DCIS breast cancer, advocating for regular mammograms.

## Reduction in Pro-Life Advocacy Encouragement:

The 2024 edition has minimized direct calls to pro-life activism, focusing instead on personal healing and spiritual growth. This shift aims to guide women towards healing without necessarily involving them in further abortion-related activities.

## General Tone and Approach:

The book maintains its core message of healing through faith but adapts its language and content to resonate with current societal contexts and scientific understandings, ensuring it remains relevant and supportive for women dealing with the aftermath of abortion.

## How Many Have Chosen Abortion?

*Accurate statistics on the demographics of post-abortive people are nearly impossible to discover for many reasons. Ramah International typically uses Planned Parenthood's*

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*research arm – The Alan Guttmacher Institute (agi-usa.org) – for most abortion references. I cite abortion provider's statistics simply because they are the only ones that come into direct contact with us. Can we trust them? Likely not but the pro-life movements statistics are equally unreliable.*

The ending of Roe v. Wade changed everything when it comes to statistics as women were then allowed to purchase medication abortion from various vendors which was typically sent to their home. There is no survey mechanism that allows tracking how many have been sold to US women since June of 2022. Most come from third world nations.

**1997** - In 1997, when I founded Ramah International, Planned Parenthood featured the following Guttmacher post-abortion statistic as part of their "Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion" research – At current rates, 43% of all American women will experience abortion at least once by the age of 45 years.

**2008** - In 2008, through an updated version of the "Facts in Brief: Induced Abortion" research, Guttmacher adjusted the post-abortion rate down to 33% of all American women will experience abortion at least once by the age of 45 years.

**2017** - At the end of 2017, this source reduced the number again, outlining that 24% of all American woman are post-abortive.

**Why has this post-abortion number changed so much over the years?** The answer relates to declining abortion rates among other variables. The general post-abortion rate in the US must now be viewed across generational lines. Older abortion rates must be adjusted for various demographic groups. For examples:

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**Over 50** - At the time of my abortion, the post-abortion rate for my demographic age group was **43% of all American women**. That leads to a basic conclusion that the post-abortion rate for women over 50 would be 43%. Think about it – nearly half of American women aged 50 or older had at least one abortion.

**Ages 35-50 years** - For women between the ages of 35 and 50 years of age, their post-abortion rate is likely more in-line with the **33% post-abortion rate**.

**Under 35 years** - For those under 35, likely their rate resembles the **24% rate** based on the 2017 the Guttmacher statistical information.

Obviously, *this is just my educated guess when extrapolating abortion statistics*. Due to my deep involvement in abortion recovery ministry over the last 33 years, I have likely heard more abortion stories than anyone else alive on Earth today. So, my speculations are educated at a different level from those who rarely hear an abortion testimony.

### Impossible to Survey

True and trusted information on the American post-abortive demographic does not exist at a statistically significant basis due to the reasons I include below.

**NOTE:** When the Dobbs decision ended Roe in 2022, President Biden immediately signed legislation that allowed ANYONE to order medication abortion online. At that moment in time, it became impossible for anyone to have good “numbers” on the number of abortions as it does not include these sales since many pills come from outside the USA.

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**Changeable** – How you feel today may not be the same as how you feel tomorrow. Post-abortive people can be unpredictable and changeable. Additional abortions increase this impact as do other “life” events like the death of family member or loved one, infertility, subsequent pregnancies, etc. Many are afraid to address abortion memories, fearing doing so could lead to a suicide decision. As a result, many spend vast amounts of emotional energy over the years working to forget they ever made such a choice.

**Too Broad** – Post abortive people comprise a large section of all American women over EVERY demographic. How a poor woman feels about her abortion can be vastly different to the emotions of wealthy women. Women of faith may experience deeper levels of regret than secular women with no faith background.

**Rehearsed Innocence** — It is typical for post-abortive women to practice ways to remain tranquil when the abortion topic is discussed in their presence. Numbness or emotional distancing can assist post-abortive women in remaining calm when abortion is discussed in their presence. If they are rehearsing their silence, they will rarely share their truthful feelings on a survey instrument.

**Recovery Impact** — Some women initially cope well after abortion but later find themselves in great emotional upheaval over this choice. Others who are immediately overwhelmed with regret and grief can attend an abortion recovery program and go on to live in peace. Those who have found healing present vastly different survey information than those who may not be struggling after abortion.

**Impact of Abortion Procedure** – Women who endure surgical abortions have vastly different experiences/emotions than those who utilize the medical (RU486) option. In addition,

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those who endured a late term abortion often go through an actual birth experience. Their pain and regret can be quite different as a result.

**Cultural Influence** – Since America is a nation of immigrants, it is a “melting pot” of cultures that have different perspectives on unexpected pregnancy and abortion. First-generation Americans are more impacted by an outside culture than those whose ancestors have lived here for many years.

Within some cultures/religions, the loss of virginity is a reason to expel or kill women, even if they have been raped. These women abort to avoid being publicly murdered. Within Christian cultures, where the sanctity of life is embraced, women abort to avoid bringing shame or judgment on their families.

**Research Methods** – Current research methods (standardized surveys) are typically inadequate in uncovering deeply entrenched emotional reactions for this “difficult to discuss” experience. Women are rarely truthful about their abortion on medical intake forms! If they are withholding information regarding their health, they likely won’t be truthful on a generic survey form or with an interviewer who asks troubling questions.

**Which Symptom to Study?** – There is no agreement among researchers about which Abortion PTSD symptom (relief, depression, grieving, self-destructive behaviors, etc.) they should attempt to survey as it relates to abortion, nor what level of symptoms should be considered substantial.

### Post-Roe Abortion Outreach

During the summer of 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled on the *Dobbs v Jackson* (*Dobbs*) case.

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The majority held that **abortion is not a constitutional right** as the Constitution does not mention it. They determined its substantive right was not "deeply rooted" in the country's history. This means that *individual states have the authority to regulate access to abortion*. As a result, abortion access was rendered illegal or reduced in many states.

*When abortion was "safe and legal," post-abortive women could believe it was a "right" choice and they could not be held "responsible." Now post-abortive women are realizing that illegal means it was "wrong." Dobbs is a massive trigger to countless millions who have been in denial of the truth of their abortion.*

Obviously, this decision changed the direction of the pregnancy center movement, *particularly for pro-life states*. **Dobbs also significantly impacted post-abortive denial patterns in women.** *Women can still access abortion regardless of its legality in their state.* Working to maintain abortion access after Dobbs, the US Government allowed access to abortion medication online, delivered through the USPS.

Medication abortion pills are now being delivered to states where abortion has been reduced or eliminated, comprising over 60% of the methods to abort. Women can also travel to other states for abortion services. Abortion "underground" services are now available in many abortion-free states, helping women cross state borders to have their abortions. Women who order medication - typically on the Planned Parenthood website - must wait up to five weeks for the pills to be delivered from international arenas.

*Many are showing up at pregnancy centers with these pills as they often come with no basic instructions.* Centers are discovering the medication they receive is sometimes **five**

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**times the amount required**, which puts a woman's life at risk if she consumes them all at one time.

One key point to include on your website is the service of assisting them in understanding how to take this medication. This allows the center the ability to cover many bases with this client.

Again, there are two drugs used in medication abortion. **Mifepristone** blocks the hormone progesterone, which is needed for a pregnancy to continue. This drug is approved to end a pregnancy through 10 weeks' gestation, which is "70 days or less since the first day of the last menstrual period," according to the FDA. This drug is taken first and can be reversed if medical attention is sought within 24 hours (<https://www.abortionpillreversal.com/>).

A second drug, **misoprostol**, is taken within the next 24 to 48 hours. Misoprostol causes the uterus to contract, creating cramping and bleeding which is designed to flush everything out of the uterus.

Together, these two drugs are commonly known as the "abortion pill," "medication abortion" or "chemical abortion." This form of abortion is now used in **more than half of the abortions** in the United States, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights. While many women obtain medication abortion from a clinic or their OB-GYN, others obtain the pills on their own to self-induce or self-manage their abortion.

At the start of 2023, the Food and Drug Administration finalized a rule change that broadens availability of abortion pills to many more pharmacies, including large chains and mail-order companies. The Biden administration partially implemented the change in 2022, announcing it would no longer enforce a long-standing requirement that women pick

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up the medicine in person. The FDA's action formally updates the drug's labeling to allow many more retail pharmacies to dispense the pills, so long as they complete a certification process.

The change expands access at both brick-and-mortar stores and online pharmacies. Women can get a prescription via telehealth consultation with a health professional, and then receive the pills through the mail, where permitted by law.

**Taking medication abortion makes the woman her own abortionist.** She is typically at home and often left alone to take the pills and endure the process. Sometimes the father of the baby is present for support. Rarely do women realize they can REVERSE the abortion if they act in time after taking the first pill.

A household is typically the least sanitary environment for such a process to occur. When the hard cramps begin, many will draw a hot bath to help alleviate pain. If the cervix opens in the bathtub, the germs often present can immediately enter the body and blood stream leading to sepsis.

Often women give birth on the toilet after taking medication abortion. Many will view the humanness of the child they have just lost. A fetus at just 7 weeks gestation looks vividly like a tiny human being. **Denial is then removed from the post-abortive experience with medication abortion.**

The horror of viewing the humanity of their just lost child leads many women to simply flush the toilet. Later the toilet becomes a "trigger" of abortion pain. Many report nightmares of hearing their lost children crying in the sewers.

Due to the lack of denial, women who have taken medication abortion present instantly searching for emotional and spiritual help. The **hormonal imbalance** often contributes to their deep despair. It is essential that we help them

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immediately and not prolong their agony. Sharing the gospel message should be the first step.

The hormonal imbalance can last up to eight weeks. Addressing grief and sin immediately is highly recommended. Once the hormones shift back to normal, women will usually work to avoid thinking of the abortion. If she's found God's healing redemption, she can avoid the additional sinful behavior that often follows an abortion.

**Medication Abortion Pain Issues** - The pain of medication abortion can be quite intense physically. In the several studies, the average maximum level of pain that people report is about **seven to eight out of 10**, with 10 being the highest. However, people also say that the pain can be brief, peaking just as the pregnancy is being expelled.

The level of cramping and pain can depend on the length of the pregnancy and whether someone has given birth before. For example, a medical abortion at six weeks or less gestation typically has less pain and cramping than one performed at nine weeks.

## Unhealthy Abortion Recovery Programs

Ramah refers to people and NOT programs. Removing the gospel from the recovery process is what defines an "unhealthy abortion recovery program." It also includes studies with new age topics that encouraged necromancy – or communicating with the dead.

Because few understand the abortion recovery process if they have never experienced abortion, many "unhealthy" programs have developed. The magnitude of women that could be reached indicates a great deal of money could be made on this topic. So, there is a constant flow of new materials being

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self-published that can do further damage to a post-abortive woman.

Some simply do not incorporate the Word of God but encourage a secular grief model. **We strongly believe there is no healing outside of Christ and God's word.** If a woman attempts a program that does not lead to healing, she will likely never attempt another program. Instead, she'll live in agony versus opening herself up to pain that can't be healed.

It is a tragedy for anyone to open an abortion wound without offering the love, grace, and mercy of Jesus Christ. Abortion is simply too intense spiritual to ignore in the healing process. If the woman has yet to accept Jesus as her savior, it is better to focus on discipleship first over any abortion recovery program.

New ministry and abortion recovery programs/models have taken over many former Gospel-based pregnancy center movement. When you receive state or federal funding, sharing the gospel is often forbidden and/or special systems set up to provide "spiritual counseling" if the woman desires that.

At the medical level, many leaders believe these efforts should be free of any religious overtones. Some models now encourage the distribution of birth control with the intent to "compete" with groups like Planned Parenthood. Few realize the goal of the abortion industry with contraception distribution was to set women up to abort.

Assisting single women with birth control to have sex outside of marriage often leads to abortion. Single women – *particularly in their teens or early twenties* – are notoriously bad at taking medication daily. By offering single women birth control, these "models" are setting them up to abort.

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## Information for the Recently Post-Abortive Person

As someone who chose abortion in my teen years, I understand the various emotions that many endure afterwards - today, tomorrow or years from now. I am not a physician or professional counselor. The points below are based on my personal experience and through assisting thousands of others after their abortions. I hope this will help you understand what you might be feeling at a physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual level.

**Realize that your hormones are in the process of shifting back to a non-pregnant state.** Having unbalanced hormones leads many to experience emotional ups and downs. When you feel overwhelmed, remind yourself that your body is changing and be patient with yourself for at least six weeks.

**Be sure to schedule a follow-up exam by a physician that does not perform or refer for abortion procedures.** Very few states have adopted health-code regulations for abortion clinics. Often nail salons, veterinary offices and restaurants are required to have a higher level of state-monitored cleanliness standards than abortion clinics. It makes good sense to have a physician uninvolved in the abortion industry ensure that your healthcare in this procedure was appropriate and safe.

**Understand that it is normal to be angry after an abortion experience.** Anger is the typical emotion endured immediately after this procedure, particularly if you were not confident about this choice and/or were pressured into it by others. Typically, anger is directed at those who did not support continuing the pregnancy. The hormonal imbalances can impact all emotional reactions, particularly related to anger.

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**Feeling “relieved” is a common emotion after abortion.** Your crisis is over, and the situation has been resolved. Perhaps the people that were pressuring you to make this decision have backed down and are no longer worried. Things seemed to have smoothed out in your life. Many times, however, this relief is temporary. Other emotions can find their way into your heart as the days, months, and years pass. If feelings of relief are replaced with other emotions, understand many other women endured this same situation. Abortion **can be** a hard decision to live with at any stage of life. Help is available should you struggle, either now or in the future.

**Give yourself permission to grieve this pregnancy loss.** Many times, anger is used to keep grief from our hearts and tears from our eyes. You may feel if you start crying, you may never stop. Or that your tears could lead you to consider suicide. *You have experienced a pregnancy loss, although it was your choice.* Society, particularly those who encourage abortion decisions, rarely provide post-abortive people the permission to grieve this pregnancy loss.

*For those involved in the decision, your tears may produce guilt in their hearts for not being supportive of the pregnancy. These related individuals can respond in anger to silence their own emotions over their involvement with your current pain. After all these years since my abortion experience, I still mourn the loss of my child. That is my right, and it brings me peace. If necessary, find a private place to express this grief. You deserve that opportunity.*

**Some post-abortive women feel an urgency to quickly become pregnant again.** This desire can be referred to as desiring an “atonement” baby. Some simply seek to “replace” the lost child with another baby. Seldom does the next baby fill that void due to the many psychological issues that can appear after abortion.

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On another extreme, many who successfully get pregnant again can find themselves facing the same pressure and lack of support from those around them. They can very easily abort repeatedly. A second or third abortion can be more difficult emotionally than the initial one, particularly if the person *wanted* to be pregnant. Additional abortions can trigger specific memories of earlier procedures and enhance any related emotional agony.

**You may experience anxiety concerning being able to get pregnant in the future.** Abortion can certainly impact women physically for assorted reasons. Therefore, it is essential to have a complete check-up with a physician that is uninvolved in the abortion industry. Personally, I not only struggled with this anxiety but endured two years of infertility when I eventually married. My doctor believed my abortion had been “incomplete” and my fallopian tubes were blocked. Through a simple test he was able to clear my tubes which allowed me to get pregnant.

Had I visited a physician immediately after my abortion, it is possible he would have noticed this situation and resolved it then. Waiting seven years to finally get a check-up did not help my fertility situation. So be sure to schedule that appointment soon.

**When you hear the word “abortion” in conversations or media coverage, it can trigger emotional pain.** In the days following my abortion, it was easy to avoid the term. Once I heard it, I had immediate anxiety and would either throw the newspaper away or shut off the television. I was incredibly careful to avoid anything related to “pro-life” or “pro-choice” politics as well.

Today this topic is simply unavoidable at any level. The abortion word can be a “trigger” of memories that you want

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to forget. Understand that if anxiety or pain comes over you at the discussion of this term, you may need some help in addressing this past choice.

**Realize there is help if you are overwhelmed with these emotions.** The Alan Guttmacher Institute, the research arm of the largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, states that at current rates, 33% of all American women will experience abortion at least once (agi-usa.com).

If abortion is such a good experience, why is it that you rarely hear anyone talk about their past choice? This is primarily due to the fear of judgment by a society that holds various opinions on this choice. Regardless, I'm happy to report that there are thousands of abortion recovery programs, staffed by caring individuals, ready to help you find peace.

If you are experiencing any of the emotions or issues I have outlined above, please read the following outline of "Common Issues People Experience After Abortion." When I read this listing eleven years after my abortion, I could see myself in many of the symptoms.

It was a relief to know that my emotions were typical and that I was not the only person struggling after abortion. By connecting my pain to my abortion experience, I soon found a wonderfully compassionate abortion recovery program offered through a pregnancy center. Ramah International exists to help you find these programs and begin your healing process.

## Workshop A Topics

**Retreat Healing Class (Green Room) – with Melissa Horton & Bettina Loughman**

**A1 – Abortion Recovery – *Healing the Extended Wounds of Abortion* – LOCATION: Children’s Room**

Abortion’s impact resonates beyond the women directly involved, affecting family members, and loved ones in profound ways. This workshop delves into the often-unspoken grief experienced by fathers, grandparents, siblings, and others touched by the decision. This includes a discussion of the tapestry of emotions that many endure that are frequently undefined and unaddressed. Through insightful discussions and guidance, **Karen Fifer** will provide strategies for offering support and creating spaces for healing conversations. Join us to learn how to minister effectively to those who may feel isolated in their experiences with abortion.

**A2 Abortion-Vulnerable Tract – *Spiritual Warfare Unveiled: Understanding and Safeguarding Your Ministry Efforts* – LOCATION: Sanctuary**

Sydna Massé will address the often-overlooked realm of spiritual warfare within pregnancy center and abortion recovery ministry in this workshop. Drawing inspiration from the timeless wisdom found in Galatians 5, Sydna will illuminate the significance of the “Fruits of the Spirit” in discerning potential threats to your vital work. Through insightful analysis and practical guidance, she will empower the audience to recognize and address these challenges with Godly clarity and confidence.

Sydna will shed light on the subtle yet formidable presence of the Jezebel Persona, which may infiltrate the hearts of

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board members, staff, and volunteers within ministries. By identifying and understanding this insidious influence, you will be equipped to safeguard the integrity of your mission and foster a culture of spiritual resilience.

### **A3 – Pregnancy Center Leadership Tract – *The Wrap Around Ministry Model – Part 1 of 2* – LOCATION: Youth Room**

Jessica Deese features a new model for holistic ministry in this enlightening workshop with the transformative model of Wrap-Around Care. This innovative approach harmonizes medical and social services, offering holistic support to clients navigating pregnancy decisions.

Discover how the Wrap-Around Care Model enables centers to provide comprehensive support to both abortion-minded and abortion-determined clients without overwhelming the center's capacities. Gain insights into implementing this model seamlessly within your organization and fostering a nurturing environment for clients in need

### **A1 –Abortion Recovery: *Healing the Extended Wounds of Abortion***

Speaker: Karen Fifer

Abortion impacts every life it touches and can have fingers that extend far beyond the woman who aborts. With over 4,000 abortions that we know of happen every day in the US. Now add what happens in the rest of the world! It is impossible to count abortions extended wounded. Countless numbers of people have been affected with emotions that cannot be defined. This workshop addresses: fathers, grandparents, siblings, and others who are impacted by an abortion.

#### ***Legacy Lost - Healing Abortion's Heartache in Grandparents***

Legacy Lost was released several years ago. I am a post-abortive grandmother. I found out after the fact and was devastated. There was nothing to help me. I worked through a study intended for abortion recovery and applied as much as I could to myself. Out of my pain - and Sydna's influence - we put together what is now known as Legacy Lost. There are no other resources for grandparents like Legacy Lost!

I love these two promises from God's word:

**Micah 7:18-20** - *Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love. Once again you will have compassion for us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! You will show us your faithfulness and unfailing love as you promised to our ancestors Abraham and Jacob long ago.*

**Jeremiah 29:11-14** - *For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and hope. In those days when you pray, I*

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*will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you," says the Lord. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."*

Every aborted child usually has grandparents. Grandparents of an aborted child often suffer alone with no one to talk to or understand their emotions. They too can experience secondary abortion trauma emotions. This often leaves behind broken relationships.

Regardless of the knowledge of the involvement, or lack of, abortion's impact is a reality for grandparents. It can cause trauma at an emotional, spiritual, or psychological level.

**Legacy Lost** is available on the grandparent button at **HerChoicetoHeal.com**. I often work with grandparents who find this website. One grandmother told me she searched for help – only to be referred to an abortion recovery hotline and the woman who answered had no idea how to help her. She shared:

*I was so glad I gave my grandparents recovery a second chance and found your story and study online. No one could give me what I needed. My heart and mind were full of condemning chatter that I could not resolve on my own. Working through Legacy Lost helped me realize my experiences, my feelings were normal and helped me find peace in my heart again.*

The extent and type of pain grandparents experience often depends upon the level of involvement in the abortion decision. For many it is heartbreaking to discover the abortion after the fact – sometimes it is weeks - months or years later. Some have been living with their own regrets and not knowing how to approach their own needs- let alone those of their daughters.

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**Legacy Lost** explores four aspects of **involvement** in abortion:

- Grandparents who **did not know** about the pregnancy and subsequent abortion and learned about it after the fact. Abortion could have occurred recently or years ago. For these grandparents it is as if it just happened.
- **They knew about the pregnancy and subsequent abortion but were not involved or refused to participate in the abortion**, allowing the decision to abort solely be the pregnant woman's choice.
- **They knew about the abortion and disagreed** or may have actively tried to stop the abortion but had no legal standing to do so.
- **They may have pressured or encouraged the abortion.** They may have allowed any other option but abortion. They actively took her to get the abortion and/or helped pay for the abortion.

**Legacy Lost** takes two basic approaches in this study:

- Those who knew about the abortion beforehand
- Those who found out after the fact.

Regardless of the involvement - or lack of - grandparents can and often do have confusing feelings resulting from their grandchild being aborted. It is for Grandparents who knew about a pregnancy and subsequent abortion. For those who had no knowledge of the pregnancy and found out after the abortion.

Imagine the shock of discovering an abortion has occurred. Two grandmothers I recently mentored through **Legacy Lost** had daughters going to college in another state. They found out about their daughter's abortion from charges on credit cards.

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**Legacy Lost** is a step-by-step process to help grandparents find relief from the heartache abortion leaves behind. It also helps grandparents to find peace and encouragement to restore a fractured relationship with their post-abortive son or daughter.

The goal is to help grandparents resolve their own feelings and actions (which they may now regret) concerning their daughters or son's abortion in a healthy way, with God's help, so they can then have a healthier relationship with the person who aborted.

**Legacy Lost** explores:

- How the pain of abortion has impacted their lives
- Understanding guilt and shame
- Anger
- God's grace and mercy as applied to forgiveness of self or others
- Legacy Lost bring us to the full heart of the matter – the lost grandchild
- Dealing with where is this grandchild now
- How to allow a place to heal and honor the child
- With suggestions of how and why and when they should talk to their son or daughter
- And then how to deal if reconciliation does not happen

### Using in a Pregnancy Resource Center setting

Just as it is recommended that any woman who has had an abortion attend an abortion recovery program to begin to work in a Pregnancy Resource Center, the same should hold true for a grandparent. **Legacy Lost** is a great tool for Pregnancy Care Centers volunteers who have experienced the loss of a grandchild by abortion.

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### Boundless Light: Discovering Peace When Someone You Love Chose Abortion

**Boundless Light** *is the tool for anyone else who has been impacted by abortion.* The potential father of the baby, a niece or nephew or friends who have aborted. Before they begin to volunteer as a client advocate, they need healing as well. They need to first be healthy regarding abortion before they try to minister to those who seek abortions.

**Boundless Light** is a joint project shared with Sydna and is specifically designed for the extended relatives of an aborted child. It is more specifically for a **father or sibling** of an aborted child. But anyone – immediate family, other relatives, friends, or anyone that finds themselves wrestling with the fall out of someone else’s abortion. They too can discover that God’s word can lead them to find peace for themselves.

The following quotes help you realize why we need a study like **Boundless Light**:

*My spouse shared an abortion with another woman before we were married. I did not realize that I too would grieve that child until we started our own family. I have mixed feelings; I often feel like someone is missing and yet feel guilty that I am relieved I do not have to deal with a former lover’s child at the same time.*

*My sister’s abortion is a death that has no closure to it. It just hangs open, empty with lifelong grief of what could have been. I have missed so many things I should have enjoyed as an aunt. It humbles you and reminds you of your own sinful thoughts, words, actions. We all sin but this sin feels HUGE despite my not being involved in her decision.*

*It is a pain - a memory that when it resurfaces, it feels Gigantic. Every milestone of my living nieces and nephews can remind me of this lost family member.*

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*Then you remember how much you love those who did this. You remember how much your own forgiveness is due to God's grace and mercy and His love flows out of your heart and starts shrinking the pain again.*

For this type of pain, we need the promise from God's word – that our days of sorrow will end, as revealed in the following Scriptures:

- **Isaiah 60:20** - *Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.*
- **Psalms 119:130** - *The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.*

Abortion often introduces a darkness that covers all aspects of life, leaving others to stumble around in a shadow of death, not understanding why they feel the way they do. J.R.R. Tolkien, in his book, *The Hobbit*, gives a good description of the darkness and the effects it can have on our lives - *Darkness cannot be seen, cannot be felt, cannot be heard, cannot be smelt, it lies behind stars and under hills, and empty holes it fills, it comes first and follows, ends life, kills laughter.*

Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. It is comforting to know that God will guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:78-79).

**Both Legacy Lost and Boundless Light** model the same excellent study found in **Her Choice to Heal**. The abortion loss, the aftermath and the emotional and spiritual healing is all similar - to a woman who has aborted. The intensity is different because they did not physically endure the abortion.

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It is common to struggle with conflicting feelings and pain when someone you love and care for deeply has had an abortion. These feelings are not easily understood and can be confusing in our current society of abortion acceptability.

**Boundless Light** is a joint project shared with Sydna and is specifically designed for the extended relatives of an aborted child. It is more specifically for a **father or sibling** of an aborted child. But anyone – immediate family, other relatives, friends, or anyone that finds themselves wrestling with the fall out of someone else's abortion. They too can discover that God's word can lead them to find peace for themselves.

**Boundless Light**, as does **Legacy Lost**, approaches the abortion and healing with two basic healing models:

- You found out about the abortion after the fact. You did not have prior knowledge of the pregnancy and did not participate in any way with the decision to abort.
- You knew about or may have participated directly or indirectly in the abortion.

**Boundless Light** offers Peace! There are chapters which are specifically devoted to:

- Potential fathers of an aborted child
- A missing sibling
- Or another relative/family loss or friend
- Generational abortion situations relating to ancestors and abortion

Then we take the basic elements of **Her Choice to Heal** and apply that to everyone regardless of the involvement. Men do not typically embrace abortion recovery like women. There are many variables within that. Boundless light is less intimidating for men- because it does not come across as just

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a women's issue. But it does address the issues men have in a straightforward and non-condemning way.

### Potential Fathers

We use the terminology “potential fathers” as many men are not at all sure the lost child was their own. Many men avoid pain by going into denial, reverting to the mindset – it wasn't mine! Some even knew that another man COULD have been the father.

**Boundless Light** offers healing for four types of fathers:

- **The Guardian Father** who did not want his child to be aborted. When the unexpected pregnancy is discovered, the Guardian is typically supportive of a life decision.
- **The Not Included Father** who typically does not know about the woman's pregnancy. His role in the conception offers him indirect influence.
- **The Indifferent Father** who simply chooses to remain silent while the abortion is being decided, believing society's mantra that abortion is a “woman's right to choose.” They may not know how to express their opinion and simply shut down. They often make general statements like, “I'll support whatever choice you make...”
- **The Coercer Father** who pressured, enforced, or encouraged the abortion. He may threaten physical harm or abandonment if the woman is considering keeping the baby. He may have paid for the abortion and driven her to the clinic to make sure the abortion was completed.

Men are less likely to honestly confess the type of influencer they have been. That is why this study allows them to take a private and honest look at themselves. After he determines

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his type of influence, he is then referred to the chapters that promote his own recovery and healing.

## Siblings

**Six out of every ten women (60%) who undergo abortions are already mothers, with half of these women having at least two children.** Think about the siblings of aborted children who passed away before they were born. Imagine the number of siblings that are missing!

With 50+ years of abortion we have seen an increase of adult **siblings** of an aborted sibling contacting Ramah for abortion recovery. Uncovering the existence of a sibling who was aborted can be like a tsunami because it destroys the perceived family unit.

When a concealed abortion becomes known within a family the siblings may experience a wide range of emotions, including sorrow, frustration, and a deep sense of loss. Often these individuals struggle with survivor guilt- why was I spared?

## Demographics of Extended Abortion Pain

**Boundless Light** is for anyone who has been impacted by - or may have influenced someone else's abortion decision. These include

**Other family relatives** – Ten years ago I learned that my brother's ex-wife aborted his child because she did not want any more kids. Their marriage ended shortly afterward. Sydna learned that her great-grandmother performed an abortion on her Great Aunt which killed this woman and her child.

**A boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse** who is not the parent of the lost child but is still impacted due to his relationship with the child's parent

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Co-workers, youth ministers, pastors, pregnancy center staff, doctors, nurses, or abortion industry workers can also be impacted by someone else's abortion.

Regardless of the involvement - or lack of - *these secondary people can and often do have confusing feelings and may have experienced one of abortions aftereffects of a damaged relationship.* Suddenly something is off that is noticed and endured and they do not understand the dynamics abortion causes.

### Healing Process Outline

Once the abortion is identified the **following chapters** begin to address the healing aspects:

- **A Light Shining in the Darkness** chapter begins to identify and put the puzzle pieces of the symptoms of abortion pain together so that the journey towards peace and reconciliation with God can happen.
- **Denying the Light** - Light is a symbol of God's revealed holiness- goodness- knowledge - wisdom - grace and hope. Denial provides a protective barrier around the heart to help us cope when the Light of God is shrouded in darkness.
- **The shadow of Anger** – Addresses pride, lies and deception that often accompanies abortion.
- **The Light of Grace, Mercy, and Forgiveness** - Learning how to apply grace and mercy leads to forgiveness. Many do not know how to apply grace and mercy – it may be a foreign concept- one that must be learned. Jesus modeled it for us as he walked toward the cross on our behalf.
- **Walking in the Light** – Speaks about using our emotions for good- when others do not understand – grieving and honoring the lost child
- **Transformed and Living in the Light** – These chapters speak about walking a new path with a transformed

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heart- how to interact and better understand the post abortive person and when restoration does not happen.

In pregnancy center and abortion recovery efforts, do not be afraid to ask:

- Have you in the past influenced someone else's abortion?
- Have you been impacted by an abortion within your family?

Although these studies can be done in a private and individual setting it is recommended .to have a co-leader or an accountability partner during this process. This helps to stay on track when things get tough to deal with and for being honest with themselves and others and especially with God. Because God cannot heal what we don't acknowledge to Him.

**A2 –Abortion Vulnerable: *Spiritual Warfare Unveiled: Understanding/Safeguarding Ministry Efforts***

Speaker: Sydna Massé

**Why Does God Allow “Evil?”**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. James 1:2-8*

*But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it. Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. Matthew 7:14-16*

Why are evil people used by the enemy to hurt and kill God’s people? Why were they allowed to be successful? Why does God allow evil? That’s a common question in life. Keep in mind that God has already won every battle. God uses each person, evil or good, for His own purposes. Each time I’ve encountered extreme levels of spiritual warfare, I’ve been led to praise God in the attack because I know from His Word that He has a plan in each trial in my life.

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If you are amid a spiritual battle, understand that you are not alone. In His perfect timing, God will reveal His purpose, so be sure to praise Him in advance for the victory. It confounds the enemy when we praise God during our pain!

### Common Wolf Mindsets in Pro-Life Work

**Mindset 1:** We need secular studies to impact post-abortive people. They won't come forward if they know we are working to help them using the Bible.

**Mindset 2:** Because of your abortion, you are a murderer. You KILLED YOUR CHILD! God can never use you. You are forever broken beyond repair.

**Mindset 3:** Here is a baby doll to represent your child. You can talk to this baby doll, bond with your child, and heal.

**Mindset 4:** God gave me a message for you...

**Mindset 5:** I could do a much better job in ministry than you do... I don't know why God gave you this ministry.

**Mindset 6:** If you don't get up on that platform and share your abortion testimony to end abortion rights, then you will have the blood of every child on your head that will be aborted from this day on.

**Mindset 7:** Body language – They can swagger or simply invade your personal space, working to make you feel their power.

**Mindset 8:** Bullying/Intimidation – Using terms like kill and murder to condemn those who are post-abortive.

**BIG POINT - Do Not Speak to the Dead** - God's Word strictly prohibits the act of communicating with the dead. *This includes children lost to abortion.* Throughout the Bible, clear

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warnings are given to God's people against consulting mediums and speaking to the deceased. For example, **Leviticus 20:5-7** highlights God's law opposing such practices and urging His people to pursue holiness.

The people of God were meant to be set apart from the rest of the world. Likewise, in **Deuteronomy 18:10-14**, God's people are commanded to abstain from sorcery and all related practices.

*1 John 4:1 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

*Isaiah 8:19-20 - And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

People are not omnipresent beings. God possesses the ability to hear the prayers of the entire world simultaneously. How is this possible? God is not confined by geographical boundaries; in fact, He is not limited by anything. God is present with people in Afghanistan and Arkansas at the same time.

However, this attribute is not transferable to humans. Even after death, individuals retain certain limitations. In other words, a person cannot exist on earth and in heaven simultaneously. When a person dies and goes to heaven, they cannot hear the conversations you may wish for them to hear as you stand over their grave or lie in bed during the late hours of the night.

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To eliminate this situation, *simply give them the opportunity to talk/write to God for Him to pass along these messages to lost children in His presence.*

### Recognizing the Jezebel Persona

*That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us.*

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

One of the worst insults anyone can receive is to be labeled a "Jezebel." This word is defined by the Encarta Dictionary as, "an offensive term that deliberately insults a woman's sexual activity or interactions." Each of us can display "Jezebel-like" attitudes at various times in our lives, especially when we think, "It's all about me!"

The good or evil nature of women can be related to their past experiences, mindsets, spiritual maturity, educational background, and more. But the "Jezebel syndrome" also may manifest in men! One thing is for certain, the "all about me" mindset is what helped promote abortion rights!

The most notoriously evil woman in the Old Testament was named Jezebel. She was a Phoenician princess who lived in ninth century B.C. and was married to Ahab, the king of Israel. Jezebel introduced tyranny and idolatry into the society of God's own people. In essence, she raised the standard of evil behavior one-hundred-fold!

The good versus evil in human hearts will always be with us, as outlined in Ecclesiastes, "*That which has been is what will be.*" Jezebel's behavior is not an isolated case in biblical history. We learn of another evil woman called Jezebel later

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in Revelation 2:20-23. Since this book was written after Jesus died, it's clear that this persona was still wreaking havoc among the church.

Revelation describes Jezebel this way - *Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.*

We know that “Jezebel-like” personas are among us—many unrecognized or simply tolerated in our ministries and congregations. The results of this behavior can bring great devastation to the work of God on earth.

Learning how to recognize these personalities and protecting our ministries from their destructive intentions remains a mystery to many. Some find out too late, and the dysfunction is too deep to stop. Others accuse good-hearted people of being a “Jezebel.” Many believe that only women can be “Jezebels,” when men are capable of the same behavior.

It is my hope that God would use this writing to help shine a light on the characteristics of these hearts, offer some ways to approach them, and reach them for God! God uses information to encourage those of you who are amid discovering a “Jezebel-like” person in your world and provide you with a *godly* way to deal with this personality.

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## Biblical Character References

**Diabolical Delilah** - Delilah is one of the first women in the Bible to use her beauty, charm, and sexuality to go directly against God's people, as relayed in Judges 16. The enemies of God's people during that time were the Philistines.

From Judges 15, we know that Samson loved riddles and often played "mind" games with the Philistines. He lied three times when he told Delilah how he could lose his strength. Delilah betrayed him each time by calling in the Philistine guards to take him away! His only defense was that he hadn't told her the truth.

Delilah's anger is outlined in Judges 16:15-16, *Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was tired to death.*

Delilah wore him down by saying he really didn't love her. Her tongue was more powerful than his God-given strength. He couldn't stand her nagging, and that weakness led him to divulge the truth of what would make him "weak as any other man." He must have known that she would reveal him that day as she'd done so three times before.

God had a plan even in Samson's weakness - to kill many of His enemies. The Philistines forgot that hair grows back! (Judges 16:28-30).

**Jezebel's Infamy** – Jezebel was incredibly competent, highly gifted, and extremely influential and powerful. She was a priestess of Baal, a generic, territorial god usually represented tangibly by a bull. Baal worship often involved

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self-mutilation, ritual prostitution, and infant sacrifice. Sexual promiscuity was a part of Jezebel's life. She often used seduction and sex to achieve her goals.

The parallels with Baal worship and today's societal behavior are more than coincidental, as outlined by pregnancy center's staff comments:

- Our clients often “cut” themselves in the modern-day form of self-mutilation. These teens relay that when they see blood, they are comforted to realize that they are still alive.
- The numerous sexual partners of the average woman today clearly coincide with ritualistic prostitution regardless of whether money is transferred.
- Abortion is today's form of infant sacrifice.

Jezebel selected a weak but powerfully placed husband so that she could control the country and eliminate any spiritual influence, specifically from the prophets of God. Instead of relying on God's power, Ahab married Jezebel to advance himself prominently in the world. Like Solomon before him, his marriage to a foreign bride impacted him greatly because her religious practices enticed him, as well as the Israelites, away from God.

God's magnificent miracle touched Ahab's heart that day, and he allowed the Israelites to slaughter the Baal prophets. What a victory for God's people! After that, Ahab ran home to tell Jezebel what had happened. Jezebel spewed forth her own prophecy against Elijah in I Kings 19:1, *So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.*

Elijah response to Jezebel's threat is disappointing. He had just witnessed God's **miraculous** power through his own faith!

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The bad guys were destroyed, God was glorified, and Ahab repented. What more could he ask? Forgetting what he had just experienced, Elijah ran for his life when he learned of Jezebel's threat. The prophet was human! But after a day's journey, Elijah repented to the Lord and fell asleep.

God sent His angel to wake Elijah and ask him, "*What are you doing here?*" (I Kings 19:9). He commanded Elijah to go out to stand on the mountain. The Lord himself passed by and many things happened – a great wind, an earthquake, and a fire. But God wasn't in the big stuff – *He was in the still small voice* (I Kings 19:11-12). Again, God asked, "*What are you doing here?*"

Elijah came up with excuses but finally admitted he was afraid for his life because, *I alone am left and they seek to take my life* (I Kings 19:14). Despite the incredible miracles, Elijah was terrified of a woman. God gave him a task then—*to anoint Jehu as King over Israel and Elisha as the prophet to replace himself.*

While Elijah thought he was all alone in his calling against Jezebel, God had others being prepared to complete the task. Jezebel never killed Elijah. God determined that about Elijah before he was born. He didn't give Jezebel the ability to follow through on her threat. Through King Jehu, Elisha participated in Jezebel's eventual demise in falling off her balcony and being eaten by street dogs.

**Horrifying Herodias** - The "Jezebel Persona" was recorded in another biblical character. This same personality comes again within the heart of Herodias in Matthew 14:6-11. She was Herod's wife during the time that John the Baptist was calling for people to repent. Herodias knew her husband lusted for her daughter, Salome. So, she used Salome to dance seductively for Herod. The King was moved with lust and

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promised the girl he would give her anything she asked. Prompted by her mother, Salome said “*Give me John the Baptist’s head on a platter.*” When presented with John’s head, Salome gave it to her mother.

### Recognizing Wolves/Ahabs/Jezebels

1 John 4:1 reveals sinful nature versus the fruit of the Spirit as outlined in **Galatians 5:16-26**: I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of *the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

With this list of characteristics, we can discern a wolf. **It is NOT judgmental to be cautious when the sinful nature, defined in this verse, becomes obvious.** Every person can be reached for Christ. However, that doesn’t mean they deserve a leadership position or authority over you.

Sinful nature represented RED FLAGS. The Fruit of the Spirit represents GREEN FLAGS. When I see one red flag when

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interacting with anyone, I go back to James 1 and speak a little and observe them.

### Sinful Nature Defined

When you consider a person's behavior as good or evil, be sure to follow a Scripture reference. Paul describes a clear and distinct outline of evil behavior in the above passage from **Galatians 5**. The dictionary defines each behavior this way:

**Sexual immorality** – relating to sex, sexuality or the sexual organs that are contrary to accepted moral principles,  
**Impurity** – contaminated – unclean because containing something harmful,

**Debauchery** – unrestrained, self-indulgent behavior; to persuade somebody to behave in an immoral way or to seduce someone,

**Idolatry** – extreme admiration or fanatical devotion to somebody or something – the worship of idols or false gods and witchcraft – the art or exercise of magical powers,

**Witchcraft** – the art or exercise of magical powers; the effect or influence of magical powers; or *alluring or seductive charm or influence*,

**Hatred** – a feeling of intense dislike, anger, hostility, or animosity,

**Discord** – disagreement or strife between people, things, or situations,

**Jealousy** – Feeling bitter and unhappy because of another's advantages, possessions, or good fortune,

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**Fits of rage** – extreme degree of anger – sudden and extreme anger, or an outburst of strong anger,

**Selfish ambition** – looking after own desires – is concerned with one's own interests, needs, and wishes while ignoring those of others. **Ambition** – desire for success – an aim or objective that somebody is trying to achieve,

**Dissensions** – Disagreement or difference of opinion, especially when leading to open conflict,

**Factions** – Dissenting minority within larger group – a group that is a minority within a larger group and has specific interests or beliefs that are not always in harmony with the larger group,

**Envy** – Wanting what somebody else has – the resentful or unhappy feeling of wanting someone else's success, good fortune, qualities, or possession,

**Drunkenness** – involving too much alcohol or occurring when people have too much alcohol,

**Orgies** – a gathering at which a group of people indulge in promiscuous sexual activity, or a period of indulgence in a particular activity or emotion.

Keep in mind that *to be evil doesn't mean you have to possess all these elements of sinful behavior*. The enemy loves to manipulate quietly, slowly, and seductively, working his way into hearts and rarely revealing himself.

**Idolatry** can mean many things—even the fanatical devotion to ending abortion! It is a worthy cause that, if taken too far, can open a heart to Satan's influence. Anger and pride build, which may invite judgment upon others who don't share their passion. These are all sin issues that may enhance the "wolf" in a dedicated person's heart.

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Attempt to meet family members of people whom you are considering joining in ministry. How a person treats others, especially their husband and/or children, usually reveals a person's true character. *How delightful it is when, her children rise to call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.* **Proverbs 31:28**

God's Word speaks about trust in **1 Timothy 6:20**, *Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. By professing it, some have strayed concerning the faith.*

### A Fruitful Spirit

The old spiritual song puts it simply, "*They will know we are Christians by our love.*" The fruit of the Spirit, as described in **Galatians 5**, is evident in the spiritually mature individual. While all of us can take steps forward and backward in our walk with God, our desire is to please and obey Him in everything. The dictionary defines the Spirit's fruit this way:

**Love** – strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties,

**Joy** – an intense feeling of tender affection and compassion,

**Peace** – a state of mental calm and serenity, with no anxiety,

**Patience** – the ability to endure waiting or delay without becoming annoyed or upset, or to persevere calmly when faced with difficulties,

**Kindness** – the practice of being or the ability to be sympathetic and compassionate,

**Goodness** – personal virtue or kindness,

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**Faithfulness** – consistently trustworthy and loyal, especially to a person, a promise, or duty,

**Gentleness** – being moderate in force or degree so that the effects are not severe,

**Self-control** – the ability to control your own behavior, especially in terms of reactions and impulses.

**Goodness** is made evident in the way a person addresses others. Trusting comes naturally when red flags rarely arise in their lives. If a red one appears, and the person is confronted with the truth in love, they repent and offer humble apologies. They are the people that our clients are drawn to instantly because their love and sincerity is evident.

The biggest part of protecting your ministry from wolves is to recognize this as a possibility. Don't trust everyone who enters your door. Don't go the opposite direction and look for evil in every heart. Just be aware that your enemy the devil prowls like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

### Sheep, Goats and Wolves

**Matthew 25:31-46** *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed*

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*Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

*"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

*"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'*

*"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

Sheep help "the least of these" in seven ways:

- Feeding others
- Providing the thirsty with a drink
- Welcoming strangers
- Clothing the naked
- Visiting the sick
- Going to prison to comfort there

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This passage outlines God will deal with those “goats” in our midst. We simply need to avoid allowing them any foothold in our ministry efforts.

**Wolves versus Goats** - Wolves are outright evildoers. Goats are lazy and do not do as God directs but are not necessarily evil or working actively against God. Wolves set out to do dastardly things. They might “play” at being a sheep or a goat, but their hearts are wicked.

### Safeguarding Your Ministry

**Be on Guard and Expect to be Attacked - Colossians 2:18-19**, *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”*

Be careful of anyone who approaches your ministry. The key to any person’s heart lies in Godly humility. Many people tend to think that because we are Christians, the “fit” will be a good one, mistaking willingness for a calling. Some are attempting to “atone” for their abortion. Being receptive to professional criticism without turning against you is another good sign of a humble heart!

**National Pregnancy Center Association Issues** - We are only as strong as our weakest link. National associations don’t typically understand the unique issue of the local pregnancy center at a state-to-state level. They also ignore abortion recovery efforts. They are only human beings who typically are paid large salaries and enjoy significant power and respect in the pro-life movement. They may not even share your faith!

The real hearts for God are those that did NOT come into this work for a paycheck. Large salaries lead to the red flag zones

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of behavior. While a workman is worth his wage, a CEO salary of near one quarter of a million dollars is staggering in non-profit management. These individuals can make decisions to protect their income versus assisting/protecting your ministry efforts.

In years past, when I was marketing a certain service for pregnancy centers, a national association leader, who was a member of our board of directors, offered to help. He stated that if I provided his organization with \$100 for every sale he sent our way, he'd be happy to help. He felt we were simply too inexpensive and could raise the amount we were asking by \$100 to cover these fees.

This level of “scratch my back and I'll scratch yours” is usually part of these associations' networks. This is one reason why Ramah International works directly with pregnancy and abortion recovery ministries. We refuse to pay for a seat at their table.

Always “follow the money.” Each non-profit organization has 990's available through IRS.com. A 990 is a yearly IRS reporting for a 501c3. They display how donated funds were used. Each dollar represents a “widow's mite.” You can also view board members' names in these reports.

**Listen to Their Conversations** - *Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge. By professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. 1 Timothy 6:20*

Talking about issues that relate to the fruits of the spirit is **NOT gossip** in a ministry environment. Again, how a person treats others, especially their husband and/or children, is usually a good portrayal of their true character. Inability to maintain control over what they say, or using condescending

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tones is a red flag that perhaps this person should not be in this sensitive ministry.

**Removing them from Your Team** - *Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Matthew 18:13-17.*

There are signs when it is time to remove a person from your team. If the person is a paid staff member, research the employment laws in your state to ensure that your actions are defensible and professional. If the person isn't displaying Christ-like behavior to clients and fellow team players or is creating dissension by saying things about you behind your back, it's time to be concerned.

It could be this person is emotionally struggling in working with the abortion issue. Have a conversation with the employee first about your concerns and give them a chance. If this doesn't work and problems still exist, document the reasons for concern and present this to the director or board for discussion.

**The Power of Weaknesses** - We know that God allows attacks to strengthen our faith and keep us humble and dependent on Him. Paul's thoughts about the "thorns" of ministry life, outlined in **I Corinthians 12:7-10** - *To keep me from being conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my*

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*weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

Those who work in the Pregnancy Center movement often witness **surpassingly great revelations** when children are spared from abortion. Each woman who finds healing through an abortion recovery program is evidence of God's incredible love and mercy.

Paul outlines the threat to witnessing these surpassingly great revelations—we can become conceited and take ownership of the miracles! God sends thorns to make us weak, so His power can be made perfect in us. These thorns can include:

- Weaknesses
- Insults
- Hardships
- Persecutions
- Difficulties

Some thorns are easier to manage than others. Weaknesses can be our normal human mistakes. Sometimes we say the wrong thing and make matters worse. We make human errors that can cause great harm to the organization.

Regardless of the circumstances, please understand that you are human! When you make a mistake, apologize to all parties, and learn to forgive yourself. The repentance that you offer can make the difference in another person's heart.

Insults and persecutions are always difficult to manage, especially when they come from other Christians. Since my involvement in this ministry, I have heard individuals attack the work of pregnancy centers saying we shouldn't be

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helping these sinful women and that we only encourage crisis pregnancies.

With the gentle and patient education of the Holy Spirit, we are moved to a more caring position. These are the hardest times to be gentle and sincere and respond in a Godly manner. Humility is instilled all over again with these judgmental attacks.

Hardships can come in small ways. Maybe your new car turns out to be a lemon or your old car gives up the ghost. Some leaders in ministry have experienced their children's own crisis pregnancy or demonstrations of rebellious behavior. God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and He will provide repeatedly.

**Don't Lose Heart!** - Paul's writings offer a picture of what a normal Christian life will offer in **II Corinthians 4:16-18** - *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

Paul knew ministry life would involve discouragement and that it is easy to "lose heart." This is often the goal of the enemy in using a wolf to attack us. It's on these "wasting away" days that we need to take time out to search for God's renewal. The next time you feel like you are wasting away, call a ministry friend who can understand and encourage you.

God will use each trial and tribulation to strengthen your faith and endurance. It's a race. It's not going to be over until we reach heaven. So, prepare yourself each day for the battle with the full armor of God and know that He will never let you down! The battle is already won!

## A3 - Leadership: The Wrap Around Model

Part 1 of 2

Speaker: Jessica Deese

### Program Overview

Our program is meticulously crafted to cultivate emotionally healthy disciples, facilitating long lasting and deep change at a foundational level. By offering a paradigm shift from conventional practices to a modernized approach in the pregnancy ministry sphere, we aim to transcend traditional boundaries and influence every facet of church and community life.

At the core of our model lies a commitment to nourishing deep-seated transformation that resonates beneath the surface of individuals' lives. By engaging in a holistic process of emotional healing and growth, participants are empowered to experience a profound shift that extends beyond immediate circumstances, fostering sustainable long-term impact in their communities and beyond.

Our approach not only seeks to address the immediate needs of individuals but also endeavors to instill a sense of resilience, empathy, and purpose that reverberates through all aspects of their lives. By nurturing emotional health and well-being, we aspire to equip individuals to navigate challenges, embrace transformation, and catalyze positive change within themselves and the world around them.

This is a mission to cultivate emotionally healthy disciples who are poised to effect enduring and transformative change, leaving a lasting impact on the world.

**NOTE:** The wrap-around care program aims to provide ongoing support, guidance, and education to individuals,

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fostering holistic development and well-being in a nurturing and supportive environment.

## **Client Outreach and Acquisition**

- Implement targeted marketing strategies to reach individuals in need
- Focus on building connections and trust with potential clients
- Marketing On-line with SEO and a faith-filled web manager

## **Initial Appointment: Virtual Health Assessment (VHA)**

- Purpose: Immediate contact to de-escalate crisis and start relationship building - not replacement for in person appointment. No scripts!
- Duration: 15-30 minutes
- Nurse-led health assessment and screening
- Introduction to program's holistic approach
- Emphasize connection and care over clinical details

## **In-Clinic Appointment**

- Follow-up to VHA, not a replacement
- Comprehensive Pregnancy and Options Education
- Abortion education and alternatives discussed with compassion
- Medical services provided as needed
- Ensure clients feel supported and valued

## **Third Appointment: Follow-up and Emotional Assessment**

- Focus on emotional well-being post-initial services
- Offer referrals to wrap-around care services for ongoing support
- Provide resources and guidance for individuals in crisis pregnancy

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- Aim to restore and strengthen family units through faith-centered care

## Key Principles

- Relationship-Centered Care: Focus on building meaningful connections with clients
- Holistic Approach: Address physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of individuals
- Faith Integration: Center services around Christ-centered values and support
- Restoration and Discipleship: Seek to bring healing and restoration within families, aligning with God's original design

**Note:** All appointments and interactions are centered on *nurturing relationships* and providing comprehensive care to support individuals facing crisis pregnancies.

## The Wrap-Around Care Program

### Client Referral to Program

- Clients referred after initial program appointments
- Focus on continued support and holistic care

### Initial Meeting and Evaluation with Program Director

- Program Director assesses client needs and goals
- Establishes personalized care plan for every individual
- Emphasize trust-building and rapport
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### "Getting to Know You" Form

- Client and mentor fill out a form to understand backgrounds and preferences
- Form a basis for personalized mentorship and support

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## **Mentor Options: Onsite and Offsite**

- Onsite mentors provide in-person support and guidance
- Offsite mentors offer remote assistance tailored to client preferences

## **Branch off into Different Programs**

- Thrive Life Coaching - Focus on personal growth, goal setting, and life skills development
- Fatherhood Mentoring - Support and guidance for fathers during pregnancy and parenting
- Parenting/Pregnancy and Postpartum Classes
- Educational sessions on parenting, pregnancy, and postpartum care

## **Emphasis on holistic development of individuals (mind, body, and soul) - Three-Part Person Development:**

- Mind: Focus on mental well-being, personal growth, and coping skills
- Body: Promote physical health, wellness, and self-care practices
- Soul: Nurture spiritual growth, emotional healing, and faith development

## **Key Principles**

- Personalized Care: Tailoring support to individual needs and preferences
- Comprehensive Development: Addressing all aspects of individual well-being
- Relationship-Centered Approach: Building strong mentor-client connections for lasting impact
- Goal-Oriented: Setting targets for personal growth and development in mind, body, and soul

## Workshop B Topics

Thursday, October 10, 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Retreat Healing Class (Green Room) – with Melissa Horton & Bettina Loughman**

**B1 - Abortion Recovery Tract – *Reclaiming Intimacy: Sex, Abortion and Marriage* – Karen Fifer – LOCATION: Sanctuary**

**Synopsis:** Sexual dysfunction following an abortion is a private struggle that many couples face, yet it is seldom discussed. This hidden issue can deeply affect the marital union, challenging the fulfillment and closeness that marriage is meant to provide. This workshop aims to break the silence on this often-taboo subject, offering strategies to help participants address sexual healing both in the context of marriage and for single women. Join us to learn compassionate approaches to fostering healing and rediscovering oneness, aligning with God's intent for deep, meaningful relationships.

**B2 - Abortion Vulnerable Tract – *Compassionate Guidance: Supporting Individuals Facing Abortion Decisions* - Sydna Massé - LOCATION: Children's Room**

**Synopsis:** Join our workshop tailored to equip pregnancy team members working with individuals considering abortion. Topics encompass a balanced exploration of abortion pros and cons, introducing the common post-abortion issues, and the trauma associated with both medication and surgical procedures. Delve into the emotional impact of ultrasound scans, and discuss a past abortion experience when client is considering another. Additionally, explore aspects such as abortion anesthesia and pain management, and transitioning clients to abortion recovery programs.

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This workshop serves as a valuable resource for understanding the motivations and influences behind abortion decisions and providing support towards life-affirming choices for unplanned pregnancies.

### **B3 – Leadership Tract -*The Wrap Around Care Model* – Part 2 – Jessica Deese - LOCATION: Youth Room**

**Synopsis:** Join us for Part 2 of the Wrap-Around Ministry Model workshop, where we delve into essential elements for comprehensive support. These elements include:

- **Baby Boutique and Subscription Boxes:** Learn how to create a welcoming Baby Boutique offering vital resources for expectant parents. Explore implementing Subscription Box services tailored to each stage of pregnancy and early parenthood for long-term engagement.
- **Thrive-Life Coaching:** Discover transformative coaching principles empowering personal growth. Explore integrating coaching into pregnancy support services to enhance emotional resilience.
- **Onsite/Offsite Mentoring:** Gain insights into building supportive relationships, navigating coordination, and integrating spiritual care.
- **Individualized Care Plans:** Recognize the importance of tailored support services for each client while optimizing resources.
- **Implementing Comprehensive Support:** Explore effective staffing and organizational strategies for seamless integration.

### **B1 - Abortion Recovery: *Reclaiming Intimacy: Sex, Abortion and Marriage***

Speaker: Karen Fifer

Sexual dysfunction following an abortion is a private struggle that many couples face, yet it is seldom discussed. This hidden issue can deeply affect the marital union, challenging the fulfillment and closeness that marriage is meant to provide. This workshop aims to break the silence on this often-taboo subject, offering strategies to help participants address sexual healing both in the context of marriage and for single women. Join us to learn compassionate approaches to fostering healing and rediscovering oneness, aligning with God's intent for deep, meaningful relationships.

**This workshop addresses and is designed for a fairly healthy marriage.** Although a healthy group discussion could benefit all the women, abortion within marriage can create multiple issues that need to be addressed like trust, fear, abandonment, etc.

**Development of Sexual Dysfunction - How abortion affects a marriage.**

A young dragon slayer who lived in a land of dragons thought he had finally killed the last dragon only to discover a baby dragon hidden away in a cave. He took pity on the little dragon and told himself "I can make a difference in this dragon, he will be loved and raised by humans, and he will not want to eat or kill us when he grows up."

He made him a little bed in the corner of his bedroom, and they had great times together. He would pretend that it was not a dragon at all but a lovely little creature. They would play in the countryside, and he would cuddle and sing to the

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dragon at night. Everyone told him to beware that a dragon could not be tamed. He was determined to prove them wrong.

The dragon grew and grew and soon encompassed the entire room and yet he continued to believe his dragon was tame even when the flames and smoke began to come from his nose.

One morning he woke up with the dragon standing over his bed. It was that moment when he saw the dragon's eyes he finally understood and could no longer deny that his little friend was indeed a dangerous dragon. A second of reality came too late. **The dragon killed him and had him for breakfast.**

The moral to this story is what we ignore will kill us. It is the unseen unnoticed changes that creep into a relationship and change things. Values can be destroyed. Relationships and a sense of safety and well-being are affected. Sin is like that.

Post-abortion sexual dysfunction is one of those dragons that may have become a pet in many marriages. It is possible to love and love deeply but then deny any effects of abortion to the sexual aspect of marriage because the marriage is still intact and may be somewhat healthy.

Ignored and denied, it lurks in the bedrooms of many post-abortive couples destroying what they long for most **intimacy** ... a connection that has been lost! One spouse may know the dragon exists and sees the dragon eating away at the marriage but the other can be in total denial. Or the dragon is alive and well enjoying himself in the silence of bedroom dysfunction until one day he snaps, and all intimacy has been devoured.

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When we have been deceived and lied to it becomes easy to deceive and lie to ourselves. Repressing, stuffing, and refusing to acknowledge never works.

The three most common arguments in marriage are about sex, money, and children. They often arrive in that order. Sex is the most frequent source of conflict between couples. Abortion can change our view of sexuality. It changes the level of respect toward each other. *Honor turns to dishonor and respect to disrespect.*

Love has changed; it loses a level of trust as it once was. It says that you are no longer as safe as you may have once thought. It all filters down into the sex life of a marriage.

A guilt-ridden woman can feel she doesn't deserve to enjoy sex. A guilt-ridden man suffers in sexual silence because he is just trying to protect his wife since he's the one who allowed the abortion dragon into the bedroom. For marriages that survive abortion it can take a toll on all aspects of the relationship.

In 1987 there was a survey of one hundred women with an average of 11 years post abortion called "Sexual Dysfunction Related to Induced Abortion," by Thomas W. Strahan, J.D. He reported:

- **Sixty-two** percent report a loss of pleasure from sexual intercourse.
- **Fifty** percent developed an aversion to sexual intercourse or became sexually unresponsive.

A 2006 study from China reports that more than 30% of women report a reduction in both frequency of vaginal intercourse and sexual desire. Their partners also reported a reduction in sexual desire.

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The conclusion was that the sexuality of both women and their partners can be impacted after abortion. This may be due to psychological trauma and the worry of an unwanted pregnancy. (Reference: European Journal of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Biology, 2006 vol. 126 Wing Yee Fok, SIU Shing-Shun Nelson, Tze Kin Lau).

Sydna has already shared about how hard it is to get accurate post abortion statics in the Post-Roe Update keynote. There is no good research available on how abortion affects sexual intimacy in marriage. Although these are old studies, it probably still holds true for many post-abortive marriages today. The discussions in our groups bear this out.

*These women are in a Christian led study and there is a perception that sex is a taboo topic. There is a fear about talking about the nitty gritty of sex. Everyone knows that sex is why they are here but discussing it seems inappropriate in a bible study.*

It is a topic that often is boiling in the background for attention and given the right context it's like a volcano erupting. All it takes is one brave woman to breach the topic and it becomes the topic of the evening. *Have you ever had this topic dominate a group discussion? Have you shied away from the topic out of fear of not knowing what to say?*

Over the years we have seen is a decrease in the number of post abortion years before women attend PA recovery group. Along with an increase in the number of women who are married to the father of the aborted baby.

Sexual dysfunction within a marriage is the dragon in the room that often does not get addressed. Often these

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marriages have been turned into a prolonged mutually destructive mourning ritual.

Sexual Dysfunction is often one of the most common complaints among **married** post-abortive women. Here are reasons why that is the case:

- Abortion is a sexually traumatic experience for men and women.
- Sex for women is the same position as the abortion.
- Abortion involves the same organs as in sexual act.
- Sex equates pregnancy or possibility of pregnancy.
- Sex is being vulnerable, and it is easier to disengage emotionally, which is often what happens during abortion. This causes sexual detachment.
- Sex involves letting go of inhibitions to enjoy the sex act.

If you are seeing these changes or just getting started in this ministry, the need to address the sexual health of intact marriages is important.

Deep marital issues should be referred to a professional counselor. *It is not intended to deal with sexual abuse.* That requires an entirely different type of healing model individually and for a couple usually with a trained professional counselor.

Although a healthy group discussion could benefit all the women. Abortion within marriage can create multiple issues that need to be addressed. Trust, fear, abandonment, etc. Sadly, some men and women will turn to pornography. It's not just a men's issue. Pornography only serves to deepen the disguise of the dragon! **This too needs a deeper level of counseling.**

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Your role as an abortion recovery leader is not intended to deal with Pornography or past sexual abuse. Those issues require an entirely different type of healing model individually and for a couple- usually with a **trained professional counselor**.

**We are Not marriage counselors.** Your desire and focus are on helping women and men heal from abortion.

**Abortion is far more stressful on men than the public would generally think.** Men report thinking about the abortion for years afterward and having feelings of sadness and experience problems that are a direct result of their abortion experience. Including:

- broken relationships,
- sexual dysfunction,
- substance abuse,
- self-hate,
- risk taking,
- suicidal behaviors and
- increased feelings over time of helplessness, guilt, depression,
- anger tendencies and
- a sense of lost manhood.

These are all the same emotions women deal with. Only men rarely discuss them. Again, this can cause a leaning toward pornography to fulfill the lack in a marriage.

**Breaking Sexual Soul Ties (Module 8 - HerChoicetoHeal.com)** has been a very freeing activity to help women/ men and couples break free from past sexual bondage and the ghosts that linger in the bedroom. It is part of the *Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery* program. This activity allows people to get rid of the ghosts of past relationships and be free to

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totally give themselves to their partner in marriage. **It is also a good After Care topic.**

Healing damaged sexual relationships is a natural outcome of breaking free from the bondage of sexual partners outside of marriage or sex before marriage. **Groups are now emerging for men.** This lost partner of abortion is one that has been needed and anticipated by many for years. Don't be afraid to invite men to attend a study or a weekend recovery. *But only with the permission of the women who are attending.* When I have had a man attend a group and this topic came up, he expressed similar sexual symptoms.

Married women know the importance of sexual intimacy in marriage especially for her husband. But what women know about the importance of sexual intimacy and what they tell us are two different things.

Women in groups have made the following statements:

- Use of the term Uninterested comes up often.
- I don't enjoy sex; I just go through with it and hope it is over quickly.
- If I can help it, we only have sex every 3-4 months.
- Why would I want to have sex? I don't want him to touch me.
- I don't deserve to have any pleasure in this area because that is what caused abortion in the first place.
- I enjoy sex to a point, but I no longer have an organism, and I don't know why.
- Why can't we just have a relationship without sex all the time?

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This leaves one of two options:

**Go through the motions** by hiding true feelings or learning how to fake orgasm to get it over quickly. *Many do not realize that faking it is the same as “lying.”*

**Withdraw from the relationship sexually and emotionally** by only allowing sex on a limited basis.

Each of these options reminds women (and the men that love them) knowing there is more. They are afraid to be honest about the underlying cause. *They want change but have no one to help them because abortion is a sexual problem that is rarely discussed.*

One woman told me that she and her husband made a pact to never discuss the abortion and that meant never! Many years later even after she had gone through a healing group her sex life with her husband still suffered.

She became one of my PA leaders. After an intense session in a group about this topic she later spoke to me in private. Although healing had taken place in their marriage, her husband still avoided any conversation with her about the abortion. He used it as an excuse to protect her – and well as himself - from the tears and pain he had caused.

She admitted she often would purposely fight with him if she felt he was wanting sex to avoid intimacy. She didn't understand why. She desired their intimacy but then would sabotage it. She realized that God had His hand on their marriage.

Fear had prevented them from approaching the abortion sexual connection. Bringing it up brought bouts of intense pain. Her husband felt like she was finger pointing. Her

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words were - *it was like an infection, if an infected wound is not treated the wound can heal but the infection can spread to another area of the body.*

By avoiding their sexual issues, the infection can pop up everywhere else. Remember all healing is a process. Sexual healing is also a process and can only begin once each member has worked through abortion healing as a couple.

Husbands can often heal through their wives' healing. She heals and then communicates with him. Open conversations begin and filter into the entire marriage.

When abortion has been part of a marriage, recovery work can be a silent unvoiced threat to husbands. *It is viewed as a reminder of how he hurt her or can be seen as a punishment.* It is an open exposure of his sin, his failures as a man. This occurs even if he understands the need for her to heal.

It is also not unusual for a husband or wife to learn of their spouse's abortion after they are married. This can bring into a marriage the same sexual symptoms. Even confessed and lovingly forgiven, couples may not relate intimacy problems to a past abortion, especially if it is with someone else.

When couples keep a past abortion secret from each other it prevents them from giving and receiving unconditional love and deprives the relationship of the opportunity to reach its full potential. *Keeping secrets says you are not safe!*

I have heard stories of directors of pregnancy centers, pastor's wives, and pastors themselves who have never told their spouse about a past abortion until they were forced by circumstances or God. It's taboo. Any connection intimacy wise is shielded from help. *It is the dragon lurking in the corner of the bedroom!*

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**Remember:** *God will always honor the truth. He does not want secrets in marriage. The power of destruction held within a secret is only as great as the secrets we keep.*

Another woman told me she only wanted to have sex with her husband if they were trying to make a baby. Otherwise, sex was not important to her. They both had come to Christ as newlyweds and had no idea how to deal with the abortion because no one knew about it. They had aborted right before the wedding. Sex was different for them right away. She had her anger, and he retreated to overworking.

Secretly he was relieved when two years into the marriage she sought help and began to communicate her pain. He had no idea how much her healing would affect him too. As a couple they would read her recovery bible study book together and look up scriptures together and answer the questions.

After the weekly group discussions, she would go home and relay to him what was discussed during the group. She credits the Bible study to saving their marriage.

**It is not always women who have a sexual reaction to abortion.** Research has shown that men can have low libido after an abortion. In “Men and Abortion: Lessons, Losses and Love,” Arthur Shostak of Drexel University reports that abortion is far more stressful on men than the public would think. He goes on to say that men report thinking about the abortion for years afterward and having feelings of sadness and experience problems that are a direct result of their abortion experience.

Including:

- Broken relationships,
- Sexual dysfunction,

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- Substance abuse,
- Self-hate,
- Risk taking,
- Suicidal behaviors,
- Increased feelings over time of helplessness, guilt, depression,
- Anger tendencies,
- A sense of lost manhood.

These are all the same emotions that hit women. Sadly, men rarely discuss them. Males can feel bound to a code of silence. Abortion reinforces a defective problem-solving method by males and encourages detachment, abandonment, and irresponsibility. Add this to the post-abortive woman's symptoms and we can understand the sexual dragon of dysfunction in a surviving marriage in a whole new way!

Abortion has never been known to solve relationship problems. Men are likely to believe it is their manly duty not to aggravate their lover's emotional recovery with an expression of doubt or grief. A guilt-ridden male does not easily love or accept love.

Proper closure to abortion by mourning the loss of the child as a couple is difficult and necessary. Memorials help. You might consider inviting husbands to a memorial; providing all in the group agree to outside attendees.

One father stood in the back of the room he refused to sit with arms crossed with that look that said, "I would rather be anywhere but here." He came because his wife pressured him into it. He wanted to support her.

As the other women read their letters and named their children. He began to cry. When it was his wife's turn, he

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walked forward and stood beside her and openly wept as they grieved their child together. It was a sacred moment for everyone. Society does not allow couples to acknowledge the lost child and grieve in a proper way.

Married couples need open communication about how abortion has affected the relationship. When abortion is a taboo subject within the marriage it becomes a silent destroyer of the relationship. The intimate part of the relationship that is still longed for, but the connection is lost. Many post-abortive couples have turned off the switch subconsciously to being able to respond to their mates the way that God intended.

What is often ignored in relationships becomes the dragon that destroys and eats away at the relationship until it no longer resembles what God had intended it to be or what the couple had hoped and dreamed marriage would be.

Healing sexually in marriage involves that the death of a child must be FORGIVEN and GRIEVED to allow the bond to heal between them. Men grieve differently than women and we should let them. For most that is started by attending a post-abortion recovery group.

One of the men who attended a weekend recovery group had pressured his wife to abort while he was in medical school. After they both had become believers in Jesus Christ, she attended an abortion recovery group in another state. He is the one who admitted he had the same symptoms of the women when sex came up.

The stage of denial can last for many years. Once denial is over, the grieving begins to take place. Couples feel better and often do not associate their sexual dysfunction with

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abortion since so many years have lapsed. *Recovery involves healing or changing our actions and thoughts in those areas.*

## Good News/ Bad News of Sexual Dysfunction

*Flee Immorality. Every other sin a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 1*

**Corinthians 6:18**

Most don't think of abortion within a marriage as immoral. Abortion is an immoral sexual act because for both parties it involves reproduction which is accomplished by sex.

**The Bad News** - Sexual problems in marriage mirror this type of sexual sin. It is against our own bodies. Since we know and understand that abortion is immoral it becomes wrapped in the sexual oneness of marriage by the very nature of pro-creation. It affects our bodies, our minds, and our spirituality. Our bodies remember when our minds do not.

**1 Corinthians 7:3-5** - *The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

Scripture joins us in this thought by speaking of the union between man and woman and encouraging them to willingly give their bodies to each other sexually. It's a mutual agreement.

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Scripture also admonishes us to **not** withhold sex except for short times and then only in agreement or for prayer and fasting. **1 Corinthians 7:5** - *Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

God gives us beautiful pictures of sexual oneness in Song of Songs. He calls the church “His bride” showing us a reflection of the relationship God wants to have with his people; how God wants to know and be known by his people. Intimately!

**The Good News** - We have been bought with a price; therefore, we can glorify God in our body. **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** - *Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.*

Christ bought us with a price...His blood can restore us back to what God had intended us to be and in all ways that he intended for us. Since we have been *bought* -- we can glorify God in our bodies and in our sexual relations within the marriage covenant. (vs. 20)

Let the marriage bed be held in honor among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled. This is revealed in **Hebrews 13:4a** - *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure...*

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We typically think of this verse regarding infidelity/adultery in marriage, or as a safeguard against such things. But when we really look at the word undefiled it can have new meaning for a man and wife.

- Dictionary Definition - *Defiled; to make dirty, foul, or unclean; to violate the chastity of, to desecrate.*
- Strong's Concordance, Greek Dictionary Definition: *To sully or taint, i.e., contaminate (ceremonially or morally).*
- The Greek Lexicon defines Defiled as: *Free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed and debased, or its force and vigor impaired.*

### Ways we defile the marriage bed:

- With our thoughts
- Our actions – withholding sex.
- Harboring unforgiveness.
- Being disconnected.
- Resisting change.
- Fear

Sexual Integrity is a basic tool to protect our marriage beds. **Integrity is defined as the state of being whole or entire, a sound or unimpaired condition.** It gives a picture of being complete.

To be sexually defiled regarding the marriage bed is to deprive each other of the oneness that God intended we have. The one flesh principal of Genesis. In **1 Corinthians 7:3–5** listed previously, the Bible tells us to not deny or deprive each other sexually. Our bodies belong to the other mates in the marriage and there is no shame in that!

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But in abortion, there is a wound. The sex part of the marriage is broken. If Satan can tempt us from lack of self-control, he gains a foothold in our marriage and certainly in the one flesh of sexual intimacy.

The beautiful thing that God intends for our pleasure/ becoming one flesh or truly completely intimate within a marriage has become debased or its **vigor is impaired**. It can become soiled with abortion's consequences.

The patterns of sexual dysfunction over time become entrenched in our minds. Our bodies read our minds and respond to what is happening inside our heads. Both parties need the brain and the body to communicate integrity or wholeness and completeness again. It is a process.

The women who attend post-abortion recovery groups need help and direction to make the repairs. The switch is off, and the power is not flowing.

Forgiven for the sin, yes. When it is repented, it can be restored. *Restored and sexually undefiled, maybe not right away. But it can happen.*

**Sexual Dysfunction employs the following:** *Don't trust. Don't feel. Don't talk. Be in control.* This result in the following:

- **Changes in desire – Don't trust** - Loss of interest in sex.
- **Changes in responses – Don't feel** - Loss of enjoyment or orgasms.
- **Changes in health** – Depression, anxiety, fear, and doubts. Painful sex (std's can affect sex) due to botched abortions/cervical damage.
- **Changes in passions – Don't talk** – Inhibitions and being disengaged emotionally.

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- **The need to be in control** of what happens, when and how – sex in the dark, only in bed, a certain position, no foreplay, etc.

All of these create a sense of **aloneness** in marriage, which **symptoms** include:

- Anxiety over sex
- Loss of interest in sex
- Guilt
- Fear
- Painful sex
- Sexual inhibitions

In Genesis, the broken relationship with God between Adam and Eve produced disconnection from each other as a couple. It's a fact that all of us struggle with today in some form or another.

As fallen human beings we have an awareness of this state of disconnection that we were born into and long to reconnect. This caused our sexuality to have two dimensions. *One is our awareness of how profoundly we are disconnected from each other. The other is all the manners we sexually go about trying to reconnect.*

It is possible to be married and share the same bed and be very disconnected. It is possible to be married and share the same bed and even have sex regularly and still be profoundly disconnected.

**You are as sick as the secrets you keep.** If there are secrets that haven't been shared, topics that can't be discussed, things from the past that are forbidden to be brought up, it can cripple a marriage.

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A sexually healthy marriage should be the opposite of - *don't trust - don't feel - don't talk. Be in control to become sexually one flesh.* The healing process offered in post-abortion recovery groups involves the process of releasing anger, forgiving, grieving together. It sets the stage for restoring sexual health in a marriage.

*Open communication about abortion restores trust.* When our feelings are shared without condemnation of each other, it facilitates mutually accepting sexual advances without one or the other being in control.

Often the first-time abortion is shared, the husband realizes his wife needs help dealing and encourages outside support. But he is often reluctant to admit he is also struggling. The best scenario is for the husband to attend a recovery group for himself. However, this is not always possible.

### **Steps toward Healing Sexually Damaged Relationships**

Physical health is essential. Exercise releases endorphins which are healers and pain relief and reduces stress. We need to reduce caffeine and stress and eat fruits, veggies, and drink water as it cleanses toxins!

**Resolving emotional conflicts requires:**

- **Open Communication** is the key to any type of marital conflict especially when it comes to this topic.
- Set aside **time to talk** while fully clothed. Not when one or the other is trying to initiate sex.

A sexually healthy marriage needs three things for restoration:

- Are you safe?

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- Do you love me?
- Will you always be there when I need you?

This can take open communications and time to restore deep intimacy.

### **Restore Spiritual Relationships by:**

- Read God's word - Song of Solomon – Beloved is the woman's part.
- Pray together, you might be surprised how many couples don't do this.
- Take thoughts captive by renewing your mind with the word.

Encourage women to surround herself with women who love their husbands and glean from them. For most people, listening to others complain about sex never helps.

### **Single Clients**

If you have single women in your group, she has just heard how married women are struggling sexually. She too may be struggling herself and wondering if she will ever have anything to offer in a marriage. Then this is a good place to learn steps for healing in this area to be applied later in their lives!

If not addressed; these types of conversations about sexual dysfunction will confirm her fears that she is broken and defective and that she has nothing to offer to a man or a marriage. It is important that she hears sexual healing is possible. She can be restored and made new, as a new and vibrant bride waiting for her husband to come. Now is the

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time to address this before she enters marriage and struggles.

It is hard to approach this topic when the focus is on PAS healing. There is always a danger in groups to get off on rabbit trails. We do not want to take away from the group. Which is why you might want this in an after-care setting. Or devote an additional night to this topic.

The caution for the single woman is that they understand sex is **for** and **within** the marriage covenant.

**Be prepared to give Scriptures** that reveal this truth. Here are some to look up and read aloud if possible:

Genesis 2: 24

Mark 10:8

Colossians 3:5

1 Corinthians 6:18

1 Corinthians 7:2

Hebrews 13:4

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

Ephesians 5:31

Matthew 19:5

2 Corinthians 12:21

Ephesians 5:3

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1 Peter 2:11

Romans 12:1

1 John 1:9

Single women can learn a new appreciation for marriage and all that it can be and need a safe place to hear and explore these truths. Be prepared to teach her what the Word of God says about sex. She will likely be involved with a man in her future and possibly marry. Understanding how to heal her sexuality will be the best gift to give a future husband.

If there are single women in the group, it adds a whole different dynamic. There is a need for wisdom in this area. This story is an example that helped me understand that single women need this information. A single woman who recently came to Christ attended our weekend retreat. During

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the retreat she voiced her own conviction that she wanted to be abstinence until marriage.

A couple of years later, she married the youth pastor from her church. Shortly after their honeymoon, they both came to see me. She reported that the honeymoon had been a wonderful experience sexually. But lately she had become so guilt ridden about enjoying sex. She felt like because of her abortion she did not deserve that kind of love and enjoyment. Her husband was at his own loss to be able to help her, as they didn't want to expose her abortion to others to seek help.

We walked through God's forgiveness and restoration. I used verses and we talked through them as a couple. I asked her a simple question; knowing that Jesus bought you with his blood and completely forgave all your sin. *Is that what God would say to you? That you do not deserve sexual enjoyment?*

It was a matter of reminding her all that God had accomplished in her life. About a year or so later I had the pleasure of being with them again when they came back for a pregnancy test for their first child.

Sex is the dragon in the bedroom and in our abortion recovery groups. We cannot always address every situation that arises in a group. Sexual dysfunction is a symptom that cannot be ignored within a marriage.

Do not let it monopolize the group. Acknowledge it and promise to address it later at an agreed upon time. This topic can be discussed on a much deeper level in after care groups or a one-on-one session, if necessary.

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Often just the opportunity to verbalize this need in a safe environment along with a healthy discussion and tips for communication can go a long way in helping to resolve this topic within a healthy marriage. Set aside another time and give them hope that this too can begin to change just by attending and completing a group.

Talk to your group to see what works best but do not ignore this vital marital relationship matter! We often address sexual healing in an after-group bible study. **Shattering Sexual Soul Ties** is a good start. It is available in Module 8 on [HerChoicetoHeal.com](http://HerChoicetoHeal.com).

It is ok to let the group know that you are willing to discuss this topic outside of the group or add another evening where you can devote the entire evening to this subject. Set a time to do so before the group ends. Otherwise, you may not do it. If you are uncomfortable going there it is still good to have a working knowledge to understand the woman in your group. If needed, never hesitate to refer her to a good therapist.

**NOTE:** *This is also a time that women may become honest about any past sexual abuse which they may not have been honest about in the intake paperwork or conversations. Sexual abuse should be referred to a professional counselor. It's important that you have a trusted professional that you can refer to for marriage or sexual abuse counseling.*

**B2 - Abortion Vulnerable: *Compassionate Guidance: Supporting Individuals Facing Abortion Decisions***  
Speaker: Sydna Massé

**Common Issues of the Post-Abortive**

*Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment. There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace – Proverbs 12:19-20*

Post-abortion trauma has many “faces” depending on the variables surrounding the abortion situation and the fall out in our lives afterwards. The ordeal and time since making this choice, as well as ongoing healing in Christ, impacts ongoing peace as well. Below are a few common issues that can present themselves during a post-abortive life experience:

**Guilt** – A mother’s heart is genetically designed to, “protect her child at all costs.” Abortion short-circuits that basic human genetic instinct. This can lead to feelings of guilt. A common guilty reaction after abortion could be that the person believes future bad events occur because they “deserve it” for choosing abortion.

**Anxiety (i.e., anxiety attacks)** - Many reveal that after their abortion they started feeling tense and could not relax. Some outline physical reactions like dizziness, pounding heart, upset stomach, headaches. They may worry about the future, struggle to concentrate and not be able to sleep. It is often difficult to understand the source of anxiety.

**Avoiding Children or Pregnant Women** – It is common for post-abortive people to avoid children, especially pregnant women or children that would have been around the age of their aborted child. This avoidance can include skipping baby showers, avoiding the baby aisle at the grocery store,

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walking around the block to avoid a playground, or making excuses to escape events that include children or pregnant women.

**Feeling “Numb”** – To avoid painful thoughts after abortion, many post-abortive people work to shut off their emotions. That could mean abandoning friendships and family, particularly if they remind them of the abortion experience. When someone shuts down emotionally, they do not feel sorrow or joy. Many turn to drugs or alcohol to assist in numbing these memories that result in guilt or anxiety.

**Depression** - Everyone is sad occasionally. After an abortion, gloomy feelings can make the person feel hopeless and unlovable. They may cry uncontrollably for no reason and/or feel like they are going crazy. Perhaps they cannot eat or sleep or eat too much and sleep all day. The things they used to enjoy are avoided.

**Thoughts of suicide** – Some post-abortive people become so sad that they think it would be easier to die than continue living. Others miss their lost child so much that they want to join them to hold them at last.

**Anniversary Triggers** – This “anniversary” can be the aborted child’s due date, or the date of the abortion. On these dates, the post-abortive can feel horrible for no apparent reason. It can take years to understand that these dates are related to their abortion experience.

**Experiencing the Abortion Again** – A post-abortive person’s mind can be suddenly transported back to the abortion clinic and re-experience their abortion. Memories can be triggered by simple sounds heard during the abortion procedure – like a vacuum cleaner or a dentist drill. For those who endured medical abortions, it can be the sound of a toilet flushing.

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Yearly pap tests can also resurrect these memories. Others experience ongoing nightmares involving children, perhaps in pain. They can even have the same nightmare repeatedly.

**Wanting to get pregnant again** – It is normal to want to get pregnant again as soon as possible after *any* pregnancy loss. Most do so out of a desire to make sure they can still have a baby. Others hope to “replace” the life that was lost during the abortion. This is often referred to as an “atonement” or “replacement” pregnancy.

**Fear of Infertility** – Many women worry about being able to get pregnant again. They fear they have aborted the only child they will ever have. Others suspect the abortion could have mutilated their body in some way.

**Unable to Bond with Present or Future Children** – If the post-abortive person has children before or after the abortion, these family members can be a constant reminder of the person they aborted. This pain can result in the person distancing themselves emotionally or even abandoning these children, believing they are disqualified to be a parent.

**Fear that Their Children Will Die** – Some post-abortive people live in fear that children they had before or after the abortion could easily die. This fright can lead these parents to *overprotect* their children to an unhealthy level.

**Eating disorders** - Episodes of anorexia or bulimia are common for post-abortive people. Some get fat or thin to avoid anyone wanting them sexually as that could lead to another pregnancy. Eating is also something an individual can personally regulate when their life feels beyond their control.

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**Alcohol and Drug Use** – Drugs and alcohol often serves as a tranquilizer that helps the post-abortive keep the memories of an abortion at a distance. They can help calm anxiety and promote sleep. Sadly, the overuse of these elements can lead to other problems at a mental and physical level.

## Unwrapping an Abortion Story

Here are some questions to ask if you discover that they have already experienced abortion. **Please don't ask every question on this list.** Asking just one question can ignite a recall of all their past abortion details. We are including ideas to get the conversation started so the Holy Spirit can lead further discussion based on their responses. While they may not answer your questions directly, *they are answering them in their mind.*

**How did you make that choice?** Here is where you will discover their motivation and fears. Did they feel forced into the abortion by family members or friends?

**What was the procedure like?** For many women, what keeps them from having additional abortion(s) is the memory of the pain they endured during the abortion procedure. For those who had anesthesia, they could be more likely to choose abortion again because the first experience was not painful.

For those who endured **medical abortions (aka abortion pill)**, they could have come face-to-face with a tiny human! These are the cases that are exceedingly difficult because denial isn't possible. Many have relayed that they immediately felt led to "flush" after the baby passed and expressed great regret in that action. Others have retrieved the small sac and took great care to bury/preserve it. Some others have retained the sac in some way and need an additional surgical abortion procedure.

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Understanding each mind-set will allow you to assess their level of abortion vulnerability. Remind them by simply asking them to share about the previous abortion could be sufficient to help them choose life!

**How old would your baby be today?** With this question you can assess their level of regret. Many women were told the baby was only a “blob of tissue” and cling to this to maintain denial. If the woman has spent time thinking of this lost child - *and can provide you with the age her aborted child would have been* - she is clearly aware of the pain and may need some extra time with you to understand that healing is available.

**What happened to your relationship after the abortion?** Many women abort because the father said it is a requirement to continue the relationship. Did they stay together? Are they happier now? Did the abortion help their lives? Your goal is to get them to understand that abortion wasn't a good choice before – and it's not a good choice now.

**Does your family know about your past abortion?** To maintain the secrecy of their sexual involvement from their parents, many chose an abortion. By asking this question, you can determine whether their parents are still a motivator to the current decision.

### Abortion Pro and Con Activity

This is an activity to do with the abortion-vulnerable individual which allows outreach workers to outline other aspects of abortion that the client may not have considered. It works well with either male or females.

**Materials Required:** Plain sheet of Paper and Pen and a copy of the “Common Issues of Post-Abortive Women” List.

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## Complete the following with the Abortion-Vulnerable Client:

- Fold the paper in half and then lay it flat,
- Put a line down the middle of the sheet of paper,
- On the right side, write “Pros” at the top of the column,
- On the left side, write “Cons” at the top of the column,
- Next, ask the client what the “pros” are (good reasons) for choosing abortion.

Record these responses under the “Pros” column using **printed** handwriting. Encourage them to think about this but don’t give her answers. It needs to be what they are thinking at that moment.

Ask the client what the “Cons” are (bad reasons) for choosing abortion. Print those answers under the Con column heading. Then give them the “*Common Issues of Post-Abortive People*” sheet. *Review each item quietly and calmly* asking what issue should go under on the Pros and Cons list. Let them think that through. Add the first words from the list either of the pro and/or con column – (i.e., Con – guilt, anxiety, etc.).

**Results:** *The cons list is typically longer than the pros list which provides an incredible “visual” on the negative aspects of abortion. Give both the list and the “Common Issues” sheet to the client to take home.*

## Abortion Pill Process

“My baby came out while I was in the bathtub, Sydna,” the distraught caller outlined. “My child’s body looked so human with arms, legs, and a head the size of a big bath bead. I didn’t know I was killing a tiny human. Will God ever forgive me?”

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**Medication abortion** – also called *the abortion pill* or *chemical abortion*– is one of the more traumatizing forms of abortion. Often referred to as an “at-home abortion,” this abortion process involves taking two different drugs – **mifepristone** and **misoprostol**. ([abortionpillrisks.org](http://abortionpillrisks.org))

Women typically receive their first pill of the hormone mifepristone at an abortion clinic. Now it is legal to ship this medication via the US mail without even a doctor’s visit to confirm the pregnancy. A mother’s body needs progesterone for her child to develop normally. Mifepristone simply blocks the pregnant woman’s ability to produce progesterone.

The second medicine – misoprostol – is given to the woman to take home. She is instructed to take this medication 24-48 hours after consuming the first drug. This medicine then initiates intense cramping and bleeding to ensure that the uterus empties out and the pregnancy is ended.

Planned Parenthood advertises medication abortion with the following narrative on their website – *With medication abortion, you don’t need to have a procedure in a doctor’s office. You can have your medication abortion at home or in another comfortable place that you choose. You get to decide who you want to be with during your abortion, or you can go it alone. Because medication abortion is like a miscarriage, many people feel like it’s more “natural” and less invasive .. -*

This advertising message is just another way of saying that the woman becomes her own abortionist. Many will then go on to say that they had a miscarriage versus an abortion.

After taking the second pill, many women go through incredible physical pain. Often alone, many will take a bath, hoping to subdue the cramping. Few understand that when a

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cervix opens to expel the unborn child, the woman's body is then susceptible to infection until the cervix closes again. Obviously, bathtubs are rarely as clean as surgical areas, so it is possible to die from an infection afterwards. Many women can then die from infections like sepsis.

### Emotional Impact

Unlike a surgical abortion procedure, the mother will likely view her "blob of tissue" when it passes out of her uterus. She may be at school, shopping, riding on a bus or anywhere when her baby is expelled. The mother then comes face-to-face with the humanity of her deceased child and must dispose of her child's body all by herself.

"I was at work," one woman outlined. "I was able to manage the cramping and bleeding enough to go to work. When I felt the baby passing, I rushed to the bathroom. I then came face-to-face with my tiny human child. My heart broke into a million pieces. I wrapped my baby in toilet tissue and smuggled it home under my coat. When I showed my husband our lost child, we both realized what a horrible mistake we had made. They never told me about this emotional impact at the abortion clinic or that our child was so developed this early in pregnancy!"

When asked how she disposed of the baby's body, she replied, "We have our baby in a tiny box on our dresser. When the ground thaws out, my husband and I plan to bury the box in the back yard and have a memorial for our child."

If the woman orders medication abortion online, there is no scheduled return visit to the abortion clinic for an ultrasound to ensure the womb is empty. If the child remains alive, a second abortion procedure is encouraged. The clinic may give another dose of these medications or revert to a surgical

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procedure. Either way, the woman is typically forced to pay the entire fee for a second abortion procedure and any resulting medical complications.

One woman outlined, “When I saw a tiny human at the bottom of the toilet, I panicked and flushed. My child is in now in the sewers, Sydna.” Many will flush afterwards without looking at their baby. In the following days, every toilet flush can then remind her of her abortion and lost child. Other women see nothing when they pass on the toilet and flush.

Abortion clinics often inform women that once they take the first abortion drug, they cannot change their mind and continue their pregnancy. This direction has no basis in fact. Doctors can reverse the impact of the first drug – mifepristone – by providing more progesterone to offset the first pills impact.

The abortion recovery process is different for those who chose the medication route versus a surgical procedure. Denial of the truth that their child was a tiny human may not be part of long-term abortion wounding with medication abortion. When their lost child presents itself quite obviously at death, many seek help immediately to help with the emotional, spiritual, and psychological impact.

**Proverbs 24:11-12** states – *Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?* By learning more about this abortion process, you may be able to help a mother make a better choice than abortion.

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God has a plan and a purpose for every life He creates, whether it is aborted or not. He can help heal the wounds and restore peace in the face of such a tragedy. But the trauma at an emotional and spiritual level can be far greater than with a surgical procedure as the woman becomes “her own abortionist.”

## Why a Pregnancy Test are Essential

There are many troubling aspects about the access to medication abortion without first determining if a woman is even pregnant. Before taking medication abortion it is essential that women receive an ultrasound to rule out a possible “*ectopic*” pregnancy. This condition of pregnancy requires different medication, or their life could be threatened.

Abortion medication has many additional negative impacts on the body if taken after eleven weeks. The risk increases and it is more likely women will need to receive treatment from a medical professional afterwards. The medical care for complications from medication abortion consists of more abortion medication, emergency curettage, and vacuum aspiration for a continuing pregnancy or an incomplete abortion.

There are other issues with medication abortion relating to ordering it through the mail. **The FDA cautions against obtaining medications through the internet.**

- Consumers who obtain medication online may put their health at risk because the products, while being marketed as authentic, *may be counterfeit, contaminated, expired or otherwise harmful.*

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- It is difficult to determine the doctor's credentials who is proving the pill should the medication impact you negatively at a physical, psychological, and emotional level.
- In ordering medication abortion online, there is no possibility of an exam and blood test to determine the RH status of the pregnancy.
- In taking an abortion pill from an online source you will have no verification *that the tissue has passed after the abortion*. If left unnoticed, this retained tissue can lead to dangerous and potentially life-threatening infections. An additional surgical abortion will then be required, adding to the costs and risks of the process.

### Script for Talking About Medication Abortion

The following copy provides a way to outline these issues with medication abortion either verbally if a client asks if you provide medication abortion or listed on your client website. *Our center offers some preliminary medical services that should be completed before taking medication abortion as there are a variety of issues that can impact you. It is also not recommended to take the abortion pill if:*

 *It's possible you have miscarried or that you could have an ectopic pregnancy. An ultrasound can determine whether either condition applies.*

 *Your pregnancy has progressed more than ten weeks from your last menstrual period (LMP). An ultrasound can determine how far along you are in your pregnancy.*

 *You are using an intrauterine device (IUD). You should*

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*d have your IUD removed before attempting a medical abortion because it may be partially expelled during the process, which can be painful.*

*If you think you might be pregnant, schedule an appointment with us to get the information you desire to make the best decision for yourself before ordering online medication abortion.*

## **Additional Information:**

Should the medication abortion fail to work in miscarrying the child, a surgical procedure may be necessary. This will result in an additional cost as well as adding to the risk of complications from an incomplete abortion. These risks can include:

- Heavy Bleeding/Hemorrhage and Anemia (especially with ongoing blood loss)
- Incomplete Abortion (pregnancy is unresponsive to drug treatment)
- Persistent Gestational Sac (GS) without cardiac activity
- Profuse Bleeding due to blood clots or pregnancy tissue fragments
- Continuing (ongoing) pregnancy - drug and method failure
- Orthostatic hypotension (extreme drop in blood pressure)
- Patient unable to return to clinic; no access to emergency services
- Patient preference to complete the procedure because she is tired of persistent bleeding
- Provider choice or error interventions
- Medically necessary interventions or threats to patients' health

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Failures, defined as cases requiring surgical procedure for medical reasons or because the patient requested it, the abortion was incomplete, or the pregnancy was ongoing, increases with longer durations of pregnancy.

Women must be informed to return for a clinical examination in cases of acute or prolonged bleeding, pain, or fever, as these signs may be indicators of failure or other complications that need treatment.

### Sources of Information:

- <https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/06/health/medication-abortion-process-wellness/index.html>
- <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/how-buy-medicines-safely-online-pharmacy>
- <https://www.abortionpillrisks.com>
- <https://www.abortionpillreversal.com/>

### The Grief Impact of Ultrasound Scans

Many medically based pregnancy center workers may be unequipped to address the emotional reactions during the scanning process when clients suddenly realize that their previous abortions didn't remove a "blob of tissue" but a baby from their womb! Sonographers also can experience a form of "secondary post-abortion trauma" when client's "abort anyway."

There is no one more vulnerable in pregnancy center work than a new nurse that has never worked with the abortion issue before. When you turn on an ultrasound screen, and view a tiny unborn child, bonding with the baby can be immediate for both patient and nurse. Yet some remain distant and unimpressed with the screen's truth. This does not mean that they are not feeling any emotions.

Post-abortive individuals are often exceptionally good at concealing any pain that could reveal they are post-abortive.

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While they may share with you about this pain, rest assured that an ultrasound screen can end the denial cycle permanently. This is also true for post-abortive fathers.

**Breaking Denial** - When I was first scanned with my oldest son at 16 weeks, *my abortion denial was blown*. I went into a whirlwind of emotions. My face did not communicate that pain, nor did my body language. But my heart had just been broken in two. I became robotic. My husband had no clue the course that I was on with that level of thinking.

For the rest of my pregnancy, I lived with the **agony** of Bruce's image in my head. That was God's plan because truth is something God is all about. *But I had nowhere to go to understand the emotions I was feeling.*

I went into a depression and a fog that clearly impacted my pregnancy. Each kick and movement brought Tom joy and my heart became more traumatized. I could not connect the pain to my past abortion. My mindset just wouldn't go there.

*It was probably the most difficult period of my life.* If I had experienced that pregnancy alone, as many of your clients are, then perhaps it would have been much worse. I don't know. I'm glad I had Tom, however. He made sure I didn't go off the deep end.

I remember thinking that I was going crazy after that scan. My lost child began to "haunt" my heart. He was in my dreams, crying for me. I'd see him in every child that would have been his age. God's hand was on my heart, quite clearly. I was overcome with guilt and shame without any clue that there was any hope for my heart because I had committed the worst sin. *The enemy had a field day with my soul with Bruce's ultrasound image for years to come.*

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Seeing Bruce for the first time after his birth only made matters much worse. I could not bond with him properly because now I knew the truth about my abortion at an entirely different level. My parenting skills were impacted severely. That only changed after my abortion recovery class. How different that time would have been had someone offered me some hope after that scan that the pain was connected to a past abortion and there was a way to God's healing.

**For many post-abortive women, an ultrasound can be a dangerous tool if it is not accompanied by detailed information about Abortion PTSD. *That is where the need lies for your center.***

You can't scratch off a very well-kept wound with one scan and send them on their way without information and a desire to help them find God's healing. *That wound will fester, rot, and infect and cause many to abort again.*

Few are truthful before/during or after the scan. Yet you can be certain that at least a third of all your clients could be post-abortive. If sonogram leaders aren't taught how to determine the "triggers" of post-abortive pain while scanning, it could impact the abortion decision quite clearly. ***Many can flip back into their denial process and believe that in aborting again, they are proving they did nothing wrong in aborting the first time.***

*Many clients may not be at the point of understanding the emotions they are experiencing.* Simply saying that your center offers "abortion recovery services" speaks volumes. Yet they may be unable at the time to make that commitment to attend a class. Making an abortion recovery class PART of your parenting program is the best thing a center could do because it gives the woman a REASON to address the pain.

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Whether they attend a recovery class or not, just knowing that you offer "abortion recovery" shows that their past abortion could need to be addressed. It offers a connection between this "haunting" and their past abortion. It throws them a lifeline. They may not want to take it because they can swim for a while. But before it drowns them, they know where you are and that you can help.

Basic information about what they could experience emotionally would at least give them some sort of hope that perhaps there can be a way to forgive themselves. Up until that scan, most had no clue what they did in aborting. Making this ministry part of your center program will also offer a huge new squad of workers that are MORE stable than you ever imagined, helping you and becoming an amazing long-term "fit."

**Processing Denial** - After an ultrasound, few can continue to convince themselves that, "I only aborted a blob of tissue." Visualizing their current unborn child can ignite the grieving for the lost child. It can also save the life of the present baby as well. It is important that both the sonographer and client advocate be fully aware of the symptoms of Abortion PTSD. Many individuals are "masters" at hiding their pain. Yet the flash of humanity on an ultrasound screen normally knocks out the denial wall instantly.

**Men are particularly impacted by ultrasound images** - For a man that has previously lost a child to abortion, he can suddenly begin crying and struggle emotionally. Men are often the strongest advocates of a life decision after viewing an ultrasound.

If the client has recently aborted, she may still be in the "relief" stage. Yet tears can come when she views the humanity of her child. She needs to know the symptoms of

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post-abortion pain and that your recovery program can help her. At the very least, give her a copy of *Her Choice to Heal* as it is something she can always have when the pain begins.

Body language and facial expressions should be monitored closely during the scanning process to try to determine if the client was truthful on their intake form about number of past pregnancies. Keep in mind that even those who admit to a past abortion may not respond openly. **Assume that there is a post-abortive element to whomever you are scanning!**

For example, the woman that helped a friend get an abortion may never have realized that she participated in the death of a person. An ultrasound scan can announce that truth blatantly. She may grieve this other person's child.

After every scan, pregnancy center workers should provide the client with a list of symptoms of Abortion PTSD. A listing can be downloaded from the Ramah site. In providing each client with a detailed listing, you have outlined that any pain following the scan could be related to a past abortion. Should the client choose life for this current pregnancy, it is especially important for them to be encouraged to attend an abortion recovery class BEFORE their baby is born.

To assist that possibility, consider offering them an incentive comparable to your center's parenting program benefits if they agree to work through their past abortion.

**Detachment in Future Pregnancies** - For many women, when that initial denial is broken, they will spend a great deal of effort trying to rebuild that "blob" mindset. For most, this is impossible. Each "kick" from the new baby will remind them of their loss.

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Whenever they try to convince themselves that their lost child wasn't human, they end up distancing themselves from the current pregnancy. Many women express that they felt "chased" by the hand of God who "haunted" their souls with the memories of these lost children. Their dreams will normally offer truth as well.

If the woman does not experience healing before this next child is born, PTSD can certainly impact her parenting experience. Most importantly, *it will influence their ability to bond*. While they may not understand what is wrong, even looking in their newborn child's face can initiate the memories of the past lost child.

Few expected to feel the depth of love towards this new child and may feel immediate guilt that they didn't show the same love towards the aborted one. It is essential that they know where to turn for help in these situations!

### How to Respond

**Identify the Pros and Cons of Abortion** – Outlined previously.

**Ongoing Friendship** - Verify that you are going to be her friend for the long-term and help her eventually evaluate whether she can parent or should consider adoption. Reinforce that she doesn't have to make an abortion decision quickly. She has time to make sure of her decision.

**Post-Abortion Testimony** - If they are strongly abortion-minded, seek to connect them with a healed post-abortive person immediately. If you are post-abortive, now is the time to share about your own abortion. Enlist the support of intercessors on her behalf to lift her up in prayer. Verify that even if she does abort, you will be there for her afterwards.

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**Be Careful of Your Words** - Because there are so many post-abortionive individuals around, always remember that they could be listening to your conversations. When speaking publicly, always share about your abortion recovery ministry. This not only reinforces your compassion, but it also makes the statement that *you are a safe place for anyone to come for help.*

Mentioning your abortion recovery program, or **HerChoicetoHeal.com**, also educates your audience to the fact that abortion is not an easy, painless solution. Abortion hurts. Abortion not only is physically painful but also has spiritual, emotional, and psychological consequences.

**A Second Abortion is a Powerful Trigger.** If women struggle hearing vacuum cleaners and dentist drills after their first abortion because it reminds them of the procedure, how much more powerful will a second abortion hit them? Help them to understand the potential for expanded trauma in the second choice.

Help them understand that a second abortion will resurrect the memories of the past abortion from the recesses of their minds. After abortion, women may “compartmentalize” the painful memories for a while. For most, eventually the grief over this loss will catch up with them.

When a woman avoids these recollections, she feels somewhat confident that she can endure an abortion again. What she doesn't realize is that the second abortion will not only involve the same pain, but it will also resurrect memories or past abortion(s). The previous denial process will be short-circuited. That level of anxiety can certainly land them in deep depression and re-experiencing the past abortion in their minds.

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All clients leaving a pregnancy center should have the HerChoicetoHeal.com website domain in their possession. This will allow those that are not post-abortive to learn more about the regret that often follows these decisions!

Review the notes on microchimerism and explain to each client that regardless of their mindset, the cells of their child(ren) will ALWAYS be in their bodies and impact their souls.

## B3 – Leadership: *The Wrap-Around Model* – Part 2

Speaker: Jessica Deese

### Baby Boutique and Subscription Boxes

**Objective:** Equip participants with the knowledge to establish a Baby Boutique that provides essential resources for expectant parents and explore Subscription Box services for continued engagement.

#### Introduction to Baby Boutique

- **Define** what a Baby Boutique is and its purpose (e.g., providing essential items like clothing, diapers, books, and other baby necessities).
- **Importance:** It helps expectant parents feel supported and prepared, reduces financial stress, and creates a welcoming atmosphere.

#### Setting up a Baby Boutique

- **Initial Setup:** Focus on layout, décor, and creating a comfortable environment for parents. Include inspirational and practical items like educational books, toys, and baby-care supplies.
- **Inventory Management:** Efficient stocking of high-demand items (like diapers and baby clothes). Teach how to partner with local donors or suppliers.
- **Community Involvement:** How to engage local businesses, churches, and nonprofits to help supply the boutique.

#### Subscription Boxes

- **Purpose:** Provide monthly or quarterly resources for each stage of pregnancy and the first year of a child's life (e.g., trimester-specific support, postpartum recovery, or new-baby care).

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- **Implementation:**
  - Tailor boxes for various stages (e.g., nutritional support for the first trimester, baby essentials for newborns).
  - Partner with brands or local businesses to include samples or small gifts.
- **Benefits:** Keeps parents engaged long-term, provides continuous support, and creates an opportunity for personal connection with each family.

## Thrive-Life Coaching

**Objective:** Teach life coaching principles and how they can empower expectant parents by fostering personal growth, confidence, and resilience during pregnancy and beyond.

### Introduction to Thrive-Life Coaching

- **Definition and Purpose:** Life coaching aims to empower individuals to identify goals, overcome challenges, and build a healthier mindset. It's designed to have the participant reflect on how their life experiences have shaped their views toward God, others and themselves to lead them to salvation.
- **Relevance to Pregnancy Support:** Pregnancy is a life-altering event. Coaching can help expectant mothers and families develop emotional resilience, manage stress, and embrace their roles confidently.

### Core Coaching Principles

- **Goal Setting:** Teach parents how to set realistic and personal goals during pregnancy and early parenthood (e.g., balancing work and family, managing stress).
- **Active Listening and Communication:** Encourage empathetic communication, both between parents and with mentors/coaches.

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- **Self-Reflection:** Encourage personal reflection on current needs and desires to create an action plan for both pregnancy and parenting.

### Integrating Coaching into Pregnancy Support

- **Sessions:** Implement regular one-on-one or group coaching sessions to help parents navigate pregnancy-related challenges.
- **Supportive Conversations:** Focus on emotional well-being, self-care, and life planning.
- **Tools and Resources:** Provide worksheets, self-assessment tools, and journals to guide parents in their personal development.

### Onsite/Offsite Mentoring

**Objective:** Guide participants on how to establish a supportive mentoring relationship, including practical coordination and the integration of spiritual care.

### What is Mentoring?

- **Definition:** Mentoring as a relationship where experienced individuals (mentors) provide guidance, support, and encouragement to expectant parents (mentees).
- **Importance of Mentoring:** Mentoring offers personal connection, emotional support, practical advice, and spiritual guidance.

### Onsite Mentoring

- **Setting up a Program:** Teach how to organize onsite mentoring through regular meetings at your facility.
- **Scheduling:** Coordinate a time that works for both mentors and mentees, and plan topics relevant to each stage of pregnancy.

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- **Building Trust:** Create a safe space for mentees to share personal struggles and challenges.

### Offsite Mentoring

- **Flexibility:** Offer options like virtual meetings, phone calls, or home visits. This is particularly helpful for those who can't make it to our *physical* location.
- **Spiritual Care Integration:** Encourage mentors to provide spiritual support through prayer, scripture sharing, and listening with compassion.
- **Coordinating Multiple Mentors:** Teach how to manage schedules and track progress to ensure mentees receive consistent support.

### Individualized Care Plans

**Objective:** Highlight the importance of offering tailored services to meet the specific needs of each client and optimize resources for efficiency.

### Why Individualized Care Matters

- **Uniqueness:** No two clients are the same, and individual circumstances (e.g., single parenthood, high-risk pregnancy, economic challenges) will affect the kind of support needed.
- **Holistic Support:** Each care plan should address emotional, spiritual, physical, and practical needs.

### Creating a Care Plan

- **Assessment:** Teach participants how to assess a client's needs through intake forms, personal interviews, and ongoing check-ins.
- **Customizing Support:** Tailor resources and services to the client's situation, whether they need housing support, financial assistance, or emotional counseling.

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- **Monitoring and Adjusting:** Regularly review the care plan and adjust as circumstances change (e.g., a client might need more postpartum support than initially anticipated).

**Resource Allocation:** Teach how to optimize resources so that the most critical services (e.g., housing, food, childcare) are prioritized based on individual needs.

### Implementing Comprehensive Support

**Objective:** Offer insights into organizational and staffing strategies that facilitate seamless support services for expectant parents.

#### Organizational Structure

- **Team Building:** Discuss the importance of building a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and mentors. Clearly define roles (e.g., boutique manager, life coach, mentor coordinator).
- **Staff Training:** Implement comprehensive training programs so that everyone on the team understands the organization's mission and the practicalities of supporting expectant parents.

#### Effective Staffing Strategies

- **Recruitment:** Teach methods for recruiting volunteers and staff who are passionate about supporting parents and families.
- **Delegation:** Break down responsibilities so no one is overwhelmed (e.g., someone manages the Baby Boutique, another oversees Subscription Boxes).
- **Communication:** Regular staff meetings and check-ins ensure everyone is on the same page and that services are running smoothly.

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## Integration of Services

- **Interlinked:** Ensure all services (Boutique, Subscription Boxes, Coaching, Mentoring) are interlinked. For instance, a coach can refer clients to the Boutique, and mentors can follow up on clients receiving subscription boxes.
- **Technology Integration:** Utilize software to track client progress, manage inventory, and schedule appointments with coaches/mentors.

## **KEYNOTE 2 - *Establishing a Ministry for Abortion Vulnerable and Post-Abortive Men***

**Speakers:** Sydna Massé and Becky Anderson

*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.  
Let all that you do be done in love.* 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Define Men's Ministry in pregnancy ministry
- Outline the purposes of a Men's program
- Understand how to structure a program
- Describe the services of a Men's program
- Challenges in developing and leading a Men's program
- Determine next steps in developing a Men's program

### **Defining "Men's Services in Pregnancy Ministry"**

**Primary:** Serving the dad of the unplanned pregnancy with meaningful and relevant care and support that will lead him to support a decision for life, learn to love his child's mom and his children as their protector, provider, teacher.

Traditionally, pregnancy ministries have been viewed as a "women's ministry" – forgetting that a pregnancy involves the union of a woman and a man and forgetting that children flourish in healthy, two-parent homes. Men are also a primary influencer in whether abortion is chosen. Serving them is critical.

**Most programs start small and evolve** - Because this movement began with a focus primarily on women, it is women who are often the ones in leadership positions. Adding the "father" component is challenging yet requires a multifaceted approach. It is wise to begin small and grow as God provides ideas and resources.

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**Available resources will determine your capacity and limitations** - Each community will have different available resources, including churches, community groups, people able and willing to volunteer, and men ready to step into a staff leadership role and develop such a program.

**Other services can be added once the primary mission is matured** - Once the core mission of a men's services program is in place, the Board, staff, and community at large can look at other ways to strengthen the impact the center has on fathers and future fathers in their community. These ideas can include STI services, men's events, student outreach to young men, and more.

## The Purposes of a Men's Program in a Pregnancy Center

**Men have been forgotten** - We only need turn on our TVs to see how marginalized men and fathers have become in our culture. If we want our dads to flourish in their role, we need to teach them what being a good dad looks like.

**She needs him** - Surveys suggest women choose the baby's father as having the greatest influence on her decision to abort or not. While the cultural message may be to tell men they have not voice in a pregnancy decision, most women want him to weigh in on what he wants.

**His child needs a father** - We can tie nearly every social ill back to fatherlessness. Greater rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, incarceration, teen pregnancy, obesity, and more are seen in children with no father in the home when compared to two parent homes.

**He has struggles that are making facing fatherhood hard** - It is more the norm for dad to lack a good role model in his life to teach him how to be a good dad. He also deals with fears like the cost of raising a child, the struggles in relationships, especially those with a weak foundation, and other concerns.

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**Our culture is anti-life, anti-man, anti-marriage, anti-commitment** - The enemy of our souls wants to steal, kill and destroy all that God created that was good. We see this in the degradation of the home and in today's views on marriage. Our dad's may not hear from elsewhere how God designed "family" to work, and it is up to us to help him see the better way.

### Structuring Your Program

**Finding your why** – Discovering your why will keep you focused on the main thing when "good" ideas come that could derail you from your primary mission.

**Staff versus volunteers** – Realize programs may have one or both and it depends on the resources available in your community. It also may change over time. This is why having a structure in place to guide the leaders in place when there is a change in personnel.

**Leadership and organizational structure** – This will vary widely among pregnancy organizations and is dependent on the personnel involved in carrying out the objectives of the program. But there needs to be broad support at every level of the organization for the existence and success of the men's program.

**Policies and practices** – This area of the ministry needs development, especially for leaders. Topics include client flow, confidentiality, documentation, and communication.

**Training** – Home grown versus existing training! There are lots of groups out there that serve pregnancy centers with fatherhood materials. Do your research!

**Client intake/flow/center layout** – Consider the dad's viewpoint as he walks into the center in areas of décor, layout, messaging, questions asked in intake, topics covered in education and timing of the visit.

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**Served together or separate?** – In a typical one-hour appointment, we gather a vast amount of information, not just what we ask in the intake. They include observations of their behavior when together or separate, their words and more. All of this will help to inform us on how we serve each of these clients and when they are together or separate. Each person has their own unique perspective on such things as:

- Length and strength of the relationship
- Current relationship status (married, engaged, just met, on-and-off)
- Domestic violence
- Trafficking
- Secrets and red flags

### What Men's Services Do We Provide?

**Support for the dad facing unplanned pregnancy** - It is his unplanned pregnancy too. The same consideration we give to mom for things like fear and anger should be given to him as well.

**Relationship support and mentoring** - If we lead with the idea that a child will feel more secure with two parents who love each other, one critical way we can serve the family is to help the couple navigate becoming a strong partnership, one that preferably leads to marriage and home as designed by God.

**Parenting support and education** - Look at the resources you have and assess what dad wants/needs, such as in-person versus online classes, support groups, one-on-one time. Design the program with both the resources and dad's needs in mind.

**STI services** - This can come in the form of support for a dad at risk of STI putting his partner at risk – when both come to the appointment. It can also be a broad, comprehensive

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program serving as a community outreach for any young man.

**Abortion recovery** - How men approach healing will be different from women. Our approach should begin with assessing his needs and his readiness to work on his specific struggle. Was he an influencer? Did he participate? Was he absent? Did he know about it?

**Spiritual challenge** - We will deal with every imaginable spiritual foundation and background, including none. We need to make sure that we are learning first, how to place our full dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide us, and second, how to approach various faith backgrounds and belief systems, looking for ways to intersect the good news of the gospel with their current view on spiritual matters. This all begins with the deep-seated conviction that the gospel message must remain a primary objective in serving our dads.

### Challenges

**Finding the right man/men to lead and advocate** -

Conversations will be tough, topics will be prickly and at times awkward, and not all men who believe they want to serve men will be prepared for what they will face.

**Strengths and weaknesses of the Men's Leader** - If God calls your men's leader or volunteers, He will use them, and that includes their strengths and their weakness, their stories, and their past. They will need encouragement and guidance.

**Change in dynamic within the center** - Adding one or more men to the team will change how the whole team relates to one another. Some conversations will no longer be appropriate, and every measure should be taken to guard all interactions as above reproach.

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**When things are slow/no dads are coming** - There are ways that a men's team member can serve when things are slow or when dads don't show up. Examples include church outreach and pastoral care, donor care, translation, security, facilities support, community outreach, student presentations.

**Homosexuality, transgenderism and other difficult circumstances** - It is important to think critically about how you will serve those clients who present with such realities. Learning all you can about the issues, how best to serve them, and how to support the rest of the team when they arrive is key.

### Next Steps

**PRAY!** - Have an overarching prayer strategy for your organization. It keeps Christ at the center and us dependent on Him.

**Assess your readiness** – We have a two-page document to help you entitled “Men's Program Readiness Assessment.” This should be part of strategic planning at the Board level first. All levels of your organization must be as prepared as possible. Move slowly and thoughtfully.

**Put a plan together** - Put it in writing. Include program objectives, team resources needed, educational needs, services to be provided, timelines, how clients will be served and team training.

**Gauge church and community support** - Make your church supporters a part of the planning and see how they might come alongside your efforts. Look at other organizations that serve men to see how you can partner for the gospel and for family and home.

**Start small** - Don't underestimate that along the way, there will be pain points not anticipated, resources not planned for, and opportunities not considered.

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## Schedule - Friday, October 11, 2024

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Devotions and Keynote #3

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. – Break

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Workshop Session C

11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Break

12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. – Lunch

12:45 p.m. – 1:45 – Keynote #4

1:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. – Break

2:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – Workshop Session D

3:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. – Break

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Keynote #5

5:00 p.m. – Conference Release – Dinner on own

### Friday Devotions: *Acts of Card Kindness*

Speaker: Sydna Massé

You are one of eight people to receive this special gift designed to encourage you to undertake a random act of card kindness project. This project – should you choose to accept it – is designed to encourage your natural ministry heart and help you comfort others in a unique way. It will also most definitely draw you closer to God.

**The Bucket List Islander** - Growing up in the 1960s and 70s, greeting cards were extremely popular to mail to people to remind them that they were loved. Hallmark commercials were designed to make you tear-up in realizing how you could bless someone if you sent them a card with a special message. Email and texting ended card sending behaviors which is a deep shame.

Remembering going to the mailbox and hoping to find a special card was always special and a rare incident today. During a simple stop at a Dayspring Card Outlet Shop, God reminded me to “practice hospitality,” based on Romans 12:9-13 - *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

As I stared at the stacks of card boxes at the Outlet store last November, the Random Acts of Card Kindness idea emerged from my heart. It was based on a Christmas project from two years earlier when I sent cards to a special needs friend during his first Christmas without his father. I sent at least fifteen different Christmas cards to Patrick, along with verses of encouragement, that season. After Christmas, I did not

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send any more cards. The idea waned for two years until I hit that Dayspring Outlet store.

While I was standing in that Dayspring store, God reminded me of Patrick's card project. I thought about my second mother, Nona Stafford, who was about to spend the winter on Mackinaw Island in Upper Michigan. Frozen in with five hundred other Islanders, Nona said this was a special retreat for her and God to work out some heart issues together.

I quickly determined to ensure that at least once a week, when she set out on the arctic trek to fetch her mail, there would be a card from me waiting to encourage her. I was determined to include a special verse in each card as well.

I purchased ten boxes of cards at the Dayspring outlet store. In each box, there were three copies of four card messages in each box. The card themes were based on topics like "Thinking of you," "Praying for you," etc. Once home, I sorted through card boxes and produced four stacks of thirty unique cards. I put one stack in a bag and marked it "Nona." I put the other three stacks of cards in their own separate zip lock bag, believing God had a plan for other acts of card kindness.

**Discovering the Verse** - In praying for Nona during her Mackinaw winter retreat, I knew some of her pain sources. Realizing God's word was the best remedy for the work she hoped to accomplish on this arctic adventure, I spent time each week searching for a word to come into my mind before beginning each week's card. The first week the word was "strength." That was easy enough as everyone needs strength to heal.

I keyed "Strength" into the search box on Biblegateway.com, *using the NKJV of the Bible as Nona said that was her favorite*. The results of the search listed every Scripture passage that contained the word, "**Strength**." I then scrolled

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through the books of the Bible searching for the perfect verse for Nona that contained that word. Here are two examples of verses with that word included:

**Psalms 18:1-3** - *I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my **strength**, in whom I will trust; My shield and the [b]horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So, shall I be saved from my enemies.*

**Psalms 27:13-14** - *I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord; Be of good courage, And He shall **strengthen** your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!*

Once I had the verse, I would write it in the card by hand. I would date the card and with a message with some loving words of encouragement. Everything was **handwritten**.

One week, God gave me the word “family.” I found the verse and sent the card. Nona later emailed that this verse had answered a big prayer request that she had that week relating to a family matter. The verse contained the direction she had been searching for from God. She was overjoyed to have that verse release her to do what God wanted her to do in that situation!

**A Witness to Postal Workers** - The next step was to ensure the card’s initial impact. I knew that this retreat was on Nona’s “Bucket List,” so she earned a new title of the “Bucket List Islander.” Every week I would either list out that title on the envelope address area, or another endearing one. I would sometimes add a sticker to decorate the piece. Decorating was meant to impact Nona as well as the postal team sorting her mail.

Since Mackinaw Island was such a small community in the winter, I knew Nona would make friends with the post office

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staff. The outside card decorations were to show the postal team that Nona was a loved woman. I was not sure if that made any difference in how they served her, but it was fun. Even my own mail carrier knew I was loving someone special when he collected the cards. Writing anything by hand on mail is a rare thing these days! Every card was unique in their stacks of collected mail!

**Growing the List** - At first, I only sent cards to Nona. In April, a dear friend's husband passed away. When I received that notification, I realized why God gave me three other stacks of unique cards. Judy's name went on the outside of one of the zip lock bags and her cards began to arrive weekly beginning one month after her husband's funeral.

This second card project for Judy brought me great peace. Judy lived in California, and I am from Arkansas. *Sending her cards was something tangible that I could do to remind her of my love and prayers on her behalf. Each week she would have a "hug" from me which delighted my heart immensely.* **It was then that I realized the card project was for my heart just as much as those who were receiving them!**

Another friend was diagnosed with breast cancer and then another. In August, another friend lost her daughter in a car accident. Names kept being added. Currently, I am sending cards to 8-10 people each week! In addition, others who ask for prayer or are obviously struggling with grief or an illness will get random cards as well!

It took some time for my friends who received the cards to notify me. They did not realize they would be getting a long string of cards in the weeks and months to come. I did not need a response as each was engaged in their own personal grief or illness battles. As they emerged from their pain, I started to get messages back from these dear folks. Their

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stories of how God had used the cards and verses were amazing and blessed me deeply.

One friend was in the process of caring for her husband with cancer. She said that the cards would come with a pile of bills. She said, "The bills are always there but when I saw I got another card from you, I knew I could pay those bills!"

**Christmas** - That Christmas I realized that many getting these cards were going to struggle with holiday joy. I went back to the outlet store and bought four boxes of beautiful Christmas cards. I began sending out Christmas cards weekly versus encouraging ones

**Extended Impact** - Two women whom I sent weekly cards to passed away in the same year. Their daughters told me of their passing, and I grieved. Once these daughters began to go through their mother's things, they found ALL the cards I had sent. One said, "I had NO IDEA you were sending these cards. I am now going to read one weekly to remember my mother. Thank you for this love and care as I know my mother was blessed by the cards.

Another card recipient who battled cancer came to visit recently with her husband. It was her husband who spoke to me directly about the impact of those cards on his heart. "Sydna, every single time she would get one of your cards, a burden for her emotional support was lifted for a bit. Her faith in God would rise significantly with each special Scripture passage and so would mine. You ministered to me as much as to my dear wife. I cannot thank you enough!"

**Here is one response from a director who used us as her web-manager when she got breast cancer. She posted this on her FaceBook wall along with all the cards she received:**

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Sydna is a friend I have yet to meet in person. Yet, she is a constant reminder of what a true love of Christ is all about. I have had many “friends” who came and went. Some were believers, some were not.

Some were at the highest places of the Christian society, and some were regular nobody is just like me. They all left when I refused to meet their demands. This woman whom I have never even met in person knows more about me than all of them combined. She never judged me. She never once told me you need to do this or that. She never points out my weaknesses, and always reminds me who I'm in the eyes of our God. More times than not, I even don't find the time to tell her how much this means to me, yet it still does not stop her.

Her cards faithfully keep coming and her reminders of who I'm in the eyes of Christ remain constant. She expects nothing in return like so many others did. She simply loves because Christ loved first! I do not have many people in my life, but she surely fills a huge gap. **Some blessings are untouched but oh so very real, and Sydna, my friend, I cannot be more grateful that Lord picked you to be one to me.**



### **Keynote 3 - *Question and Answer Session***

**Synopsis:** Embark on an interactive discussion during our Question-and-Answer session, where questions submitted prior to the event will take center stage. Join us as our panel of speakers tackles a wide array of topics, delving into the heart of issues that matter most to our audience.

From navigating complex ethical dilemmas to exploring innovative solutions to industry challenges, this session promises to be a thought-provoking exploration of the issues shaping our world today. Do not miss this unique opportunity to participate in a keynote experience that puts your questions front and center, driving meaningful conversation and fostering a deeper understanding of the topics that matter most to you.

## Workshop C Topics

Friday, October 11 – 10:00 - 11:45 a.m.

**Retreat Healing Class (Green Room) – with Melissa Horton & Bettina Loughman**

**C1 – Abortion Recovery – *Unlocking Retreat Success: Essential Tools and Techniques*” – Karen Fifer - LOCATION: Youth Room**

**Synopsis:** Join Karen Fifer as she delves into the comprehensive resources of The Her Choice to Heal Retreat Leader’s Manual and the Weathering the Storm Retreat Manual. This workshop equips you to effortlessly guide women’s retreats using the Her Choice to Heal Retreat Workbook. Discover how to seamlessly integrate Ramah International’s Weathering the Storm retreat for those coping with miscarriage or infant loss. Explore these topics:

- Initial attendee interviews
- Effective promotion strategies
- Essential administrative forms
- Detailed schedules and meal plans
- Supply lists and teaching guides
- Recovery guidelines and retreat goals
- Identifying hidden agendas
- Facilitating meaningful discussions
- Detailed healing activities
- Scripture integration

**C2 – Abortion Vulnerable – *How Culture Influences an Abortion Decision* – Sydna Massé, Jessica Deese, and Melissa Rodriguez LOCATION: Children’s Room**

**Synopsis:** This workshop delves into how culture, encompassing beliefs, traditions, and societal norms,

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profoundly shapes abortion decisions. Explore how cultural perspectives, including sexuality and religion, impact individuals' choices. Delve into diverse religious and ethical considerations within cultural contexts. Analyze the influence of stigma, societal pressures, and community expectations on abortion attitudes. Understand how cultural support systems and interpersonal relationships affect decision-making processes. Recognize the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status in shaping abortion experiences.

**C3 – Leadership – *Faith-Fueled Fundraising: A Guide for Pregnancy Centers* – Becky Anderson - LOCATION: Sanctuary**

**Synopsis:** Discover how God's provision shapes our mission during this workshop. Embrace your unique traits—like introversion—as strengths in advocating for our cause. Becky Anderson, ED of Verity Pregnancy and Medical Resource Center, will explore effective banquet planning, from choosing dates and venues, the impactful use of client testimonials on video, online registration and much more.

Learn why Verity PMC evolved from walk events to more engaging fundraisers like the baby-bottle campaign, connecting deeply with local churches and managing coordination seamlessly for maximum impact. This session will guide you through the essentials, including donation processing and partnership with churches, ensuring a streamlined approach to community engagement.

Also addressed are overcoming community challenges, turning criticism and/or disparaging remarks into opportunities for growth and unity. Join us to empower your center with strategies that blend faith, community, and practical wisdom, creating a lasting impact on those we serve.

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### **C1 – Abortion Recovery – *Unlocking Retreat Success: Essential Tools and Techniques***

Speaker: Karen Fifer

My fraternal Grandmother was born in 1893. As a child she came to Oklahoma in a covered wagon and 76 years later she watched men walk on the moon! Our American culture changed rapidly and drastically after World War II.

In 1973, the first cell phone looked like this:



It was about ten inches high, 1.5 to 2 inches wide and three inches deep. It could not store contacts or messages or take pictures! It cost \$3,995 and it did not take off too well until the much smaller and cheaper models came out in 1984.

In 1960 the birth control pill was introduced to society. In 1973, the legalization of abortion began. Compare those influences to our decline of religious values. It is staggering!

But the biggest, most substantial culture shift for humankind happened just 30 years ago. In the span of all humanity, it feels like it was only forty-five minutes ago. What I am referring to happened in 1995 and 1996, when the masses started hitting the **internet**. Now even our phones are connected to the internet!

We started becoming connected in a way that was never possible before. **It has changed EVERYTHING for all of us!**

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**Technology is advancing every day.** Smartphones and social media have become the norm, and social media is the major way to rapidly change the way our culture thinks and acts. Whether we like it or not -- Artificial intelligence will have a major impact in our culture in the next few blinks of an eye!

In the past - about every 10 years – things change. Our music, clothing, and a person's outward behavior — the way they act, speak, and express themselves changes. Today the cultural time clock changes about every 2-3 years. Just think about how our culture has changed since the pandemic!

As pregnancy centers and abortion recovery ministries, we need to be aware and always on the move trying to keep up with our rapidly changing culture. Then we can still be relatable as we do.

**Our culture changes but God's truth never does!** We may need to change our approach – but never our message of healing based on God's word. After Roe V Wade became legal in 1973 abortion was an everyday topic! It still is! I held my first post abortion recovery group in 1994. Within a year, I had six leaders on my team. We had three full groups, running back-to-back consequently all year long for many years.

These were the years that Dr. Dobson and the Focus on the Family broadcast reached so many hearts. As the Manager of Crisis Pregnancies ministries from 1991 to 1998, Sydna was often on the broadcast, sharing her testimony of attending a pregnancy center's abortion recovery class and how she received healing from God. Each broadcast was a wonderful advertisement for God's hope of healing and our groups grew accordingly. There are no podcasts that reach as many people as possible today, even if this topic was covered.

Gradually, things began to change. We struggled with how to advertise in reaching post-abortive women and men. There

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were fewer and fewer women contacting us for help. The number of groups we held slowly declined. **But the rate of abortions did not change.**

Initially, group members were ten to forty years out from their abortions. Many had illegal abortions before 1973. My oldest woman was 80 years old, and she had aborted in her teens.

At the beginning, most of the women were older and their children were older. They were mostly Christian women who could recognize that they need help. **There was still the stigma that abortion was wrong or a sin.** They had a stronger knowledge of the bible and could navigate a more in-depth post-abortion bible study method.

**What changed?** As I interviewed PA women, I documented the new demographics as our numbers started to reduce. These were the elements I documented about the average post-abortive woman after 2000:

- They were younger
- There was an average 2- 5 years out from their abortions
- They worked full-time
- Their children were younger and often in day-care
- They had less time to commit to a weekly study
- They were less knowledgeable of the bible and struggled more with an in-depth recovery bible study.
- They were more steeped in the rhetoric that it was just a **choice** and to just move on with life
- They still realized, especially after childbirth, that they needed help.

I looked for ways to relate to the changing culture. As the culture changed so did our abortion recovery outreach. By the time I left our pregnancy center in 2012, most of our ministry efforts were either one-on-one or a weekend retreat

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model that was followed with a few weekly *aftercare* sessions. Twelve weeks seemed too long to commit to- but a weekend was doable!

Many weekly studies are still happening today. That is wonderful and should continue to be an option for busy women searching for healing. But adding the retreat model to your outreach should be something you also consider.

Personally, once I started weekend retreats, our weekly groups diminished because women clearly preferred a retreat. One-on-one ministry was the choice for women who could not attend a weekend. Going to a women's retreat is perfectly acceptable and few ask specific questions. A weekend format for abortion healing is not better or worse than other group formats (i.e., a weekly group meeting or one-on-one). It is simply different.

As abortion recovery leaders, our goal is to be a vessel of the Holy Spirit that has been broken and healed. The plan is to lead others through the same process. And to present Christ's redeeming work on the cross as the perfect remedy for every sin – even abortion!

Author **Henri Nouwen** wrote: *We are not the healers; we are not the reconcilers; we are sinful, broken, and vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for. The mystery of ministry is that we have been chosen to make our limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God.*

**Adding Retreats to Your Ministry Model** - Your ministry should have on their resource shelves the following items from Ramah International:

- Her Choice to Heal Policy and Procedure Manual
- Her Choice to Heal Weekend Retreat Manual and Leader's Guide

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- Beyond Regret: Living Victoriously in Christ After Abortion
- Weathering the Storm: A Bible Study for Women who have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss – Retreat and Weekly Program (each has Leader's Guides)

Men can attend a weekend, but they never stay overnight with the women. You could even hold a couple's retreat. If a man attends – get prior permission from all the women. I never had a man commit to a weekly group.

**Benefits of Retreat Model** - The main benefit of a weekend recovery is the walls (or defense mechanisms) that women erect in their hearts come down, allowing them to process the information and begin the process of healing at an accelerated rate.

My years of experience with weekly recovery studies was that women often – out of necessity - ***rebuild these defense mechanisms to function during the week***, making the healing a long and delayed process.

The weekend retreat model can “jump start” healing as the walls come down and remain down during the entire weekend. Eliminating the need to rebuild the walls allows women to make drastic life changes in a short amount of time. **No one can completely heal after just a weekend.**

A Recovery Retreat establishes the strong foundations that ensure further healing. It must attach follow-up classes that occur after the retreat to work through the deep emotions that often result after the retreat.

**After-Care – Using *Beyond Regret*** - I highly recommend Sydna Massé's four-week follow-up Bible study called **Beyond Regret: Living Victorious in Christ After Abortion** to further explore what the Word of God says. This book was

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specifically designed as an after-retreat tool. It addresses the age-old question, "How did I end up in an abortion clinic?" It is a good follow up resource- for both types of groups - weekly or weekend

**Leadership** - A weekend retreat -- is very intense physically, emotionally, and spiritually for both women and leaders. **You must have a co-leader and never attempt a weekend by yourself.**

The advantage for leaders is a retreat is easier for them too. Prayer coverage for yourself and the attendees is necessary. There is a great amount of spiritual warfare that accompanies these weekends. Always be encouraged because our God is greater than anything this world can send our way (John 4:4).

The weekend format requires that you stay on task and keep to a schedule. You need leaders who can gently lead women back to task if they stray off course. Otherwise, you will not get through the material.

Because the weekend retreat is designed to allow the "hidden things" to be brought into the light so huge steps toward healing can happen. **The bonding process** with other group members happens very quickly. Simply sharing a meal together can kick start the trust and friendship among retreat members.

**A key rule is that participants must attend the entire weekend.** They are not allowed to participate in only part of a weekend or to leave early. Participants should be encouraged to set the entire weekend aside and not schedule additional activities or church commitments.

If women cannot commit to attending the entire weekend, they should have the option of attending a group or one-on-one class that meets weekly.

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It is best to limit your group size to no more than 5-6 group members with a maximum number of 8-10. Personally -- I never had a weekend of more than six women. Most were 2-4 women.

Often, less is often better as it increases the sharing time for each woman. A group of 2 or 3 works just as well as larger groups. Sometimes better – more individual time.

Bottom Line - Let God will establish the size of the group. Do not be concerned if only two attend your retreat. It may be just what God wanted!

**The Pros of the Retreat Model** - The Pros and Cons are something you want to talk through as you interview women for a group. The pros include:

- The weekend provides undivided time - *set aside from normal daily activities* – to allow specific attention in the areas women struggle with the most.
- Getting away for a weekend provides freedom from the *distractions* of everyday life.
- A past abortion is an emotional issue to tackle. Interfering emotions with family/work/marriage relationships during this retreat will be avoided.
- A great deal of recovery work is accomplished within the retreat setting.
- The aftercare sessions allow for deeper processing after the retreat.
- The time commitment is less - one weekend and 4-5 weekly follow up sessions.
- Attendees end the weekend with profound relief from post-abortion symptoms.
- The weekend allows women to quickly identify and bond with other women.

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- Women leave the weekend with a sense of peace, ready to experience and explore the four-five additional Bible study meetings for ongoing fellowship.

I only had one woman who did not attend an after-care group- and that was because she worked nights. We did the follow up care in a one-on-one format during the day.

### **The Cons of the Weekly Model**

- The recovery time is longer as groups can take up to 8-12 weeks.
- Emotions must be suppressed between sessions to deal with everyday life and activities.
- It can be difficult finding quiet times to complete homework during the week.
- More time is invested to prepare for the Bible study which can take several hours to complete.
- Group trust and bonding takes longer in the weekly format.

### **The Cons of One-on One**

- It is a solitary recovery without insight from others enduring the same emotional pain.
- They miss relating to others and feeling their feeling and reactions are like other women.
- The recovery time is longer.
- Emotions must be suppressed between sessions to deal with everyday life and activities.

**Remember that you can use the retreat format one-on-one.**

**Interviewing and screening** - The interviewing process for weekends is the same as you would do for a weekly group. Be sure that only one person interviews participants. It is essential that leaders encourage the retreat model even if

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they personally prefer another format. If left to group leaders to individually interview, they may give in to the desire for just having enough for a group – instead of adhering to the guidelines for participants.

**Identifying hidden agendas** - This is an area where good screening comes into play. In any abortion recovery group setting there are those who sometimes **unknowingly** or **knowingly** attempt to fix others. These “fixers” often believe their abortion story is worse or bigger than everyone else’s.

They may have had some healing and can tend to either discount women who are not in the same place as they are or try to fix them.

Some want to be in control - you can sometimes sense that in an interview. Some will be quiet. Some will be angry. Some will be anti- Bible or a spiritual program. Some cannot read well and are ashamed they cannot do the homework. Some have never been in a group setting of any kind which leads to their being uncomfortable.

**Screening Questions** - While screening some good questions to ask are:

- How long has it been since your abortion? *Be aware that women who recently aborted may just want to feel better as they do not have the long-term abortion impacts.*
- Are you pregnant now? If so, you will need to ask other group participants if they can welcome the pregnant woman. Asking them reveals the depth of their post-abortion pain as well. Do not be intimidated to ask this question.
- Have you been in a group setting before?
- How do you receive constructive feedback?
- Are you easily intimidated by others?

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- We use the bible to guide us in the principals of healing. Are you opposed to using and applying scriptural passages from the bible to your life?
- How has abortion affected you personally or tell me what you are looking for in abortion recovery?
- Do you take any mental health prescriptions? If so, are they seeing a professional therapist? You may need to explore if she is mentally ready or has approval from her therapist for this type of emotional work.

**Presenting the PA Models** - Present the dates for the next weekly group and a weekend – as well as a weekly group. Which one would work with her schedule the best? **Ask:**

- What are your concerns about attending a weekend retreat?
- Does this retreat sound like something you would be interested in doing?
- Would you have childcare available to attend an overnight retreat?
- Are the expenses a problem for you? If so, payment options or scholarships are available.

Do not let a retreat be the only option for abortion recovery ministry!

### Two Formats for Retreat Options

**3-day Retreat** – *begins Friday night and ends Sunday afternoon.* Friday begins with a potluck dinner – we provided chicken – the women brought a side dish and finishes about 5:00 on Saturday and Sunday. Friday night is the initial paperwork with an explanation of the weekend guidelines and sharing each woman's stories.

**2-day Retreat**– All day Saturday and Sunday work best. But you could do an **all-day** Friday and Saturday. Be aware -

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these are long days with few breaks. A two-day retreat schedule **requires you to be very intentional about staying on task** and is not recommended for a large group!

If you prefer a 2.5-day retreat that *begins on Friday evening, you can adjust the schedule and end the retreat earlier on Sunday*. Be cautious of going too late on Saturday night with activities since the participants have homework to complete.

**Locations for Retreats** - Let your needs be known to your supporters and friends. The lake house location I used was offered to me by a volunteer working at our center. Share the need, pray, and watch how God might meet and exceed all your expectations. A private home can be used as long as no one else is there. Maybe they are gone for the weekend!

**Note:** You need enough space for women to do individual work and will utilize bedrooms or outdoor space.  
*Homeowner's valuables must be secured as women may be alone in rooms.*

**Staying Overnight** - I had the privilege of using a friend's lake house. We did a hotel once, but it was not a good match as too many people were milling around, that led to interruptions and hotels were too costly.

The location must offer enough space for women to withdraw alone for individual work. It should contain a kitchen for food prep and adequate eating, sleeping space (if they are staying overnight) and restrooms.

The 3-day format can be adjusted to allow some additional free time or a fun activity on Saturday night such as games or a movie to break up the intensity of the weekend

**Sleeping at Home** - I do not recommend a church for a weekend. Before we started using the lake house, I used our pregnancy center – which was closed on weekends. If you use such a setting, *the women go home at night*. There is

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homework that will need to be completed before they return on the second day.

- Women need to understand about homework before committing to a weekend.
- They should not have any other Saturday night commitments.
- They will miss church on Sunday.

A pregnancy center office is a good meeting location. Specific location needs:

- One large room for meeting together
- Some individual break out rooms (counseling rooms work nicely) for alone times
- Kitchen or food prep area and eating area.

You may want to use the couches from counseling rooms instead of sitting in straight chairs -- it makes a homey atmosphere to relax. Women need to be comfortable for the challenging work ahead and they do a lot of sitting. It requires more set up and cleanup for leaders but is worth the effort.

We also suggest soft lighting in your meeting room. Florescent lights can be hard on the eyes when there are many tears and are prone to give women headaches.

**Meals for the Weekend Retreat** - Meals should be simple but nice and include protein and salad. Be sure to check if there are special diets the individual requires.

I asked a church group and some pregnancy center volunteers to prepare meals which cuts down on retreat expenses. Meals are to be delivered **before** the weekend begins. No outside person is allowed to enter after a weekend begins.

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Meals should be pre-cooked and able to warm up in a microwave so that you have little preparation and clean-up time. Provide drinks such as water, coffee, and tea for the entire weekend. Ask participants to bring snacks to share and/or soft drinks if they want them. Always have some chocolate on hand!

**Costs to Attend** - Keeping the fee to attend as low as possible. A charge of \$25-\$50 for the weekend, which includes the costs of the meeting location, is acceptable in today's economy. The fee also includes meals and workbooks. Have a confidential scholarship fund available so the cost is not a factor in attending. If women pay even a little, they are more likely to attend as it gives them ownership and investment in their healing process. If you use a retreat center, you will need to adjust your cost accordingly.

As with any retreat effort – Paul Tripp has a good description of our role. *To connect women and men with the truths in God's Word, so that they can think as He would have them think, desire what He says is best, and do what He calls them to do in a safe, and loving environment.*

Keep in mind the following principles:

- All healing is a process.
- Retreats require that you stay on task and keep to a schedule.
- You will need to have the ability to gently lead women back to task if they stray off course. And they will.
- Use humor often!

It is fine to leave a supplemental activity out but remember that *every topic is an important and necessary step in the healing process and must be presented.* If you must leave something out during the weekend setting, make sure to use it in the follow-up. Ramah's Retreats (abortion recovery and

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pregnancy and infant loss) are well designed to walk you through each of the major points of healing.

### Other Elements of Retreats

**Emotions** - Be sure to focus on the major emotions: Denial – Anger – Guilt & Shame – Forgiveness - Grief

**Opening Session** - The opening session sets the framework for the entire weekend and is designed to help participants relax and feel comfortable as they begin to share with each other. Be as welcoming as you can be – but not fake and do not overwhelm them. The hardest thing for them to do is walk through that door the first time.

**Cruse the parking lot** - She may be sitting outside afraid or contemplating if she really wants to do this.

**Material** - As you walk through the material – know it well enough that you can **talk through it – not read it**.

**Personal Interaction** - The participants will have sections they can read aloud – be sensitive to those who are uncomfortable reading aloud – ask for a volunteer - Scriptures etc.

**Ask good questions** - Who – What – Where – How. **No Why's!** When you want to ask why -- Instead, I use how did you learn to do that? Always listen carefully.

### **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Ministry - Weathering the Storm**

The **need** is revealed with the following points:

- Approximately **20,000** babies die each year from causes including birth defects, preterm birth, and sudden infant death syndrome. A miscarriage is defined as a pregnancy loss before 20 weeks.
- In the US in 2021, **19,944** infants died before reaching their first birthday

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- Pregnancy loss that happens after 20 weeks is called stillbirth.
- Each year, there are about **3,400** sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUID) in the United States.

**Weathering the Storm** is a grace filled study dealing with the following healing topics:

- Examining grief
- Who is Jesus? A Shepherd, Friend, and Comforter
- Managing my emotions
- Forgiveness – as it relates to grief and loss. Releasing themselves from shame & guilt
- Where do I go from here?

**Two-day Schedule** – Saturday 9:30 -4:00 and Sunday 12:30 - 4:00

You may not cover everything and sometimes the natural conversations that occur cover a topic without you having to discuss it again in detail. That is why knowing the information on a deep personal level is so important.

Each retreat ends with a memorial or honoring service. Unless a woman is past the 6-month mark, she rarely has an actual body to bury. Women rarely honor a child that has been miscarried in early pregnancy- and yet there is a life that was lost. They are just left *to suffer in silence*.

*Both the Her Choice to Heal and Weathering the Storm programs have detailed Leader's Guides to cover much more information on running a retreat!*

### **C2 – Abortion Vulnerable – *How Culture Influences Abortion***

Speakers: Sydna Massé, Jessica Deese and Melissa Rodriguez

#### **Immigrant Families (Sydna Massé)**

A woman's family's cultural background impacts their abortion decisions. If her family has recently moved to the US – or if she is attending school here or on a visa. As a “first generation” American, I was raised in a home that was technically located in the U.S. *but culturally ran like an Irish household.* My parents immigrated after their marriage, with the financial and physical assistance of many family members.

My father joined the US Army during the Korean War and gained American citizenship as a perk. My mother went through the “naturalization” process and became a citizen right before I was born.

When I was five years old, I met my maternal grandfather. He took me into his lap and said, “*You are an answer to my prayers to God to have an AMERICAN grandchild. You have been given a great gift. You are the first woman in our entire family to be an American. It was the hope of my life that one of my granddaughters would have this great privilege.*”

*Generations of our family prayed for this as well. We are proud of you as you represent us all! Your success is our success. But don't ever forget what a gift you have been given as an American citizen. Take this deeply into your heart and know that we love and pray for you daily.”*

While I basked in the love of my grandfather for those few days, I only had one family connection in America – my father's sister and her family. Her daughters were older, so I

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didn't even know what cousins were like. *I had no clue what my ancestors had sacrificed so I could be born in this nation.*

When I was 7 years old, our family took a trip to Belfast, N. Ireland. During that visit, my Irish aunts, and uncles, along with my maternal grandmother, would state similar mandates – **“You have been given a great gift in being an American.”** That clearly meant, **“don't blow it!”** From their obvious poverty, I understood what they meant.

Due to these cultural aspects, my mother was determined that ***I become the first female of the entire family line graduate from college.*** She had left school at the age of eleven and worked full-time in a tobacco factory.

When my parents divorced, my mother's lack of education led us to spend many evenings hungry. As our stomachs would growl, I remember her saying, *“Once you have your college degree, you'll never be dependent on a man. You'll never know hunger again.”* The trials of single parenting were obvious in my young life.

When my mother determined to marry her unsaved boss, one of her reasons was to ENSURE that I would go to college. She knew he had the financial means to take care of us as he had a college degree himself. Thankfully, he was a loving man who showed us the American way.

**Clearly all these cultural influences impacted my abortion decision.** When I learned I was pregnant after my freshman year in college, the faces of all my past ancestors drifted through my mind. How could I disappoint them all? My mother's sacrifice had been too great for her to endure an unplanned pregnancy at the cost of her greatest dreams being fulfilled!

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I could not let them down by denying the great gift I had been given as an American woman in being the first to obtain a college degree. *In other words, my child had to die for all their dreams to be fulfilled.* **If the client before you state that her family are immigrants, she could be in the exact same mindset!**

Perhaps the client is the daughter of a Muslim family. A pregnancy outlines her loss of virginity. If she does not abort, her entire family's honor is at stake. These clients have shared that if they reveal their lost virginity, their fathers will take them back to their Muslim nations and publicly execute them for dishonoring the family.

When asked how they know this to be the case, many have responded, "Because we have watched our family members be executed as a way to discourage us from having sex outside of marriage!"

Since America is a "melting pot" of various cultures, learning the impact of their specific nations needs to be included in every pregnancy center training program. If you are in a college community, physical support is even more crucial.

In other countries, mothers-in-law of the women are often the strongest abortion influencer. It could even be the woman has no voice in the decision or she could be cast out of the family, even having her current children taken away.

**Should your center be in a primarily urban area, understanding cross-cultural issues is even more essential.** Ask members of culturally based church congregations to educate your team on ways to address unplanned pregnancies with these clients. Seek their support in assisting with communication with their parents for current/future clients. God's people reside in all communities and cultures. .

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## Latino Community - Melissa Rodriguez

Through my journey, I have come to understand how deeply culture can shape one of life's most complex decisions—whether it is beliefs and traditions, sexuality, religion, or the social pressures and stigmas that surround us. My experience is just one example of how these cultural forces play a role in our decisions.

At the age of sixteen, I decided to become a mother despite my family and others urging me to consider abortion. This led me down a path where I felt isolated, shunned by my family, and distanced from friends and any support. I was committed to a relationship, believing that love could overcome any obstacle. Little did I know that my partner was battling a severe drug addiction. At three months pregnant, we decided to move to a new state in hopes of starting fresh. I held on to hope and determination, trusting that I could face the challenges of motherhood despite my youth and lack of experience.

**The Role of Sexuality and Religion** - When we moved to Philadelphia, looking for better opportunities and support from his family, I had no idea what was waiting for me. I found myself in a world that was completely different from anything I had ever known. Coming from Worcester, Massachusetts, and later sunny Florida, I was not prepared for the realities of street life—fast money, drugs, and a culture that seemed focused on self-importance. This was not just about getting by; it was a way of life that had been passed down through generations, where these choices were normal.

During that time, I was introduced to spiritual practices I had never encountered before. My daughter's father's family practiced Santería, a religion with roots in Afro-Caribbean

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traditions mixed with Catholicism. I witnessed rituals, offerings, and ceremonies they believed would protect them. Even though I was not really interested, I could feel a pull from those spiritual forces. I remember one specific moment when, during an initiation ceremony for my partner, I was warned to stay away for the sake of my unborn child.

Looking back now, I see how God's grace was protecting me and my daughter, even though we were surrounded by so much darkness. I did not grow up in a religious home, but I had heard about God—the One who knows all, sees all and is always with us. My grandparents, who had a deep faith, had planted seeds in my heart. When I was fifteen, I gave my life to Christ, even though I did not fully understand the spiritual battles I would face in the years to come.

**Social Pressures and Stigmas** - Though I could not see it at the time, the cultural and societal pressures surrounding me—including the voices of those I loved—had a lasting impact on my choices. When I became pregnant again, I turned to the same people who had first suggested abortion, seeking their guidance. I now realize how much those voices shaped my decisions.

I believe that every woman who contacts a Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC), whether through text, phone or in person, is experiencing a supernatural move of God. It is a testament to His work, using a crisis pregnancy to draw people closer to Himself.

This allows us to share the love and truth of Jesus Christ with them, with the ultimate hope of not only preserving the life of the child but also leading the mother and father toward salvation. Seeking to minister to individuals before, during, and after a pregnancy-related crisis.

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At that time in my life, I was driven by fear rather than faith, chasing after false ideologies and seeking validation in the wrong places. In my crisis, I was being asked by Christ for a drink, just as He asked the woman at the well: *If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water (John 4:10).*

Even though not every woman we serve will choose life, we can be certain that God's nudging is at work in their stories, and we pray they will one day see His hand in their lives.

After my daughter was born, less than three months later, I discovered I was pregnant again. Overwhelmed by my circumstances—my partner's addiction and feeling disconnected from my family—I turned to the person who had once suggested abortion. I am not sharing this to excuse my actions but to acknowledge the weight of cultural and relational influence. I chose to have an abortion, and sadly, I made that choice again in two subsequent pregnancies.

**Starting the Journey in Pregnancy Ministry** - When I started working in pregnancy ministry, I found myself facing a deeper level of forgiveness than I had ever known. The Holy Spirit began to help me release the fear, guilt, and condemnation that had been holding me back. This process made me realize how much my past experiences influenced my life and work.

At first, I was not ready to share everything about my past, including my previous abortions. It felt uncomfortable and personal, and I questioned whether it was necessary. I wrestled with the idea of talking openly about these decisions and prayed for clarity. I wanted to make sure that if this were part of God's plan for me, I would follow through.

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The next day, I talked with a friend about my new role at a Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC). I was excited but also hesitant, worried that sharing my involvement might seem like bragging. My friend later reached out with a voice message, asking if I had experienced abortion. She explained that while counseling a young woman considering abortion, she felt that my mention of volunteering was a sign from God. This moment gave me the confirmation I needed.

I went back to the PRC to gather resources to help the young woman. Although my abortions were years ago, I began to see how important it was for me to face and heal from the pain I had buried.

I learned that many women struggle with what is known as **Forbidden Sorrow** – feeling that they do not have the right to grieve a lost child because abortion is a choice. This pain often leads to emotional numbness and distancing from loved ones, and some may turn to substances to escape the guilt.

Through my recovery, I discovered that my difficulties with bonding with my children and feeling like a bad mother were linked to my unresolved past. I also learned that this trauma was not just my own; it had affected my family as well. My grandmother had a similar experience with abortion and nearly died from an infection. She only later came to understand the value of life and God's design through her faith.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death." This means that our natural way of thinking, shaped by a world of sin, is not always correct. When I turned to Jesus, He changed my thoughts and transformed my life.

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**Cultural Attitudes Toward Abortion** - The changes in abortion laws and practices in Puerto Rico reflect broader cultural attitudes toward reproductive rights. For instance, my grandmother's decision was influenced by social pressures and a limited understanding of what abortion truly meant. Back then, there was a belief that it was just tissue and not yet a formed baby, which impacted her choices.

**Operation Bootstrap and Economic Pressures** - Operation Bootstrap had a significant impact on Puerto Rico's economy, leading to high unemployment and increasing stress on families. Women felt the pressure to provide for their families under challenging economic conditions. This financial strain often influenced their decisions about abortion, as they faced harsh realities and limited resources.

**Sterilization Policies and Reproductive Rights** - The documentary "La Operación" brings to light the forced sterilization policies in Puerto Rico, which were part of a broader eugenics agenda. These policies illustrate how cultural and governmental pressures shaped reproductive choices and women's health, highlighting a dark chapter in the history of reproductive rights on the island.

By sharing these insights, I hope to provide a deeper understanding of how cultural, economic, and historical factors can shape reproductive decisions and offer support to those navigating similar challenges.

**Why Women Choose Abortion** - Understanding why women choose abortion requires more than just presenting scientific facts. Many women are aware that they are ending a life, but their decisions often stem from deep-seated fears about losing their current way of life. For many, the choice is not made lightly or due to medical reasons; it is usually driven by social or economic pressures.

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Women may fear that having a baby will drastically alter their lives—making it harder to go out with friends, pursue a career, or continue their education. They might feel that their current identity and lifestyle are at risk, leading them to choose between preserving their own lives as they know them and facing an uncertain future with a child.

The terminology used to describe abortion, like "terminating a pregnancy" or "pregnancy tissue," often masks the reality of what abortion involves. Many people dismiss explanations of abortion procedures as false, leading to a widespread misunderstanding of its impacts. This avoidance complicates efforts to provide accurate information and support.

**Misinformation** also plays a significant role. When I refer to details from abortion manuals, some people refuse to believe them, arguing that if such procedures were widely known, fewer people would support abortion. This misinformation, combined with institutional biases, means that the real effects of abortion on women and society are often overlooked.

To address this, we need to equip our teams with reliable, pro-life voices who are hard to dismiss. We must also highlight that motherhood can be a path to success, countering the narrative that abortion is the only way to avoid losing one's life as one knows it. Society has created a false dichotomy between a woman's life and her baby, often neglecting the support systems necessary for women to thrive.

**Cultural Shifts and Modern Influences** - As global communication and feminist activism influence younger generations, we see a shift in cultural attitudes. Social media and pop culture are reshaping views on personal autonomy, including the right to choose abortion. This trend is evident

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in Latin America and the Hispanic world, where traditional values are increasingly challenged by modern ideals.

Music and pop culture now celebrate unrestricted sexuality and redefine gender norms. Many younger individuals, influenced by cross-cultural stars and global movements, are embracing more liberal attitudes toward issues like abortion and gender roles. This shift has created a generational divide between traditional values and contemporary views, especially in communities with strong Indigenous roots.

**Race, Ethnicity, and Socioeconomic Factors** - In countries with strong Indigenous traditions, such as Nicaragua and Guatemala, family and community values heavily influence views on abortion. Women from these regions often adhere to cultural norms that emphasize large families and early marriages. Even when they move to places like the United States, these cultural expectations can remain strong.

In contrast, women of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent who have been raised in the U.S. or come from more Americanized backgrounds may be more likely to consider abortion as an option. This difference highlights how cultural and socioeconomic factors can shape individual choices and beliefs.

**The Role of Sexuality and Religion** - Cultural shifts and smaller family sizes have changed how children are perceived in modern contexts. In some societies, children are seen as burdens, creating tension for women caught between traditional values and contemporary pressures.

When discussing these issues, it is important to remember that everyone has different experiences and beliefs. We should seek to understand why people hold their views rather than expecting agreement. By asking thoughtful

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questions and exploring underlying assumptions, we can open doors to deeper conversations and potential understanding, much like Jesus did when He began with questions.

Understanding these dynamics helps us better support women facing tough decisions and navigate the complex interplay of personal, cultural, and societal influences.

**Communicating and Supporting Clients** - In pregnancy ministry, it is crucial to recognize and address the diverse cultural contexts of those we serve. Understanding these cultural differences allows us to offer more effective, compassionate support. By forming strong partnerships with local faith-based communities, we can better meet the needs of individuals who are vulnerable to abortion.

**Cross-Cultural Communication** - To build a stronger connection with the community, we should collaborate with local churches and faith organizations. This approach helps bridge the gap between our clinic and the people we aim to support.

**Education** - Educational workshops are vital in our outreach efforts. We should focus on clarifying diverse cultural perceptions of abortion, explaining the reality of what abortion involves, and providing accurate information. This helps individuals feel respected and informed, which is essential for making life-affirming choices.

**Finding Opportunities in Challenges** - Let us seek to understand and address the various needs of our communities with wisdom and grace. Reflecting on Matthew 16:18, where Jesus says, *Upon this rock, I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it ...* reminds us of our mission. This passage inspires us to stand

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firm against the forces that seek to undermine life and to promote the value of every human life with conviction.

**Historical and Spiritual Context** - The setting where Jesus declared He would build His church, Caesarea Philippi, was a place known for its pagan worship and darkness. Jesus chose this location to emphasize that His church would thrive even amid spiritual adversity. Similarly, our ministry is called to stand firm in the face of challenges and to advocate for the sanctity of life, advocating for both mother and child, even when it is difficult.

**Encouragement** - When Jesus spoke of the “gates of Hades,” He was referring to the powers of evil and death. His promise that these forces will not overcome His church assures us of our strength and authority. We are empowered to confront the culture of death with the truth about the sanctity of life and to support those in need with compassion and love.

In summary, our mission is to uphold the value of every human life, grounded in the truth of Christ. We have been entrusted with the authority to stand against the forces that seek to diminish the worth of life. Let us move forward with confidence, knowing that our work in promoting life and supporting those in crisis is making a significant difference in advancing God’s kingdom.

**C3 – Leadership – *Faith-Fueled Fundraising: A Guide for Pregnancy Centers***

Speaker: Becky Anderson

**Learning Objectives:**

- Define Fundraising in a Ministry Setting
- Outline the purposes of a comprehensive fundraising strategy
- Understand how to structure an effective fundraising program
- Describe the methods for funding a ministry
- Challenges in developing and executing a fundraising program
- Determine next steps in meeting the funding needs of the ministry

**Define Fundraising in a Ministry Setting**

**Ultimately, God Provides** - While we know that every good and perfect gift comes from our Almighty and gracious God, we often operate as if it all depends on us. Fundraising with a biblical mindset begins with God's hand of provision.

**Your role as the leader** - Each organization will approach the fundraising activities differently, but the leader's first duty is to keep the team focused on God and His will for the fundraising plan.

**The team as a whole** - Whether the fundraising is done mostly by one person (Executive Director or Development Director, for instance) every member of the team should be included in discussion of the budget (income needs and planned expenses) and offered ways to help in fundraising.

**Caring for our donors** - Donor care is ministry. Our goal should be to help our donors connect with our ministry to

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the level they feel God calling them while showing the love of Christ to them through meaningful and personal connections.

**Events and other** - Events such as galas should include both new donor relationship building and nurturing existing donor relationships.

### **Purposes of a Comprehensive Fundraising Strategy**

**Funding the mission** - This is the primary reason we seek financial support. But when we see it simply as a transaction rather than part of ministering to our donors, we miss growing deep faith connections.

**Inviting others to the mission** - Many donors want to have a deeper relationship with the ministry, but they don't know how to engage at that deeper level. It is our job to help them discover how God may want to use them for His Kingdom work.

**Generationally sustaining the mission** - As we engage in fundraising and donor development and care, we need to be alert to ways our supporters see their role from a generational perspective. Over time, we will need to be prepared to adjust our ideas for how we raise funds, always keeping the central theme that God is the Provider.

### **Structuring Your Program**

**God-dependent** - It begins with recognizing not only that God is our Provider, but that He will provide in ways we cannot even imagine, from the people and organizations He brings to the places funding may come that are non-traditional

**Prayer-bathed** - Prayer is the mechanism that reminds us that He is the Provider, and our dependence lies fully in His hands. Included in our prayer strategy should be the time in prayer with the Board, staff, volunteers, churches, and some

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form of community prayer team. Our efforts to fund the mission should be included in the prayer needs and seeking God's will for the funding plan.

**Donor-centric** - Our supporters are not like a bank we transact with for needs. They should be brought into the overarching ministry plan and needs and invited to consider using their God-given financial resources to support the mission.

### Fundraising Methods

**Donor care** - This is truly part of the overall "ministry" we conduct, as much as we care for the clients who present for pregnancy services. It involves spending time, having a listening ear and being alert to what lights them up when it comes to serving the Lord.

#### Events:

- Fundraising banquets/galas
- Baby bottle campaigns
- Walks
- Other
- Online giving

### Challenges and Solutions

**The leader and personality/strengths and weaknesses** - The most authentic form of "fundraising" is done by a leader who plays to his/her strengths and allows God to use who they are in these efforts. We do not have to become someone we are not to accomplish His work.

**The team** - If the team does not understand the big picture – the "why," their willingness and ability to play a role in helping to fund the ministry can fall flat or fizzle. Inspiring them and allowing them to share their successes when they occur will sustain a more robust program.

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**Inadequate resources** - Lack of time and budget can be seen as a challenge. It can spur creativity and will always allow God to get the glory for the outcome.

**Trying new things** - While fundraising planning is important, a willingness to pivot mid-plan or listen to innovative ideas can result in unexpected results and another opportunity to give God the glory.

**Handling criticism** - Whether it is from a past or current donor, someone in the community, another ministry or elsewhere, criticism will come. This is where our focus on God will serve us well because if we truly believe it is His plan and it is He who gives the fruit of our efforts, it will be Him who fights our battles for us, and we do not need to be defensive or afraid.

### Next Steps

**Begin and end with prayer** - A good reminder who is in charge.

**Strategic planning in fundraising** - Develop your budget – what are your needs and plans to grow the ministry. Then look at what kind of funding will be needed to support all the ministry's efforts and design a plan for how those funds are raised – including support from individuals, businesses, churches, grants, events, and other methods.

**The role of the Board** - This can and should include personal giving as well as donor development and event support.

**Owning your role as the leader** - The role of the leader is really two-fold – keeping the focus and maintaining forward momentum.

**Getting the team involved** - Sit down with your ministry team and review the budget together. We cannot expect them to see why they are needed if they don't understand the

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practical costs of ministry. In the discussions, move from informing to inspiring them to brainstorm how they can be effective in helping to fund the ministry.

**Using touch points to locate talent** - Keep your supporters aware of your needs, not just for funding, but for practical ministry needs, including physical items and people to help serve. We never know who God may call to respond to a need, but He sees both our needs and the talent, resources, connections, and passions of the people who want to partner with us in ministry.

## **Keynote 4 - *Navigating New Pro-Life Frontiers: Frozen Embryos, IVF and Cryogenic Orphanages***

**Synopsis:** This keynote will focus on a significant pro-life issue sparked by the recent Alabama Supreme Court decision that recognizes IVF embryos in cryogenic storage as “children.” This groundbreaking ruling has stirred considerable debate within the pro-life community due to the potential impact on invitro fertilization.

John, and Marlene Strege, alongside their daughter Hannah, will share their profound journey through frozen embryo adoption, which began with a simple yet pivotal question from Marlene, “Can frozen embryos be adopted?” Their answer led to Hannah’s birth, making her the first human symbol against embryonic stem cell research, a science threatening countless frozen embryos.

The Strege family’s story, which has touched stages from Focus on the Family to the halls of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the White House, highlights the intersections of faith, family, science, and politics. This keynote is essential for pro-life advocates, individuals touched by infertility, and anyone interested in the ethical dimensions of scientific advancements on the unborn child.

### **The Best Interest of the Child**

"Is This in the Best Interest of the Child" should be the terminology used when referring to frozen embryos. Just like pregnancy centers use ultrasound technology to connect potential parents with their unborn children, the same is true in discussing embryo adoption with donors or other interested couples who want to adopt.

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**Adoption forward terminology** needs to be in place for everyone. Please **do not** use words like "donor family", "donor embryos" "embryo donation", "surplus embryos". This is adoption. These are children and not just embryos. Personalizing their humanity is essential.

Here are some terms to consider using relating to “adoption forward terminology,” or positive language that celebrates the formation of families and avoids stigmatizing words:

- **Adoption:** Use as a verb to describe the process of family formation
- **Genetic parent:** Avoid using "real parent", "mother", or "father"
- **Parent:** Use "parent" instead of "adoptive parent"
- **Child placed for adoption:** Avoid using "abandoned child" or unwanted child",
- **Chosen:** Use this word to emphasize the deliberate and affectionate nature of adoption
- **Loved:** Use this word to emphasize the deliberate and affectionate nature of adoption
- **To make an adoption plan:** Use this phrase instead of "to give up for adoption" to empower genetic parents
- **To place for adoption:** Use this phrase instead of "to give up for adoption" to empower birth parents

Other terms related to adoption include:

- **Adoption triad:** The relationship between the birth parent, adoptive parents, and the child
- **Surrender instrument:** A legal document signed by birth parents to surrender their legal rights to their child

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## Encourage Open Adoption

Also, encourage open adoption between all parties which makes future communication more secure. This is especially necessary if the first family has had their children and there are still remaining embryos.

### For the Placing Family

(those who have remaining embryos to place for adoption):

Keep all the embryos together; don't split them between families at the beginning. The exception should be that when the first adoptive family has had their children, *custody of remaining embryos should revert to the original family who can choose another adopting family.*

Educate the families that they are not only relinquishing their boys and girls in their embryonic stage of development, but they are also relinquishing those familial relationships.

Begin relationships with IVF clinics, outside of your state if possible, to learn who offers embryo adoption.

Begin support group for placing families (i.e., Facebook, closed and private).

### For Adopting Families:

Ensure they do a **Home Study** like any other type of adoption, need specific education for embryo adoption (vs. international or domestic adoption). Ensure the families are completely vetted.

Legal agreements are essential. *Check state for property laws and/or embryo adoption laws*/ Include future communication between the adopting and placing families.

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Need to keep track of the embryos. Get an embryology report from IVF doctor after transfer to see how many embryos remain.)

Begin a support group for adoptive families (i.e.. Facebook

### Donated Versus Adopted Embryos

The distinction between **donated** and **adopted** frozen embryos in the context of adoption revolves around legal terminology, emotional perspectives, and regulatory frameworks.

When embryos are **donated**, the process often occurs anonymously, without sharing detailed family or genetic information between the donors and the adopting family. While this privacy protects the confidentiality of both parties, it also raises a unique consideration for the future.

Because there is no identifying information exchanged, it is possible that children born from donated embryos could unknowingly meet their biological siblings later in life.

This includes the potential for close relationships, or even marriage, between siblings *who may never know they share a genetic connection*. For this reason, some families choose to explore more open donation or adoption arrangements, where information can be exchanged to ensure future awareness and transparency, protecting the well-being of all involved."

Here's a breakdown of the key differences:

#### 1. Terminology:

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- **Donated Embryos:** The term "donation" frames the transfer of embryos as a **medical and contractual transaction** where the embryos are donated by one family to another. This view is closer to the model of organ or tissue donation, where the focus is on medical transfer without implying a legal parent-child relationship prior to birth.
- **Adopted Embryos:** Using the term "adoption" applies a **legal and emotional framework** traditionally associated with child adoption. This terminology emphasizes the intention of creating a **family** and assumes a relationship more akin to adopting a child. It conveys the moral and emotional weight of welcoming a child into a family.

## 2. Legal Framework:

- **Donated Embryos:** In most legal contexts, frozen embryo transfers fall under **property law** or **contract law** rather than adoption law. The donating family relinquishes their rights through a contract, and the adopting family takes on responsibility for the embryos and any children that result from them. Legally, there are no adoption processes or parental rights established until a child is born.
- **Adopted Embryos:** Although some agencies and programs use the term "adoption" for embryos, legally, embryo adoption is not recognized in the same way as traditional child adoption. After birth, *the legal parents are the individuals who give birth to the child*, with no post-birth legal processes like those in traditional adoption (e.g., court appearances or finalizing parental rights).

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## 3. Ethical and Emotional Perspective:

- **Donated Embryos:** The donation framework views the process primarily as **altruistic** and focuses on the transfer of embryos without carrying the full emotional weight of adoption. It can feel more transactional and less about forming a family bond before the child is born.
- **Adopted Embryos:** Many families prefer to think of embryo transfers as **adoption** because it frames the process in a way that aligns with the emotional and relational components of bringing a child into a family. This view often resonates more with those who feel that, even though the embryo is not yet born, it already represents a future child to be **welcomed and loved**.

## 4. Regulatory and Procedural Differences:

- **Donated Embryos:** Programs using the donation model often involve fewer formalities, focusing primarily on medical matching and consent forms between the donating and receiving parties. The process is more streamlined and typically less emotionally intense in legal documents.
- **Adopted Embryos:** Programs offering embryo "adoption" may mimic more traditional adoption protocols, such as requiring home studies, counseling, and extensive background checks for the receiving family. Some families and agencies prefer this approach because it mirrors the serious commitment associated with adoption.

## 5. Future Contact and Relationships:

- **Donated Embryos:** The term donation might suggest a more **anonymous or detached process**, like sperm or egg

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donation, where there may be little to no contact between the donating and receiving families.

- **Adopted Embryos:** Embryo adoption programs may encourage or allow for **open adoption** relationships, where the embryo donors and adopting families maintain contact. The use of adoption language often implies more openness to future relationships between genetic and adoptive families.

### Summary:

- **Donated embryos** focus on the medical and contractual aspect of embryo transfer without the formal emotional or legal framework of traditional adoption.
- **Adopted embryos** apply the language and emotions of family formation, drawing closer parallels to child adoption, even though the legal process does not fully mirror standard adoption law.

While both terms describe the same biological process of transferring embryos, they reflect different attitudes and expectations surrounding the experience for both the donors and the recipients.

## Workshop D Topics

Friday, October 11 – 2:00 - 3:15 p.m.

**Retreat Healing Class (Green Room)** – with Melissa Horton & Bettina Loughman

**D1 – Abortion Recovery Tract – *Honoring Life: Transformative Healing in Abortion Recovery* – Karen Fifer -**  
LOCATION: Children’s Room

**Synopsis:** The journey of healing after an abortion focuses deeply on the wounded soul, guiding individuals through the process of acknowledging and grieving the life lost. This workshop introduces the concept of an honoring service—a powerful ritual that helps rewrite a woman’s story of abortion by dignifying the memory of the children lost, in the presence of their Creator. Participants will explore methods to conduct these services, designed to foster closure, restore joy, and promote peace. Join us to learn how to support women in finding healing and renewal through compassionate, spiritually enriching practices. -

**D2/D3 – *Adoption Redefined* – Hannah Strege -** LOCATION: Sanctuary

**Synopsis:** Hannah Strege will share her heart on being the first frozen embryo adoption. She will examine the role of pregnancy centers in encouraging adoption among clients and donors. It will delve into the diverse landscape of adoption and encouraging embryo adoption in your local community. Gain insights into the demographic profile of children awaiting adoption both nationally and internationally, explore the complexities behind the decisions of couples and individuals who opt out of adoption.

## **D1 – Abortion Recovery Tract – *Honoring Life: Transformative Healing in Abortion Recovery***

Speaker: Karen Fifer

Revelation 4:1 - *Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.*

Clearly God creates all things. Because of Him all unborn exist. It is a fact that cannot be reduced to excuses. A PA recovery is most effective if it leads women to grieve in a healthy productive way. Grief is a healthy concession to the brokenness of what we have done or what has been done to us.

Jesus said in Matthew 5:4 - *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.* It is interesting that Jesus tied these two things together: mourning and comfort. Grief and mourning give us access to His comfort or freedom.

Some abortion recovery groups do not include an honoring or memorial service. If so, then you miss the fundamental aspect of closure with your group. I like the term honoring over memorial – but memorials are what we are accustomed to in our culture. That which is valued – *the life of someone should be “honored.”*

Honoring is defined as: *to seek - to enhance the reputation of someone. To demonstrate high respect or great esteem for someone. By honoring another you are saying you see immense value in them.*

The biblical emphasis on honoring others has everything to do with the biblical command to honor God first. By being created in the image of God – we then should show respect

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or esteem for others. Abortion robs children of being respected and honored as a creation of God.

**The meaning of the Hebrew word for memorial is “to remember.”** Given our tendency to forget, memorials have frequently played a key role in biblical history. The Bible contains many examples of memorials designed to honor God in both the Old and New Testaments.

Often memorials were in the form of stones that are stacked or used as markers. Throughout all cultures and time periods individuals have had the need for rituals or memorials commemorating life-changing events. These include birth, circumcision, coming of age, marriage, job training, graduations, and death.

In acknowledging aborted children as truly human individuals - and **intended** members of our community - it is important to dignify their lives lived within the womb with a memorializing or honoring event. We often do so with miscarriage—and leave abortion out!

To honor is to remember. Biblically, the concept of "remembering" was for future generations and were intended to teach children what God has done in the past. God has always given his people times and ways to memorialize. The dates on the following list were all commanded memorials to observe:

- They were to honor and keep the Sabbath
- The Passover – This event so vividly points to Jesus' death on the cross. In Exodus 12:14 God decreed that the Passover was to be a permanent memorial for all generations
- The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- The Feast of First fruits

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- The Feast of Weeks
- The Feast of Trumpets
- The Day of Atonement
- The Feast of Tabernacles

These dates were **ALL** meant to remind the Israelites throughout each year of God's ongoing protection and provision and salvation through the blood. God appointed specific times and ways that these feasts and memorials were to be kept to the honor of His name.

These times of celebration are important not only to Israel, but also to the overall message of the Bible. But, even more importantly, they foreshadowed the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Likewise, *honoring the life of an unborn child foreshadows the redemptive work of Jesus.*

### Jacob's Stones

Jacob is the first person in the Bible to set up a memorial stone in Genesis 28:10-22. Traveling from Beersheba to Haran to escape his brother Esau, Jacob stopped for a night to sleep.

While he slept with his head on a rock he had a dream, which we call *Jacob's ladder*. This was a dream of angels ascending and descending from heaven. It was here that God assured him that he would be with him. His offspring would fill the earth, and all the families of the earth would be blessed.

Jacob took the rock under his head and set up a pillar to honor and remember the promises God had made him that night. He made a memorial and gave it a name - **Bethel**. We too can name the unborn that we are honoring.

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### Moses then Joshua

At the foot of Mt. Sinai, Moses built an altar of stones to honor God's covenant with Israel. After Moses died, Joshua was appointed to lead the people of Israel into the promised land.

In Joshua 3, the people of God approach the Jordan River. There a miracle happened that allowed the Israelites to cross the Jordan river on dry ground. I encourage you to read about it because a real miracle happened twenty miles away!

Once they crossed the river God told Joshua to take twelve stones from the middle of the riverbed from the very place where the priests stood with the Ark while the people passed over. Each stone represented the twelve tribes.

Joshua explained that these stones would be a sign so when their children asked, they were to tell them about how God had dried up the river allowing them to cross the Jordan. **These stones were a forever memorial.**

These memorial stones were to be a reminder of their own personal experience of what they saw, heard, and felt from the time they left Egypt to now. They were to tell their story and to keep on telling their stories so that **future generations would never lose the awe and wonder of what God had done.** Again, we see it was to be a time and place to remember what God had done.

God said do this on the 10th day of the first month This was an important date because it had been exactly forty years since Israel marched out of Egypt having been set free. Forty years of spiritual defeat and failure had rolled away. It was the dawn of a great new beginning in a new land. They were

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now a people with a powerful new sense of purpose, determined to take fresh territory with God.

We all have memorials in our lives. Maybe they are not made of stone but one built of memories. There are significant places, times and our lives that trigger the memory of how God has worked in our lives. We cannot escape these memories even when they are attached to something bad in our lives.

As believers we should be able to look back and see those monumental occasions which stand out as times when God changed our direction and gave us hope and a new sense of purpose. It is a time when we **by an act of faith** decided to abandon ourselves to God and step out in freedom – leaving our past behind.

The Mosaic Law prescribed a set of **rituals** for Israel to remember God and worship Him. There were many ceremonial laws for them to observe. Some of those laws were extremely specific and involved the sprinkling of water, the sprinkling of blood, the waving of grain, or the washing of clothes.

**God ordained rituals throughout the scriptures.** Do not let our current society ruin the word ritual. An honoring or memorial service is a ritual of significance.

Even today, when Jews visit a grave, they leave a stone behind on the tombstone in remembrance of their loved one. We put a headstone at every grave to mark and remember the person. All church services have a format that they typically follow that can be thought of as a “**ritual.**” In the Old Testament we saw pillars of stones used as Remembrances. God had a purpose in that!

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## Jesus – our Living Stone

Jesus, Himself is described as our Living Stone. Because we live on this side of the resurrection, we can apply the concept of a **stone of remembrance**.

As believers in Christ, we can look back at Jesus as our Living Stone knowing that what He has done for us can never be taken away. The cross is our personal memorial. We wear them around our necks to honor his death for us on the cross.

Jesus gave us another specific memorial in honor of the cross in **The Lord's Supper**. We are to honor and remember his sacrifice and celebrate His resurrection.

**Baptism is another memorial** Paul used it that way in Romans 6:1–4 - *Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."*

Memorial services are included in Ecclesiastes 3:4 - *A time to cry and a time to laugh; a time to grieve and a time to dance.*

Hud McWilliams made the following points in his book, **Discipline of Disturbance: Stop Waiting for Life to be Easy** - *Hope and grief are tied together. Without hope- grief is merely survival. And mere survival is life without meaning. When we learn how to grieve and mourn, we can experience a kind of spiritual freedom that is available only through letting go. Letting go means putting an end to our false sense of control; it is not forgetting the person or ignoring the pain.*

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There are many ways to avoid grief. When we fail to grieve – it hinders our ability to live free. Through the act of grieving—the loss – the suffering and struggle - that is the pathway we access to find the comfort and freedom that Jesus died to provide us.

The post-abortive are often trapped in grief unknowingly. Grief will work its way into our hearts one way or another, often in unhealthy ways. Now they have a healthy way to grieve as revealed in I **Peter 3:15-16**: *But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account **for the hope that is in you**, but with gentleness and respect; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.*

**Real hope comes when we place our trust in what is true. Jesus is truth.** This is how the healed post abortive to respond others who seek to remind them or make them feel guilty again for their past. They now have freedom and hope. They can speak about the hope within them with gentleness and respect. That is the most sure-fire way to quiet the voices of those who speak against them.

When people in our lives die, we honor them with a funeral/memorial service which provides us the freedom to grieve and reminds us of our hope in Christ, which is eternal life!

These types of rituals involve symbolic physical actions. God intended them for our good. In our recovery efforts after abortion, we are **remembering/honoring/making a memorial to the children God had created and designed.**

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## Introducing the Memorial Honoring Service

Wait until after the children are accepted as children – not abortions or pregnancies. Often the first thought women have is, “Oh! I cannot do that!” Some will welcome the opportunity.

Using the memorial teaching from scripture covered in these notes, discuss the topic. Remind them that you will not make them do anything that is not good for them. All PA work is hard – this is no different. Let them know that this will be a GOOD process for them.

The Memorial/Honoring service is the most difficult and painful part of the healing process. The delayed grieving of the child is at the center of most of the women’s reactions to the abortion. They may seek to forget, but it is remembering that brings peace.

The loss of the child(ren) must be faced for healing to take root and grow. Women may be afraid to grieve. They may dread to come into God’s presence and finally face Him with the loss of their children **whose death they caused**. They may even try to take back shame.

An honoring service allows them the final act of letting go of the very thing they have been grieving - their children! If they miss this step, they miss experiencing *the act of letting go of the very guilt, shame and misery that can lead to God’s comfort*.

**Jeremiah 31:15- 17** involves looking at their life and seeing their own broken heart:

*This is what the Lord says:  
“A voice is heard in Ramah,*

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*Lamenting and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
She refuses to be comforted for her children,  
Because they are no more.”  
This is what the Lord says:  
“Restrain your voice from weeping  
And your eyes from tears;  
For your work will be rewarded,” declares the Lord,  
“And they will return from the land of the enemy.  
There is hope for your future,” declares the Lord,  
“And your children will return to their own territory.*

A broken heart is often the driving force behind a woman coming to a recovery group. Under the warm glow of Jesus' love, the power of His word applied to a broken heart allows hope and comfort along with sorrow being turned into rejoicing.

In our groups we need to allow time to be thankful for a broken heart- for by becoming broken we are led to Christ for the mending. We do not emotionally grieve the loss of the aborted child(ren) for several reasons:

## Society

**Forbidden Loss** - Society denies abortion as the loss of a pregnancy or life. Abortion death is unspeakable. There is no public mourning or ritual for an aborted child. We are expected to “just get over it” and move on. Many will say:

- Why dig up the past! Let it go! - The problem is women do not know how to let it go as it is often stuck in the throats and they cannot release it.
- Why heap condemnation on yourself. It will only make you sadder.

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- That is a morbid and kooky thing to do. It will only cause disturbing and unpleasant thoughts.

These are lies but many unknowing family and friends can speak it as the idea of a memorial is overwhelming to them.

### Fear of our Feelings

When we do not have resources to deal with the depth of our emotions – it creates fear. Here is more about that fear level in the post-abortive heart:

- They fear about where their child is now - Heaven. They fear their children will know why they are in heaven in the first place and will hate them
- They fear they will not know their child in Heaven
- They fear that once started grief will be overwhelming or that we will lose control, and the tears will never end but even lead to suicide
- Crying shows weakness or is wrong
- The fear that once they start grieving, they will never be able to stop
- It feels weird to mourn a child that is long gone from the world

Unless they come forward immediately, all post-abortive people, to some degree, have been in an extended time of grief which they have tried to deny.

A lament or lamentation is a type of grief that is most often born of regret, or intense mourning. Lamenting is often that uncontrollable grief which cannot be consoled easily. It usually is experienced when we first learn of a loved one's death. We lament when we grieve over the loss of someone or something dear to us. We lament in prayer when our hearts are broken. Many of the psalms are songs of lament,

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which express a range of emotions when the authors were going through sorrowful times.

**Psalms 130:1** reveals, *Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!* A lament often is what leads us to an enthusiastic expression of grief that can often be expressed in music, poetry, or songs. Jesus also demonstrated this type of lament when He cried out to the Father the night before His crucifixion: *Abba, Father . . . all things are possible for you. Take this cup from me* (Mark 14:36).

We lament when we feel helpless in our situations. The Bible instructs us to lament over our sin. This kind of lamenting is associated with repentance as revealed in these verses:

**2 Corinthians 7:10** - *Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

**Genesis 6:6** - *... the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."*

The idea in this verse is that God lamented at what His prized creation had become. God's lamentations show us that He has deep feelings of sorrow when evil reigns unchecked. When wickedness in the world - and within ourselves - causes us to lament as God does, **we are on our way to becoming free.**

You may see lamenting during an honoring service because we have given them permission to do so. Do not let it disturb your heart. This level of grieving is a good and healing process. **We fail to grieve when there is ambivalence and deception.**

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By the time you are ready for an Honoring service you will have led women through the process of the **conflict of contradictory feelings** concerning the abortion they have had. These include:

- Feeling both relief and denial at the same time.
- Feeling glad that our lives do not change, but we sense pain and loss.
- Believing it was our “choice,” yet we feel bad or sad?

We need to address these emotions in a healthy way, providing healing for the heart.

### Grieving our Loss

When we acknowledge that there is loss, the loss of our children -- a healing ritual can be a way of assisting us to **release our grief and pain**.

Honoring allows a drastic change to this story of her life. It rewrites our story. It now has a new ending. No longer are we attached to the memory of an aborted child that is attached to pain and suffering. The child - is now a loved child that has been given dignity - with a name - to be honored as God's creation, and their precious child.

An honoring memorial brings meaning and closure. It can often enhance our spiritual transformation and bring emotional healing from the trauma abortion has caused. An honoring memorial – with its symbols and images -- bring meaning, purpose, and health back to our lives.

**NOTE:** Women should never be made to hold a doll or stuffed animals to represent their children during a memorial/honoring process or even in an abortion recovery program. This can and often does retraumatize women.

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Here are some better suggestions:

- Writing a letter or poems or singing - along with journaling feelings to deal with the loss.
- Some may like to express themselves through drawings or paintings.

## Naming the child

Some instinctively know if the child was a boy or girl. Others may have thought of a name already. Some may have been shown by the Lord whether their child was a boy or girl in dreams or unusual events. Others may never know and will never need to know the sex of their aborted child. **Healing is not dependent on knowing about their child or giving a name.** The Lord will reveal what they need to know about their children.

## Planning an Honoring Service

You do not need to bring it up until towards the end of the study. Yet it is ok if it comes up in conversations to let them know of the plans. Whenever it is discussed, give them a few weeks to get used to the idea. **Give them background first of why it is done.**

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve. The important thing is that the grief process has begun and should be allowed to continue through its natural course even after the service. Miscarried children can be honored during this service as well.

Planning for the service should be done with the group's input. Allow women to help in planning their own memorials. This involves whether outside guests can come, etc. **The exception to being involved in a planning process is the**

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**service during a weekend retreat which is preplanned for time purposes.**

It is okay to make suggestions. Keep it simple but meaningful. This can be accomplished anywhere: at a church, home, or outdoors. **Here are some suggestions:**

- Include songs and meaningful Scriptures
- Have a preprinted order of service
- Lighting a candle to represent each child (make sure you have plenty on hand.):
- Either before or after they have lit a candle, they can read the letter they have written to God to give to their children.
- Allow them to take their time. You may find they will linger and not want to put their candles out.
- Present a rose and a Certificate of Life to represent each aborted child
- You could have a pillar of stones – that women decorate and keep afterwards. These look nice in a flower garden.

### **Sample Memorial Service Program:**

Open in Prayer

Scripture reading: Isaiah 61

Song – (have the class select music)

Candle lighting - reading of letters

Read: **A Preborn Child's Conversation with His Heavenly Father**

Sing - Amazing Grace while leader GENTLY blows out the candles

Presentation of Rose and certificates

Closing Prayer

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## A Preborn Child's Conversation with His 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 is done, she will be here.*

Is she going to know me when she gets here?

*Yes, she will, 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?

*She never had the chance to, my child.*

Why did she never have the chance, Father God?

*I don't remember, my child.*

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

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### Will I Know My Child in Heaven?

In the Bible, the word for “**bereaved**” (according to Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionary) means “to miscarry - i.e., to abort, to be (made) childless, deprive, destroy, or to be robbed of your child or children.” The following scriptures will have a new meaning!

God not only talks to the bereaved heart of women who have lost a child. He also wants to give us something to hang on to in our times of grief. **Isaiah 49:15-21** reveal this truth:

*Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you. Lift up your eyes and look around; all your sons gather and come to you. As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride.*

*"Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away. The children born during your **bereavement** will yet say in your hearing, 'This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in.' Then you will say in your heart, 'Who bore me these? I was **bereaved** and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these—where have they come from?'*

God is talking about His people, Israel, in this passage, who were held captive in Babylon. He chose a bereaved mother as an example of His heartache over His children. God provided for the **children of bereavement** to have royal caregivers as revealed in **Isaiah 49: 22-23**: *Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations. And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. Kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and*

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*lick the dust of your feet; and you will know that I am the LORD; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.*

In God's sovereignty, because He is Jehovah-Jireh (God, My Provider, He has provided for these precious children. We in turn are blessed with our hope in Christ Jesus to see our children again.

It is as if God is saying to us... *"I understand you are out there wandering around in exile. You are lonely and you do not know who to talk to. You do not' even know if you will ever get to see your children. But I am telling you 'kings will be their guardians and princesses their nursemaids' they will be caring for them and when you come to me they will 'carry your sons in their bosom and your daughter will be carried on their shoulders' and they will come and kneel down and present your child to you."*

**How will I know my Child in Heaven?** The Bible gives us examples of those who appeared and were recognized by others after their death. There was an ability to know someone without being told who they are or by being introduced to them.

- **Samuel** - 1 Samuel 28:3-20
- **Moses and Elijah** – Matthew 17:2-4; Mark 9:2-4; Luke 9:29-31
- **Saints raised from the dead after Jesus was crucified** - Matthew. 27:51-53
- **Jesus after His resurrection** – Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:9-18; Luke 24:13-32; John 21:1-14; Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

**What are we like in Heaven?** Below are a few truths to answer this question.

- We have a new body - Philippians 3:20-21

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- We will be known - 1 Corinthians 13:12
- We are like Jesus - 1 John 3:2
- We have a place prepared for us –John 14:1-3
- We will never die again - John 11:25-26
- We have a new name - Revelations 2:17
- We will not grieve - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
- With Jesus forever - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18
- No crying and no more death –Revelations 7:17; 21:4
- Children in heaven are not angels - Psalm 139:13-18 -  
*Children do not come back to being a baby again to someone else. God does not replace miscarried children or an infant that dies. If you become pregnant again the next child is a different person with a new body and personality from the lost child.*

## **D2/D3 – *Adoption Redefined***

Speaker: Sydna Massé & Hannah Strege

### **Adoption Agency/Attorneys Steps to Offer Frozen Adoption Services**

Adoption agencies and attorneys looking to offer this service should take several steps to ensure compliance with laws and to establish proper procedures. Below is a list of steps to begin offering frozen embryo adoption:

#### **1. Research and Understand Frozen Embryo Adoption**

- **Understand legal implications:** Embryo adoption is governed by both adoption and reproductive laws, which vary by state and country. Research the legal framework around embryo adoption.
- **Study medical aspects:** Understand the medical procedures involved in transferring embryos and the health implications for both the adopting family and the embryo.

#### **2. Consult Legal Experts**

- **Consult with attorneys specialized in reproductive law:** Ensure compliance with both adoption laws and the unique regulations surrounding the adoption of embryos.
- **Draft legal agreements:** Create legally binding agreements for both the donating and adopting families, covering the transfer of parental rights, medical history disclosure, and future contact agreements.

## 3. Create Policies and Procedures

- **Establish an application process:** Develop guidelines for screening prospective adoptive families, like traditional adoption processes.
- **Set criteria for embryo donation and adoption:** Determine qualifications for both donating and adopting families, such as age, health status, and ethical considerations.
- **Decide on open or closed adoption:** Develop policies for whether donors and adoptive families can remain in contact and how that would be managed.

## 4. Develop Partnerships with Fertility Clinics

- **Work with fertility specialists:** Partner with fertility clinics that manage embryo storage and transfer. Ensure they understand the adoption process and legal aspects of transferring embryos.
- **Establish medical protocols:** Set medical protocols for transferring embryos, including legal consent forms and health screenings for adoptive mothers.

## 5. Ensure Compliance with State and Federal Regulations

- **Follow adoption laws:** Embryo adoption often falls under contract law rather than traditional adoption laws, so make sure contracts meet the legal standards in your state.
- **Comply with FDA regulations:** In the U.S., the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates human tissue transfers, which includes embryos. Ensure all transfers comply with FDA guidelines for safety.

### 6. Offer Counseling and Support Services

- **Provide counseling for both parties:** Ensure both the donating and adopting families have access to counseling, especially for emotional and ethical considerations surrounding embryo adoption.
- **Prepare for future contact issues:** Help families prepare for the possibility of future contact between the child and the embryo donors, particularly in cases of open adoption.

### 7. Create a Marketing and Outreach Plan

- **Educate the public:** Develop informational materials and marketing campaigns to educate potential donors and adoptive parents about frozen embryo adoption.
- **Reach out to families:** Connect with families who may have remaining embryos and are considering donation, as well as prospective adoptive families.

### 8. Set Up Financial Plans

- **Establish costs and payment plans:** Determine the costs involved in embryo adoption and create financial plans for prospective adoptive families.
- **Provide grant or funding options:** Explore options for offering financial assistance, such as grants or loans, for adopting families.

### 9. Establish Record Keeping and Data Management

- **Maintain medical and legal records:** Set up secure, compliant systems for storing records related to medical histories, contracts, and other legal documentation.
- **Track post-adoption outcomes:** Develop a process for tracking health outcomes and other crucial factors after the embryo has been adopted and a child has been born.

## 10. Train Staff and Attorneys

- **Train staff on embryo adoption specifics:** Ensure all staff are knowledgeable about the legal, ethical, and medical aspects of embryo adoption.
- **Provide ongoing legal education:** Attorneys involved should stay up to date with changes in adoption and reproductive laws that impact frozen embryo adoption.

By following these steps, adoption agencies and attorneys can effectively begin offering frozen embryo adoption services while ensuring legal, medical, and ethical compliance.

**Keynote 5 - *Microchimerism and Epigenetics:  
The Hidden Biology of Abortion Trauma***

Speaker: Sydna Massé

**Generational Sin**

The Bible addresses the concept of generational sin in several passages. These verses suggest that the consequences of sin can affect multiple generations, but they also emphasize God's justice, mercy, and forgiveness. Here are some key verses on this topic:

**Exodus 20:5-6** - *You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

**Exodus 34:7** - *Maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.*

**Deuteronomy 5:9-10** - *You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

**Lamentations 5:7** - *Our ancestors sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment.*

**Ezekiel 18:20** - *The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent*

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*share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.*

**Numbers 14:18** - *The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.*

**Jeremiah 32:18** - *You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them. Great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord Almighty.*

**Galatians 3:13** - *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole."*

In these verses, God emphasizes both His justice in addressing sin across generations and His mercy in offering forgiveness and redemption. However, passages like Ezekiel 18:20 clarify that everyone is responsible for their own actions and relationship with God. Through Christ, there is freedom from the consequences of generational sin, and the opportunity for healing and transformation is always available.

### Your Grandmother Carried You!

A fascinating fact about pregnancy is that part of you may have been inside your grandmother! When a woman is a fetus in her mother's womb, her ovaries are already forming all the eggs she will have in her lifetime. This means:

- Your grandmother carried your mother, and inside your mother were the eggs that eventually made you.
- This connection means you spent around five months inside your grandmother's womb, through your mother.

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- Even though you and your mother have different DNA, your egg was once part of your grandmother!

**Epigenetic Effects Across Generations** - Because women are born with all the eggs they will ever have, certain things that happen during pregnancy can affect not only the baby but also future grandchildren. **A study found that a pregnant woman's diet can impact her grandchildren by changing her son's sperm.** This may increase the grandchildren's risk of certain diseases.

## Epigenetics

*Epigenetics is the study of how cells can control genes without changing the DNA.* "Epi-" means "on" or "above," and epigenetics refers to things that affect genes without changing their code. Epigenetic changes turn genes on or off. Even though scientists are researching it, we still do not know everything about epigenetics, especially how these changes might pass down through generations. This makes epigenetics a debated topic, but we are learning more every day.

Epigenetics is important in pregnancy. Things like what the mother eats, her stress levels, and exposure to chemicals can influence the baby's genes. These changes can last for a long time, even into adulthood. Here are a few examples:

- **Nutrition:** A pregnant woman's diet can affect her baby's genes. For example, if the mother is overweight, it can increase the baby's chances of obesity and health problems later.
- **Stress:** *If the mother is anxious during pregnancy, it can change the baby's DNA, which could affect the child's behavior.*

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- **Chemical Exposure:** Being exposed to certain chemicals, especially in early pregnancy, can disturb the baby's gene changes.
- **Microbiome:** The mix of bacteria and other microorganisms in the mother's body can also affect the baby's genes.

**Stress during pregnancy** impacts the baby in separate ways:

- **Brain Development:** Stress may disrupt brain development, making the child more sensitive to stress later.
- **Nervous System:** Stress in the second trimester could change how the child's nervous system develops, possibly affecting mood and behavior.
- **Birth Defects:** Stress can reduce blood flow to the baby, which may cause developmental problems or birth defects.
- **Preterm Labor and Low Birth Weight:** High stress levels can increase the risk of early labor or a low-birth-weight baby.

### Microchimerism

**Microchimerism in Pregnancy** - Microchimerism happens when cells and genetic material are shared between a mother and her baby during pregnancy. This sharing goes both ways but happens more from the baby to the mother. Here are some important things to know:

- **Fetal microchimerism:** Baby cells can enter the mother's body and stay in her organs for many years after pregnancy.

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- **Maternal microchimerism:** The mother's cells can pass to the baby and remain in lesser amounts during infancy and childhood.
- **Factors that affect cell transfer:** Things like the mother's health, the baby's sex, and whether the baby is breastfed can affect how many cells are transferred.
- **Effects on the child:** Chimeric cells may affect the child more than the mother because the child's immune system is still growing.
- **Potential benefits:** Microchimerism may help protect mothers from rheumatoid arthritis and breast cancer.

**Microchimerism and Siblings** - Microchimerism can affect siblings in these ways:

- **Cell transfer:** Baby cells can enter the mother's body, and the mother can also pass her cells to the baby.
- **Cell buildup:** A mother's body can **collect cells from each pregnancy, and these can be passed to younger siblings.**
- **Cell role:** *Microchimeric cells may give future babies a signal about their genetic chances.*
- **Health issues:** Microchimerism is linked to health problems like reproductive and autoimmune diseases.
- **Stem cell transplants:** Stem cell transplants between siblings, especially using younger siblings' cells, can be more successful.

### Fetal Microchimerism & Abortion

**Microchimerism** refers to the presence of a small number of cells (or DNA) that originate from another individual within a person's body. This can happen naturally during pregnancy when cells from the fetus cross the placenta and integrate into the mother's body. Conversely, maternal cells can also

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enter the fetus. These cells can persist in the body for years or even a lifetime.

*In cases of abortion, especially surgical abortion, **the abrupt detachment of the placenta can release a higher number of fetal cells into the mother's system compared to a full-term delivery.** These cells, often DNA-bearing, can integrate into maternal tissues such as the liver, thyroid, and potentially the immune system, and remain for decades.*

After an abortion, more fetal cells are released into the mother's body, especially in surgical abortions. **This happens because of the way the placenta separates.** These cells can stay in the mother's body for a long time, unlike after a full-term delivery.

After an abortion, the persistence of these cells may contribute to complex physical and emotional responses. **While they do not directly cause emotional distress,** they could potentially play a role in immune or hormonal responses that might affect overall health.

When it comes to **abortion** and microchimerism, the topic is often explored in relation to the long-term health effects for women who have undergone abortions, as well as the emotional or spiritual implications. Microchimerism is not inherently harmful. In some cases, these fetal cells are thought to contribute to tissue repair and maternal health. However, there is also evidence suggesting that they may be linked to autoimmune disorders, though research in this area is ongoing and not conclusive.

When a pregnancy ends, **especially through abortion,** microchimerism can be affected in diverse ways:

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- **Fetal cell levels:** *Fetal cells are higher after an abortion than a miscarriage, and higher after surgical abortion than chemical abortion.*
- **Autoimmune disease:** Fetal microchimerism may be connected to autoimmune diseases common in women of childbearing age.
- **Immune tolerance:** Microchimeric cells may change how the mother's body tolerates pregnancy.
- **Long-term effects:** Fetal cells can remain in the mother's body for decades after pregnancy.
- **This differs from full-term delivery, where the process is more gradual. The increase in fetal cell transfer during abortion could be attributed to the trauma and damage caused to the placental tissue.**

### Important Points:

- **Cell type and number:** In abortions, more cells, including undifferentiated ones, are released, which may settle in the mother's body.
- **Immune system response:** The mother's immune system may normally remove fetal cells, but after an abortion, this system can temporarily tolerate them, allowing them to survive.
- **Cell movement:** Fetal cells can move to various parts of the mother's body, including bone marrow, where they might stay and multiply.

### Emotional and Spiritual Considerations

On an emotional and spiritual level, the concept of microchimerism can raise complex feelings for women who have experienced abortion. The idea that cells from the fetus may remain in the mother's body can be emotionally charged,

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especially for those who are **working through post-abortion grief or healing**.

**This is further evidence of the deep, lasting connection between a mother and her child, even after abortion.** This perspective may be explored in post-abortion recovery programs, such as those focusing on healing and forgiveness.

### Health and Medical Implications

There are still many unanswered questions about how microchimerism affects long-term health after an abortion. Some researchers are exploring the potential for these fetal cells to contribute to autoimmune diseases or other health conditions.

Conversely, others suggest that these cells may play a reparative role in the body, highlighting the complexity of the phenomenon.

Studies have shown that fetal cells found in maternal tissue are not necessarily harmful; in fact, they may have a protective role in tissue repair, such as during injury or inflammation. For example, research in animal models suggests *that fetal stem cells can migrate to sites of injury and contribute to the healing process, particularly in the heart and other organs.*

However, the persistence of fetal cells has also been associated with certain autoimmune conditions in women, such as systemic sclerosis and thyroiditis. Some studies indicate that women who experience pregnancy loss, including through abortion, may show higher levels of fetal microchimerism, *as the immune system may react to these fetal cells differently than it does after a full-term pregnancy.*

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*This suggests a unique immunological interaction influenced by how and when pregnancy is terminated.*

Though research is still evolving, the potential implications of fetal microchimerism, especially after abortion, have sparked interest in its long-term effects on maternal health, cancer risks, and autoimmune diseases ([Cambridge University Press & Assessment](#))

### Microchimerism in Other Pregnancy Outcomes:

- **Full-term delivery:** The placental separation is slower during normal delivery, so fewer fetal cells are released into the mother's body.
- **Miscarriage:** Miscarriages usually involve fewer fetal cells, and since the pregnancy is shorter, there is less chance for long-term microchimerism.

**Male Microchimerism** - Male microchimerism is when a small number of male cells are found in a woman's body. It can happen in unusual ways:

- **Pregnancy:** Women who were pregnant with a male baby often have male cells in their bodies. The number of male cells can be affected by delivery type, placenta issues, and pregnancy complications.
- **Other sources:** Male cells can also be found in women who only had daughters, have never been pregnant, or in girls who have not gone through puberty. Sources include older brothers, a male twin, sexual intercourse, or unknown pregnancies.

**Male Microchimerism in the Brain** - Male microchimerism in the brain happens when male DNA is found in a woman's

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brain, **usually from a pregnancy with a male baby**. Here is what to know:

- **Common occurrence:** Many women who have been pregnant with a male baby show signs of male DNA in their brains.
- **Where it comes from:** This DNA comes from baby cells that cross the placenta during pregnancy.
- **Where it is found:** Male microchimerism can be found in various parts of the woman's brain.

### The Impact of Family Sins on Our Lives

One of the hardest things about understanding how our ancestors' actions affect us is the lack of information. In the past, people did not often write down the wrongs or traumas they experienced. In fact, many sins were kept secret, as people feared that sharing them would hurt future generations.

For example, many single pregnant women consider abortion because they do not want their teenage children to think it is okay to have sex outside of marriage since they did it themselves. It is true that a parent's sexual choices—whether inside or outside of marriage—can affect their children.

Even if parents do not talk about it, their decisions can still indirectly influence their kids. If a mother chooses to have an abortion, her children might suffer emotional, spiritual, physical, and psychological effects. Even if they do not fully understand the situation, this trauma could lead them to face unplanned pregnancies and even consider abortion themselves.

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The **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)** questionnaire is a 10-question survey that looks at how difficult childhood experiences affect a person. It checks for experiences of abuse, neglect, and other problems before the age of eighteen. The ACE questionnaire looks for ten types of experiences, including:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Physical neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Parental substance abuse
- Parental mental illness
- Parental separation or divorce
- A household member being in jail
- A parent being abused in domestic violence

The higher your ACE score, the more likely you are to face psychological or medical problems like depression, cancer, or heart disease. Some areas most affected by high ACE scores are:

- **School performance:** Children with higher ACE scores are more likely to repeat a grade and less likely to be involved in school.
- **Mental health:** ACEs can raise the chances of mental health issues like mood disorders, anxiety, addiction, personality disorders, and suicidal thoughts.
- **Physical health:** ACEs increase the risk of physical problems, such as depression, cancer, heart disease, and more.

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- **Behavioral issues:** Higher ACE scores make people more likely to face problems like smoking, drug use, alcoholism, and skipping work.
- **Lifespan:** People with an ACE score of 6 or higher may have a lifespan shortened by up to 20 years.

**Note:** *The ACE test is explained in more detail in Karen Fifer's notes for Workshop E2 in the Abortion Vulnerable Tract titled "Determining Level of Client Vulnerability/Lifecycle of Abortion." This information is presented to assist in sharing it with abortion vulnerable individuals.*

### Inherited Trauma

When I was seven years old, my family took a trip back to Ireland so my brother and I could meet our relatives there. While I was young, I vividly remember getting off the plane in Belfast, N. Ireland with the distinct feeling I was "home." Everything seemed familiar to me, and I could not figure out why.

During that trip, my parents took me to visit my only living grandmother – my mother's mother. *This was the woman that "carried" me in her womb.* I was quite shocked to walk into her TINY row home which could not have been more than nine hundred square feet in size. Everything seemed familiar in that abode - *despite the fact I had never been there before.* This was the home where my mother had been born and raised.

Sadly, my grandmother physically abused my mother throughout her young life. Daily beatings focused on my mother's head were common. My mother would wake up at least monthly in the hospital after being knocked out cold. There were no laws in Belfast then relating to child abuse. No

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one intervened and my mother suffered horribly at the hands of my grandmother.

As I was walking around her home, I came downstairs to realize my parents had left me with this grandmother without saying goodbye. I was horrified that this woman could potentially beat me in that moment. She was not a person I wanted to stay with by any means. I truly did NOT like her at all!

She ignored my angst and quickly dragged me down the street to meet all her friends. I was introduced as “May’s wee girl” and my cheeks were pinched hundreds of times it seemed. These Irish women would encourage me to speak and then laugh at my American accent. It was quite a difficult day in my young life – *the only one I would ever spend with this grandparent.*

During dinner back at her home, she prayed over the meal. Shocked that she spoke to God, I came right out and asked, “*Why did you beat my mother when she was a child?*”

Shocked at such an impertinent question from a seven-year-old, my grandmother simply denied my accusation saying in a serious tone, “I never laid a hand on your mother, Sydna.”

I did NOT believe her but asked no more questions since she was lying. My mother had shown me her scars and told me the stories of how her mother had inflicted each one. I wanted no part of such a brutal woman. I was not happy, and my body language and lack of words revealed that vividly. She did not seem to care.

When my father came alone to pick me up the next day, I was equally angry with him. In the car I blasted him with my anger over leaving me with this woman. He simply laughed and

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then told me to be quiet saying I should be thankful I had even met her.

My mother was later apologetic when I accused her of leaving me to be beaten in the same way she had. Her answer was, "Your grandmother clearly adored you so I knew you would be safe. She did not care for your brother, however, so he stayed with us." I was jealous of my brother then, and he was angry at me because he wanted our grandmother's attention and did not receive it.

*When I learned that I had literally RESIDED in my grandmother's body in egg form when she was pregnant with my mother, a deeper understanding took hold in my heart. I walked out that idea realizing that I had also been part of my mother's body during those horrifically abusive days. Each beating was something that impacted me too. How could it have not if I were inside her body at the time?*

**The horror of my mother's early abuse also impacted me on a biological level.** That led to another deeper understanding about one of my major reasons for aborting. I had made the choice to "protect" my mother from additional shame/guilt/grief of community rejection. I knew she would be deeply traumatized with a pregnant unmarried daughter. Hoping to spare her that shame, I embraced abortion for my own child, *who was once a part of my mother's body during my time in her womb!*

Take a few moments to remember your mother's upbringing and your relationship with your maternal grandmother. Trauma is typically repeated down the generational line. There is so much that we do not realize or understand because the truth of the past is rarely revealed.

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Abortion has occurred in various forms for thousands of years. While you may never know what your ancestors experienced as it relates to an unexpected pregnancy, that does not mean their choices did not impact you eventually. Take a minute to ponder your maternal family history and connect any dots that may exist to your abortion experience.

### Puzzle Pieces of Truth

Because a past abortion is often a “secret sin,” that is rarely shared with future generations, it can become a family habit. 2 Corinthians 4:2 reveals the way to stop abortion from having that generational impact: *Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, **by setting forth the truth plainly** we commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.*

My mother was never able to embrace my ministry efforts to reach abortion’s wounded hearts. She responded in outright horror that I would publicly confess my sins to the world. She even unsuccessfully attempted to get me fired from my ministry position!

My mother loved Jesus. I could not understand why she would be against me offering His hope of healing along with my own personal repentance with anyone who needed to hear it. I was simply using His healing of my sin in evangelizing the post-abortive demographic with the Gospel of Christ. She could never embrace that concept.

At one point, I asked God, “Do I really have to do something that makes my mother this upset and miserable?”

God used an old Star Trek movie where Spock was allowing himself to die to save many others to speak His answer to my heart. Captain Kirk begged Spock to spare himself, Spock

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responded quietly, “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.”

The Holy Spirit used a movie line to confirm two ministry truth:

- **You can have a ministry to your mother or to the world. But you cannot do both.** If you focus on the world, I will take care of your mother.
- **Your grandfather prayed and asked Me to end abortion. The ministry you are doing for Me is an answer to his prayers.**

There were puzzle pieces of truth that were missing, obviously. Since my grandfather was no longer living, I had no verification of his prayer to God to end abortion. But I realized that people had been sinfully aborting children since Biblical times! What I felt from this thought was that my mother’s father would have been proud of my work, even if my mother were not.

I concluded that if God promised to take care of my mother, I could move forward **DESPITE** her ongoing horror of my efforts. God certainly **DID** take care of my mother and gave her back to me at the end of her life so I could care for her.

Before her death, she would attempt to bring up **things from her past** but then stopped herself. When I pressed her, she would change the subject.

Eleven years after her death, I submitted my DNA to ancestry.com. Since my parents were immigrants from Northern Ireland, I was hopeful to find some Irish family members. Six months later a hit came – I learned I had a second cousin named Jan!

We had the same Great-Grandparents, meaning our grandparents were siblings. Even more interesting, her

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grandmother, Elizabeth, was known to me as my grandfather's favorite sister. My mother was named after her.

We instantly connected and later I had an opportunity to share about choosing abortion as a teen and how God had led me to start Ramah International to help other women. This cousin then confirmed WHY my grandfather prayed for abortion to end. She gave me the missing puzzle piece that explained so much.

Jan shared, "I was not going to tell you about the family curse, but I have just watched your testimony video and read some of your blogs and there is no coincidence that we have met. You did this wonderful work without knowing this family truth."

Jan relayed that our great-grandmother, Agnes, had been a well-known midwife in Belfast, Northern Ireland during the early and middle 1900's. Jan's grandmother, who was my Great Aunt Elizabeth, married and had three children.

When she became pregnant with a fourth, our great-grandmother performed an abortion, which took the life of her grandchild resulting in the death of Elizabeth as well.

That truth hit me like a bolt of lightning! My grandfather, after losing his precious sister via an abortion botched by his own mother, certainly WOULD HAVE prayed to God to end abortion. He loved Jesus too. It finally made sense why my ministry efforts were an answer to his prayers.

A second truth was revealed to my heart. Before she died, my mother had attempted to tell me about this abortion but could not. Then I realized the root of her agony in my sharing my secret.

She lived with the truth that her grandmother had killed her aunt in that third-world environment. Likely this was a well-known truth in her community and a source of shame for the

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family. Moving to America hopefully put the shame of that abortion behind her. Then, not only did I choose abortion, but was called to speak publicly. *This explained her horror for my ministry efforts.*

My mother had told me my great-grandmother, Agnes, was a massive alcoholic. She would warn me not to touch liquor as alcoholism was something I inherited from her. Never did I imagine that my great-grandmother had performed abortions, let alone killed her own daughter and grandchild. Now I knew the reason she drank so heavily.

My mother had shared that her father hated his mother, which made sense to me now. Thankfully, I also knew that when Agnes was dying, my grandfather forgave her because he went to her side and personally ensured she passed away in peace.

My heart then grew angry at Agnes. While she died ten years before my birth, she clearly impacted my life. What a horrible idea to be the great-grandchild of an abortionist!

God slowed me down in that tirade by reminding me of the 1900's in Ireland. Another mouth to feed often meant the whole family starved. Abortions were done in a different mindset than present day. I knew I needed to take this anger captive, but it was a process for me at that time.

Then I became angry with my mother. I was reminded of 2 Corinthians 4:2 about confessing secret and shameful ways. If she had told me my Great-Aunt Elizabeth had died during an abortion, I NEVER would have chosen it. The idea of dying would have been enough to ensure I never entered an abortion clinic!

After prayer, God helped me realize that my mother was protecting me from the burden of such ancestral truth. It was

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easier to understand my mother's behavior towards my ministry with **this puzzle piece of truth in my heart.**

Forgiveness is an ongoing process which lead me to forgive her again. God had turned my abortion sin to His good. Regardless of the horror I endured, or the repercussions on the rest of my life, my abortion had been redeemed in so many ways.

### Surrendering the Need for Answers

Whether or not you know the sins of your ancestors, you know that they did sin. Perhaps abortion was chosen in past generations. Ancestral sin could have impacted the abortion that you are presently working to resolve in your own heart.

While God promised to visit Israel's sin upon the third and fourth generations, He also promised that He would show, *mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.* God's grace is towards those who love Him and cancels all generational curses.

The cure for any sins passed down from ancestors is repentance of sin, faith in Christ, and a life dedicated to God as revealed in **Romans 12:1-2** - *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

When the puzzle piece of truth arrived from my cousin, I experienced **John 8:31-32**: *Jesus said, ". . .Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* Being set free by God is always a good thing, no matter how it feels initially.

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**Prior to receiving the family history puzzle piece**, the Holy Spirit gave me assurances to provide peace so she could move on in faith, *trusting these unknowns to God's care*. She had to surrender her “need to know” and continue in the path of obedience in God's leading.

Whatever you know about this lost child that is causing you heartache, *realize you may lack key pieces of information to understand the entire situation that led them to be aborted*. God can help you grieve this child and move on, for now, without answers to your questions.

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## Schedule Saturday, October 12, 2024

8:30 a.m.- 8:45 a.m. Devotions – Suzanne Reed

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. - Break

9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. - Workshop Session E

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. - Break

10:30 a.m.– 12:00 p.m. - Keynote 5 – *When They Abort Anyway: Handling Your Emotions* – Sydna Massé

12:00 – Conference Close

## Devotions – A Walk on the Beach: Broken but Restored!

Speaker: Suzanne Reed

I was on vacation a few years ago in St Pete, Florida. I was out on a morning walk along the beach. I was feeling so broken, useless, and ugly.... just like one of life's HUGE screw-ups that we would see as children, and VOW to never become.

Then I looked down again, as I had been collecting shells all morning, and I saw a BEAUTIFUL WHOLE shell shimmering in the waves! I was drawn to it because it was not broken, like all the rest I had in my bag. It was PERFECT!!!!

I grabbed it up out of the sand, and the portion that was buried in the sand was broken off and missing. Totally gone and broken, much like my other shells. I just cried, because it was representative of all the things I wanted all my life, to be whole, perfect, and beautiful. This shell was just like me; BROKEN, busted-up and no good. I just stood there and cried. As I stood on this public beach crying, I realized I was not so much crying over this *shell*, but *once again crying over all my loss, the brokenness that I HAD CHOSEN, when I deviated from the plan that Jesus had for my life.*

And then I hear GOD in my head and my heart: *Suzanne!!!! Suzanne!!!! LOOK at the stunning beauty in your hands!!!! It is magnificent, isn't it??? LOOK AT IT!!!! It is GORGEOUS!!!! I look at you the same way!!! YOU are mine now, and I see your brokenness and sin no more. You are perfect IN ME, and stunning and beautiful. I CAN and HAVE restored you!!!! And I LOVE YOU!!! DON'T YOU SEE?? BROKEN THINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL!!!*

These truths are listed in the following passages of the Bible:

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**Psalm 147:3** - *He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*

**Psalm 51:10** - *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

You all will be working with a lot of women who feel they are broken beyond repair, and completely hopeless. Satan tells them that - over and over. There is NO hope. You can extend the hope of Jesus forgiveness and restoration.

What a privilege to be able to speak the LOVE and RESTORATION of Jesus to hopeless people. Hopefully during this conference, you have learned a lot about how the post abortive think and how to best approach them, with confidence. God will be with you in your work, of that I am confident.

**1 Peter 5:8** - *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Unfortunately, we live in a broken world and satan will be working against you at every turn. In my case, the way he most often does that is to place thoughts of guilt and shame in my mind. It is up to me, and all of us, to cast these out.

My husband bought me a coffee mug that says **NOT TODAY SATAN** on it. Although I own a ridiculous number of coffee mugs, this one is my favorite, and I start every day with it. It is my reminder every morning to not accept what the devil is dishing out.

**1 John 4:4** - *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

We do not have to take it! God has so much more for us. It is

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up to us to use scripture and praise to combat his sneaky, devious ways. I would also recommend having at least one good and trusted friend to which you can really talk.

Satan attacks me daily and keeps trying to drag me down with all these thoughts of brokenness. BUT GOD, in His eternal love, has restored me. I will NOT give in to satan today or any day - and revert to my stinking thinking.

Thankfully, I am no longer a broken mess. I am restored and in God's GOOD graces, and in the center of His will and in His care, now and forevermore. NOT TODAY SATAN. I am no longer broken. I am restored and beautiful. BROKEN THINGS ARE BEAUTIFUL.

John 10:10 - *The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more ABUNDANTLY.*

## Workshop E Topics

Saturday, October 12 - 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Retreat Healing Class (Green Room) – with Melissa Horton & Bettina Loughman

**E1 – Abortion Recovery Tract – *Empowering Your Ministry: Leveraging the Ramah Institute and Her Choice to Heal Websites* – Sydna Massé – LOCATION: Sanctuary**

**Synopsis:** In today's digital age, ministries have unique opportunities to connect, engage, and support their communities online. Join us for an enlightening workshop where Sydna Massé explores the invaluable resources provided by the Ramah Institute and Her Choice to Heal websites.

Participants will delve into the myriad ways these platforms can enrich and fortify their ministry efforts. From accessing insightful articles and guides to fostering meaningful discussions on sensitive topics, the Ramah Institute equips ministries with a wealth of knowledge, training and tools to navigate contemporary challenges relating to pre and post abortion work.

We will explore how the HerChoicetoHeal.com website offers compassionate support and healing resources for individuals navigating the complexities of post-abortion experiences. By harnessing the guidance and materials provided by this platform, ministries can extend a nurturing hand to those in need, fostering a local culture of empathy and restoration.

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### **E2 - Abortion Vulnerable Tract – *Determining Level of Client Vulnerability/Lifecycle of Abortion* – Karen Fifer - LOCATION: Youth Room**

**Synopsis:** In the delicate environment of pregnancy centers, it is uncommon for women to explicitly express contemplation of abortion. Often, even those who initially resolve to carry to term can find themselves facing unexpected vulnerabilities in choosing abortion. This workshop explores the concept of universal abortion vulnerability, emphasizing the importance of treating each client with the understanding that she may face intense external pressures or challenging prenatal diagnoses in the future.

Participants will learn strategies to effectively support and empower their clients, reducing the impact of external influences and fostering resilience against the pressures that may arise after leaving the center. Join us to enhance your approach in providing compassionate, informed care to every woman you serve.

### **E3 - Pregnancy Center Leadership – Holistic Strategies for Personnel Management, Board Dynamics, and Succession – Becky Anderson, Jessica Deese, Leah Shrum - LOCATION: Children's Room**

**Synopsis:** Join our Leadership Workshop for pregnancy center and abortion recovery ministries. Discover holistic strategies for personnel management, board dynamics, and leadership succession with faith-based guidance. Select staff who align with mission values, handle transitions gracefully, and foster growth and accountability. Address gossip with trust and humility, navigate adversity with unity and faith. Harmonize board dynamics and enhance effectiveness through clarity and humility. Prepare for the future by identifying and nurturing emerging leaders rooted in faith.

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### **E1 – Abortion Recovery Tract – *Empowering Your Ministry: Leveraging the Ramah Institute and Her Choice to Heal Websites***

Speaker: Sydna Massé

How it Happened - the story of **HerChoicetoHeal.com** website – an interactive online abortion recovery program that has revolutionized the healing journey after abortion since its debut in 2017.

Using HerChoicetoHeal.com

There are many ways that HerChoicetoHeal.com can help you either personally or professionally share God's compassion with those who have made this choice. Here are just a few:

**Link to HerChoicetoHeal.com on your life-affirming, post-abortion, or pregnancy center website(s)** - There are millions of individuals in our world who are struggling in silence with the pain of their abortion experience. Some of the best supporters of life-affirming efforts have chosen abortion yet lack the courage to reach out physically or vocally to identify as a post-abortive person.

Many do not have the emotional strength to vocally share this difficult sin out loud. Thankfully, they can gain great comfort in discovering a website that offers a private way to address this pain without sharing their abortion truth publicly.

**Linking to HerChoicetoHeal.com on your own website(s)** – or in social media posts relating to abortion – shows that you care about the broken people who made this choice. It presents confirmation of your compassion. Even if they never contact you, **HerChoicetoHeal.com** can help them discover God's peace without any human involvement.

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By advertising HerChoicetoHeal.com on your social media outlets as well as printing this domain on your business cards, abortion's wounded can visit the website privately and discover basic information about how abortion may have impacted them. It can help them begin their healing process because it identifies their abortion as the source of their emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical pain.

The Ramah International team is committed to referring website contacts into healthy local abortion recovery programs. We know that there is nothing like direct, face-to-face compassion to comfort these hearts. Our team contacts local ministry groups to obtain program information. If the program is a healthy one, we will share that information with them and help them make local contact.

Should they require additional privacy, are still too concerned about vocally admitting this sin to others, or if a healthy program is not available in their community, our team will continue to help them throughout their healing journey. We have already been doing this extensively across our World.

**Sharing Your Services** - Feature the **HerChoicetoHeal.com** website when speaking about abortion or discussing your center's services - Whenever abortion is discussed in general society, it's important to realize post-abortive people are listening. Most expect to be judged and cast out if their abortion secret is ever revealed. If they are anticipating rejection, they can research the website privately and always be within reach of our dedicated team who can help as well.

**On the Sidewalk** - Sidewalk counselors can use HerChoicetoHeal.com on their business cards and distribute them outside abortion clinics. These cards can then become a lifeline to God's healing in the future as well as evidence of compassion.

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Use the **HerChoicetoHeal.com** website to supplement your existing abortion recovery program - Some wounded hearts require “triage” ministry services to help them understand their pain will not be deepened in talking about their abortion. Beginning their healing journey with the HerChoicetoHeal.com website can also build courage in making local contact.

Once denial is broken and abortion is discovered as a pain source, many are driven to research every angle about how abortion impacts hearts. **HerChoicetoHeal.com** offers them a unique source of organized information to investigate online versus asking detailed questions to someone who may not have many answers.

Even in existing abortion recovery classes, information about how abortion impacts women at a detailed level can be difficult to uncover since so few write about the other side of abortion pain. The **HerChoicetoHeal.com** website acts as a source of detailed and compassionate information that is designed to calm their fears and open their hearts to God’s love and forgiveness.

Whatever abortion recovery program you are using, **HerChoicetoHeal.com** contains a vast storehouse of answers to commonly asked questions by those who are beginning their healing process with God.

## **Lack of Pro-Life Language, References or Links**

Post-abortive women are the most afraid of judgment from the “pro-life movement.” The mindset is defined by the following beliefs - If anyone is going to stone us, it would be someone against abortion. If you are against abortion, you are against me.

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While this is not always the case, it is a common fear in the hearts of women who are already deeply struggling with tackling these abortion memories directly. Therefore, no pro-life language – including the term “pro-life” – is included on the HerChoicetoHeal.com website. We use the term “life-affirming” instead.

We also do not link to any other organization in the pro-life or abortion recovery world. It simply is not necessary. In addition, no research or information derived from the pro-life movement is used. This is because this information is often suspected and can be poorly developed through un-statistical methods.

While information from the Guttmacher Institute, strongly associated with Planned Parenthood, is also suspected, it represents information FROM the abortion industry and is not easily discounted.

There is also much research that is available from scientific studies about concepts like microchimerism and the abortion/breast cancer link. We also do not link to other groups involved in abortion recovery.

### **HerChoicetoHeal.com modules include:**

Module 1 – More About Abortion PTSD

Module 2 – Sharing Your Story

Module 3 – Denial

Module 4 – Addressing Anger

Module 5 – Forgiveness

Module 6 – Grieving Your Loss

Module 7 – Joy Comes in the Mourning

Module 8 – Shattering Sexual Soul Ties

Module 9 – Sharing the Secret of Abortion

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In using the Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery program, you can use the Complete the Following buttons listed below:

**Healing Activities** – includes .pdf files of each of the healing activities included in the program.

**God's Comfort** – We know that reading God's word is the TANGIBLE way to heal hearts. This button features the weekly verse for the week and includes links to the daily reading program in Biblegateway.com so they do not need to look up any verses.

**Devotionals** – Includes one devotional from A Journey in Ramah that relates to the module topic.

**Reading Assignments** – This button features what chapter they should read for the module, what pages to complete in the recovery guide and the pages to read in the daily devotional, Journey in Ramah, if they are using that.

**Alternate Program – Forgiven and Set Free** – Since the weekly topics align with the F&SF program, we've included the chapters to read in that program too. We also broke down Chapter 2 – The Character of God – into reading parts so no one is overwhelmed with that homework in the first week of class.

### **Additional HerChoicetoHeal.com Modules:**

**Shattering Sexual Soul Ties** is addressed in Module 8. This module is an excellent tool for anyone struggling with past promiscuity issues. Each lesson includes God's word regarding sexual sin and provides an uncomplicated way to confess, heal and release past sexual sins from our hearts.

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Since many in this work experienced intimacy before marriage, this module helps them cover that trauma and heal any sinful impact to strengthen their outreach.

**Sharing the Secret of Abortion** is the topic in Module 9. It offers a list of healthy steps to take before sharing an abortion secret in public. Post-abortive women who can publicly share their often-horrific experience in an abortion clinic can bring understanding to our world that abortion is not good for women.

This module also walks through how to recognize God's voice and understand if He is truly calling the individual to participate in either politics or ministry efforts relating to abortion. It also lists various steps that should be taken before making an abortion secret public to the world.

### The Ramah Institute

Ramah International takes pleasure in offering the very first online training curriculum tailored for those who aspire to work in both basic and advanced abortion recovery (helping individuals attain peace following an abortion) and pregnancy center support services for those contemplating abortion. It will launch January 1, 2025.

This online program comprises several courses, each containing relevant classes that provide understanding, knowledge and understanding in this important ministry effort. Our team will be adding added content at an ongoing level with pregnancy center and abortion recovery leaders around the nation. We pray the international arena will expand with this new online school as well.

**Basic Abortion Recovery:** This course is tailored for individuals who are just beginning their journey in abortion

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recovery ministry. It is also perfect for current abortion recovery leaders who lack a formal training background.

The classes aim to help participants effectively use the written program, *Her Choice to Heal: Finding Emotional and Spiritual Peace after Abortion*, and HerChoicetoHeal.com. The course includes videos related to the emotional aspects of healing along with a downloadable written curriculum, which will enhance your communication skills when working with this significant demographic.

Also included in the basic course are weekly overviews of the content, homework, and activities. Individuals can simply review the video before the week's meeting and feel caught up to date and ready to proceed!

The course also covers legal issues in abortion recovery, logistical information in running either a one-on-one, group or retreat format, marketing an abortion recovery program and so much more. Course certification is also included when you complete this Basic Abortion Recovery course. A team of veteran abortion recovery leaders share their knowledge with you through this unique and vital ministry course.

This course is great for anyone starting out in helping people heal after an abortion and for leaders in this area who haven't had formal training. It is focused on using the book "Her Choice to Heal" and the website HerChoicetoHeal.com to guide healing. You will find videos and materials to download that will improve how you talk and work with people affected by abortion.

You will learn about the laws related to abortion recovery, how to run different types of healing sessions (like one-on-one, groups, or retreats), how to tell people about your program, and lots more. When you finish this Basic Abortion Recovery class, you will get a certificate. Experienced leaders

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in this field have put together this important and special course to share their knowledge with you.

**Advanced Abortion Recovery Leadership:** This course is designed for individuals who have the basic abortion recovery skills and want to go deeper. This advanced course provides ongoing training topics to refine your skills in utilizing the written program, *Her Choice to Heal: Finding Emotional and Spiritual Peace after Abortion*, and **HerChoicetoHeal.com**. The course aims to inspire and empower experienced leaders, enabling them to take their ministry efforts in helping those with wounded hearts from abortion to find God's healing to the next level. Course certification with downloadable written curriculum is also included.

This course is made for people who already know the basics of helping others heal from abortion and are ready to learn more. It offers more training to get better at using the "Her Choice to Heal" book and the **HerChoicetoHeal.com** website.

If you're already leading and helping others, this class will give you new ideas and skills to help even more. You'll learn advanced ways to assist people hurt by abortion to heal through finding spiritual peace. When you finish, you'll get a certificate and access to more written materials to help you in your important work.

**Reaching the Abortion Vulnerable:** This course is tailored to help pregnancy center staff, nurses, and volunteers become more proficient in connecting with individuals who are seriously contemplating an abortion. The course material also aids in gaining a deeper understanding of how to reach the 50% of women who consider abortion on multiple occasions. This course material includes topics with printable/downloadable curriculum on a wide variety of ways to provide another choice than abortion to women today.

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Veteran pregnancy center leaders share their knowledge with you through this unique and dynamic ministry course.

This course is designed for staff, nurses, and volunteers at pregnancy centers to get better at talking to people who are thinking about having an abortion. It also teaches how to connect with women who have thought about abortion more than once—about 50% of women. The course offers a range of topics and gives you materials you can print or download, showing different options that women can consider instead of abortion. Experienced leaders from pregnancy centers will be sharing their expertise with you in this engaging and important course.

**Pregnancy Center Leadership Training:** This course is tailored to help pregnancy center staff, nurses, and volunteers become more proficient in all areas of pregnancy center ministry development. Topics include coping with ministry burnout, working through spiritual warfare, establishing abortion recovery programs, selecting team members and much more. The course material also aids in gaining a deeper understanding of how to reach the 60% of women who consider abortion on multiple occasions. Sydna Massé and her team of veteran abortion recovery leaders share their knowledge with you through this unique and essential ministry course.

This course helps staff, nurses, and volunteers at pregnancy centers get better in every part of their work. You'll learn how to handle burnout from helping others, deal with spiritual challenges, set up programs to help people after an abortion, choose the right team, and lots more. The lessons also show how to support the 60% of women who think about abortion more than once. Sydna Massé and her experienced team will share their insights with you in this special and important course.

**E2 – Abortion Vulnerable Tract – *Determining Level of Client Vulnerability/Lifecycle of Abortion***

Speaker: Karen Fifer

**REMEMBER: Every Pregnancy Center Client is Abortion Vulnerable!**

Rarely will a woman walk into a pregnancy center and state that they are considering abortion. Even the most determined to carry to term client can suddenly, under the right circumstances, become abortion vulnerable. Treating every client as if she is abortion vulnerable will help reduce the cause and effect of outside influencers or the pressure to abort for adverse pregnancy discoveries once she leaves your office.

**Synonyms of vulnerable include** - in danger, in peril, at risk, endangered, unprotected, unsafe, without weapons, defenseless, exposed to, susceptible to and easily affected by

This defines almost every woman who walks into a pregnancy center. Rarely do women connect the link between having a choice about their pregnancies and what makes them more susceptible physically or emotionally.

**Psalm 139:1-2** - *Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I get up; You understand my thoughts from far away.*

God knows EVERY detail about us and cares about us. In those areas of weakness - *where we are most vulnerable* - we can allow God's strength to be made perfect.

**Consider these scenarios and choices:**

**The client is newly married.** She is happy and excited with a positive pregnancy test. She states her husband will be thrilled to learn he will be a dad. They both have good jobs; she has insurance and good family support.

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**CHOICE:** *She aborted because her husband convinced her that they needed more time to become stable in their marriage and reach their goals of buying a house before they started a family.*

**The client has two different sexual partners.** She has had one abortion and no matter what happens she has vowed she would never have another. She left the center with an ultrasound appointment and a determined attitude that she could manage a child on her own.

**CHOICE:** She aborted because she still lacked support from potential partners who threatened her that she would get no financial assistance. Her family convinced her that she could not raise a child on her own.

**When Women lie.** They may not truly know what they will do but it's easier to go along with their own preconceived ideas of what **you** want them to do just by the nature of this being a pregnancy resource center. **We cannot disguise what we are. Nor should we.**

**When They Lie** - When they are lying about a past abortion sometimes the truth can be obvious.

For example, at one center, a client had experienced five positive pregnancy tests over the years but no live births. The pregnancy center staff recognized this woman and had a file confirming her previous positive tests. The staff member reminded her of past conversations the two of them had together.

When confronted, this woman refused to acknowledge that she'd ever been in the center. Clearly, she was lying.

This is when you deal with her at her level of immediate need. Praise God that she continues to come back to your center and pray intently for God to work in her heart and life. We never know when a breakthrough might come! Each visit

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is an opportunity to once more present the unconditional love of Christ.

Choice today no longer hides the life or development of the unborn. While ultrasound exams are still important, clients perceive abortion is a question of:

- Are you ready?
- Do you have the financial means to have a child?
- Do you really want a child right now?

Women who abort rarely have just one stressor to do so. It is often a combination of pressures or influences. Once they succumb to that pressure, they often abort quickly before they have time to work through the perceived dangers.

Every Pregnancy **always** carries with it a layer of anxiety even in the best-case scenarios anxiety - *even the anxiety of a wanted pregnancy* - can quickly result in rash decisions being made. They are instantly confronted with a barrage of anxious thoughts that constantly intrude on their thought processes.

This can make it more difficult to concentrate and think clearly when asking themselves *normal questions* like:

- Am I ready for a baby?
- Will the baby be normal
- Can they supply everything a baby requires?
- Will I be a good parent?

Abortion vulnerability begins with sex. The “fear of pregnancy begins immediately and lasts until menstruation begins. For the sexually active – it can be a monthly stressor. This fear typically initiates a search on “Google” about all aspects of abortion. Your pregnancy center web site should provide valuable information that encourages them to visit your

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center. Be sure to check out [pregnancycenterwebsites.com](http://pregnancycenterwebsites.com) as Ramah International has over 22 years of experience in websites that transition clients into pregnancy centers.

During this time of fear of pregnancy, the woman or couple normally enters a state of intense self-analysis driven by the fear - What if I am pregnant? They begin to turn to others for information—which contributes to the perceived crisis until either the menstruation cycle begins, or the pregnancy test is positive.

During this **fear of pregnancy mode**, the source of information they discover becomes an influencer to the abortion decision.

Now add to that the influencers or anyone who has an opinion about what the girl/couple should choose. This includes girlfriends, social media which may or may not give accurate problem-solving advice, men talking about the abortion option in school locker rooms, etc.

That's when fear begins taking over. That **fear** can be real or imagined. It leads to a negative outcome for an unexpected pregnancy. Anxiety involves worrying about a threat that has not yet or may never happen. When we feel anxious -- the emotional brain overpowers the cognitive brain and limits good decision-making abilities.

Fear and anxiety both produce a similar stress response. However, many experts believe that there are essential differences between the two. These differences can account for how we react to various environmental stressors.

The physical sensations of fear and anxiety are remarkably similar. Because they both evoke the same type of physical and emotional response, it can make it more difficult to tell the difference between them.

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**All of this activates the fight or flight response in our bodies.**

Most young women abort due to three major reasons:

- Boyfriend or father of the baby's influence,
- Fear of parent's reaction to their obvious loss of virginity and pregnancy
- Fear of "losing" their future.

**Never accept the notion that someone will not abort. There are thousands who genuinely wanted their child ... until the unthinkable happens.** This includes:

- A client who learns her husband is having an affair.
- The teen whose mother had her in her teens thinks her mother will be fine with her pregnancy because she made it through. Only the mother is not!
- A client who finds out there are adverse conditions of her unborn child. Can be easily swayed by physicians.

**Abortion influencers** are previous experiences in a person's past which can prompt the onset of sexual activity and the greater risk of abortion vulnerability. These are the things that clients will not tell you about. Not only do they increase sexual activity but also abortion.

These include, but are not limited to:

**Parental Divorce** – A parent's divorce can greatly impact a person's level of love. Many times, divorce leads to a search to replace the lost parent's love. It can also make a child more open to sexual abuse.

**Sexual abuse** – This includes incest, molestation, rape, fondling, etc. Once they have been involved in perversion, and their virginity lost or compromised, they often feel led to continue in promiscuity believing this is "true" love.

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**Death** – Sometimes of a close friend or family relative can leave a person vulnerable and alone. This can lead them to search for fulfillment through sexual activity.

**Torment** – Bullying and teasing by peers or older siblings can result in tremendous terror inside and loss of control that can easily lead to other behaviors including promiscuity to find acceptance.

**Low self-esteem** – This can lead to desperation in searching for love in all the wrong places!

**Parent's abortion** – An unhealed post-abortive parent may be unable to bond with their children or are overprotective and even threatening, leading to a dysfunctional home. They may still believe it was what was best for them- so it will be best for their child.

**Cultural aspects** – For example, in some culture's virginity is critical. She has brought dishonor to her family. Children of immigrants often feel more pressure to abort since their parents expect them to succeed at a deeper level

**Trauma** – Physical abuse can easily lead a person to consider abortion to protect their future children from harm.

**Physical impairment** – Individuals who are physically handicapped (i.e., deaf, blind, lame, etc.) can often view themselves as incapable of parenting.

**Media influence** – Clearly this is one of the largest influences of children in our society today!

**Most often the Father of the Baby is the greatest impact on pregnancy outcome.** He is normally the key influencer of an abortion decision. This is not the case if the pregnancy is a result of a “one-night stand” or a “date/rape” situation.

If there *is a relationship with the sexual partner, he becomes a primary abortion influencer.* Therefore, it is essential that

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couples considering abortion receive the same information about this decision during the pregnancy center visit.

## **Fathers are often the forgotten players in abortion decisions.**

While men do not possess tangible rights in the abortion choice, they do hold varying levels of influence over whether their potential child will live or die. The male impact often has varying levels of severity, depending on the nature of the influence.

How important is the father's involvement or support to her? The challenge is to ask good questions to help you determine the amount of influence.

**Below are 4 types of personalities in men related to an abortion decision (see handout for a visual of these 4 categories):**

### **Protector – Lowest abortion risk factor**

The father knows about the pregnancy and doesn't want his child aborted. It is typically at this point that the man discovers he has NO LEGAL RIGHTS to stop an abortion decision.

He may propose, get down on his knees and beg, but other factors bring the woman to an abortion decision. He may accompany her to the clinic. Afterwards, this man often feels emasculated by his inability to prevent his child's death.

The relationship typically ends due to the death of his child.

### **Uninvolved – low to moderate abortion risk factor**

The uninvolved father typically does not know about the pregnancy. His role in the conception offers him indirect influence. He could be:

- A "potential" father among several others

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- A temporary boyfriend who doesn't communicate with the woman after the conception
- A person the woman doesn't want in her life
- The potential father is her rapist

The Uninvolved father typically has little direct influence in the woman's choice. An Uninvolved *often convinces himself that it was another man's child that was lost* so it is not his problem.

Women may choose to not inform him of the pregnancy, citing it is her choice not his.

### **Neutral – medium to high risk for abortion**

*By outlining that a woman has the right to decide what to do with her body, the pro-abortion society has trained many to make no comment about the life or death of their unborn child.*

Men with Neutral mindsets are often silent while the abortion is being decided. They make statements like, "I'll support whatever choice you make." The Neutral man doesn't propose or encourage an abortion decision. He simply refuses to participate in the choice by allowing the decision to be made solely by the mother.

Indirectly a Neutral influence communicates the message: *Please abort but I don't want to feel guilty about it. That's all on you.*

When the father of the baby is neutral a woman feels abandoned. Believing she cannot have the baby – or that the father could leave her after the child is born, she aborts. Many Neutral men believe and have been conditioned that they are doing the right thing and have no clue the woman wants help in this choice.

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### **Enforcer – Very high abortion risk**

An Enforcer pressures, coerces, or encourages abortion. He may threaten physical harm or abandonment if the woman is leaning towards a life decision. At the extreme, the Enforcer could physically abuse the woman to bring on a miscarriage. The Enforcer has likely encouraged other women to abort.

Enforcers may even resort to other strategies to ensure an abortion takes place. They may push their pregnant women to take drugs. And then use it to reinforce the abortion with comments like “You can’t have that baby now because you took drugs that may mean you’ll have a handicapped child!”

Enforcers may also be a woman’s abuser. They could also be her father, brother, uncle, or even a new boyfriend.

When an Enforcer is involved, the woman typically feels she has no other choice but to abort.

### **Other Abortion Influencers:**

**Man’s Family** - The sexual partner’s parents may play a pivotal influence role. These parents can be protective of their son’s financial liability with a child. They can doubt their son’s parentage and work to remove him from the woman’s life. Parents, primarily mothers, often speak directly to the young woman to promote the abortion option.

On the other hand, many parents can actively promote a life affirming decision in the young woman’s heart. Their offers of support can be effective in her choice as well.

**Woman’s Family** - The woman’s parents are normally the second strongest influence in the level of abortion-vulnerability as outlined with the ACE test impact which outlines the **effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)**.

Family histories that may already include abortion or that contain other traumatic events can heavily - and at times -

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unknowingly influence abortion. Unplanned pregnancy often results during deep family strife as one generation significantly impacts another.

One generation clearly impacts another so abortion decisions are often repeated down the family line. A psychological test of the impact of family strife on unplanned pregnancy is determined through **The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) test**. The ACE test breaks down family strife situations into 8 experiences, including:

1. Recurrent physical abuse
2. Recurrent emotional abuse
3. Contact sexual abuse
4. An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
5. An incarcerated household member
6. Someone in the home who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized- including imprisoned, or suicidal
7. Mother is treated violently
8. One or no parents

A study in Pediatrics researched ACE results in comparison with teenage pregnancy, discovering that *if your childhood experience included 4 or more of these variables, you were likely to have experienced an unplanned pregnancy.*

Many young women fear informing their parents of their lost virginity more than the fact they are pregnant. Parents may never even know about the pregnancy but still influence the decision by their negative opinions voiced about out of marriage pregnancies. Many say, “My parents will kill me if they found out I was pregnant!”

They lean to abortion to protect their secret and their parent’s well-being in the community. This is particularly true if their parents engage in ministry.

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Others fearful scenarios may also be involved. Perhaps their parents will encourage an abortion, and they don't want to give them that control. Another subset is the parent who is strongly pro-abortion, it is an assumed result for an unwanted pregnancy. Some women are simply afraid their parent could end up in jail by taking legal action against the father of their baby.

**Siblings** – Siblings of the man or woman involved in the pregnancy are also key influencers. Previous crisis pregnancies within families can either encourage or discourage an abortion choice.

For example, consider the situation where the sibling has previously placed her child for adoption. This individual will have firsthand experience about the emotional trauma involved in both pregnancy and adoption. Her perception is that her parents will probably “make” her choose adoption as well, makes abortion seem like a much more desirable choice.

Others have watched parents embrace their sibling's pregnancies and seen their struggles vividly and cannot consider burdening their family situation with another child.

**Post-abortive siblings** may also influence an abortion decision to prove that their choice was the best.

**Friends** – While normally the least equipped to help, friends of both the man and woman can be strong influencers in the abortion decision.

While the man may initially be supportive of a birth choice, his friends may “call him on the carpet” for such a stance. He can feel pressured to reverse his initial reaction to the pregnancy.

I wonder how many abortion decisions are made in bars or the locker room than in pregnancy centers!

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**Best friends** are those who know about the work of the pregnancy centers and actively encourage their friend to turn there for support.

**Spiritual Background** – Statistics show that Christians experience abortion more often than those who express no religious background. Many are afraid to be honest with their church about their pregnancy or bring shame onto their family. Abortion is said to “erase” the mistake and allow them to go on with their lives without anyone knowing their “sin.”

If the person has a real faith basis in God, they may be praying for God to supernaturally stop them or give them a sign of what to do. God can use you to be their “sign” as well.

**External sources – The Internet!** Google is one of the main area’s women turn to for information. Every center should have a website that is actively featured in search engines. A potential client may never show up at a pregnancy center’s door – but they often visit the more “confidential” entrance of their center’s website. Once there, they can make a life-or-death decision or e-mail for more advice.

## First Stages in the Life Cycle of an Abortion Decision

### Handout

#### Low Risk - later ultrasound appointment - Blue

There are certain demographics that make abortion less of a possibility in an unplanned pregnancy. These include:

- The woman is married
- The father of baby/family knows of the pregnancy
- The family is supportive of a possible pregnancy

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## **Moderate Risk** – immediate ultrasound appointment - Yellow

The risk of abortion is increased when there is more than one variable included. These can show a high-risk vulnerability. Some demographics make a person more at risk than another. In the chart, we outline the additional demographics, along with their value on the client's level of vulnerability:

- No insurance
- Pursuing school or a career
- Little or no support from father of baby or family
- Is the sole provider in the home
- Admits to casual illegal drug use
- Admits to heavy alcohol use
- Admits to casual alcohol use
- Has chosen abortion before (double if multiple)
- The individual is under the age of 25
- The individual is over the age 35
- If they have a child that is under 18 months of age
- If they have teenage children
- Speaks only Spanish (or one language)

## **High Risk** – Urgent ultrasound appointment -- Red

With any of the following factors, you should assume abortion will be their likely choice. If these situations are combined with any of the moderate risk factors, then the level of vulnerability can be off the charts.

- More than one possible father of the baby
- Outside influence of family/friends to abort
- Father of the baby wants her to abort
- If she has financial problems or is homeless
- If she has no income or job

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- If she has endured current/past domestic violence
- If she is Asian
- If she is African American
- If there is current or past drug use or addictions
- If she has any sort of medical condition
- If there were previous pregnancy complications
- If she has endured a sexual assault or rape
- If her parent has experienced a past abortion

After determining the level of abortion influences, you will have a good idea of the type of discussions to have.

### **Question to ask: What fears or anxieties do you have?**

Let them know everyone has a certain amount of anxiety even if they are happy about the pregnancies.

**Action to take:** Work through what might happen when she leaves and things don't fall into place like you expect. Sometimes women are caught off guard and have no defenses when others are not excited about the pregnancy. Share your number if permitted. Texting is great for this. It can be more confidential for the client.

This may be the first time they are confronted with other people's negative opinions. How will they respond? How do they manage pressure from others?

Life situations often bring a higher intensity of pressure that they may not have ever dealt with before. No one has explored how to deal with these types of intense pressures.

"What if's" can take many different avenues. Using the chart will help you formulate the "what if" questions for your client. Even if she has all the right answers, you have subtly prepared her just in case she does not get the acceptance she perceived would come.

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When women are unprepared for the onslaught of messages like, “How can you do this (or that) with a baby?” - they can be easily swayed that abortion is the answer.

When we treat every client as being vulnerable to abortion, we have a unique opportunity to prepare them with the tools they might need. **This lays the groundwork for them to trust you.** Just one compassionate person can set all this pain in the opposite direction.

One thing that we have not included – is the POSITIVE experiences in early life that build buoyancy and impact how trauma affects a child. There is certainly enough reason to understand how a loving teacher, grandparent or friend can impact the cycle of strife in a family. This is where a pregnancy center can be so valuable in helping the woman.

## Level of Abortion Vulnerability Activity

It’s time to practice how to determine the level of a client’s abortion vulnerability. Here’s the activity:

Pair off in groups. One person will have a “personality” sheet. Their job is to role play being an *abortion-vulnerable client* by the scenario given and to answer the following questions so that those at her table can identify certain traits. **Then switch roles.**

Each personality sheet has identifying traits that should enable everyone to work as a group in coming to a final abortion-vulnerable level based on the abortion vulnerable chart. You will have 5-10 minutes to determine the level of abortion-vulnerability. Then we will discuss what you have learned!

**Possible questions to ask:**

- Are you married?

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- Does the father of the baby know you may be pregnant?
- Do you have insurance?
- Are you pursuing school or a career?
- What family support would you have if this test is positive? Would they be happy about your pregnancy?
- Have you or anyone in your family ever chosen abortion before?
- What do your friends say about this potential pregnancy?
- Do you use alcohol or drugs? If so, how often?
- How old are you?
- Do you have children – if so, what are their ages?
- If your test is positive, would you know who the father of the baby is?
- Are you employed?
- Have you ever used drugs?
- Do you have any medical conditions?
- Have you ever experienced sexual abuse?

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## Personality One

I'm married.

My husband knows I might be pregnant. He's not happy.

We don't have insurance.

My husband is in school, working on his B.A. in Accounting

I'm the only one working – full-time.

We have 2 children aged 17 months and 4 years of age

My husband has another child from a previous marriage that is 16.

I always get gestational diabetes. My mother did too.

I was to be addicted to alcohol but have been faithfully attending an AA class since my last DWI

My parents live in another city. We do not see them very often.

No one helps us with our kids. It's all up to us.

**Level of Abortion-Vulnerability - \_\_\_\_\_**

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## Personality One - Answer Key

I'm married. +0

My husband knows I might be pregnant. He's not happy. +1  
– **COULD BE +10 (outside influence to abortion)**

We don't have insurance. +1

My husband is in school, working on his B.A. in Accounting.  
+1 (**pursuing education**)

I'm the only one working – full-time. +2 (**sole provider**)

We have 2 children aged 17 months and 4 years of age +1  
(**child under the age of 18 months**)

My husband has another child from a previous marriage that is 16. +1 (**has teenage children**)

I always get gestational diabetes. My mother did too. +10  
(**medical conditions**)

I was addicted to alcohol but have been faithfully attending an AA class since my last DWI. +10 (**current/past drug use/addictions**)

My parents live in another city. We do not see them very often. No one helps us with our kids. It's all up to us. +1  
(**little family support**)

**Level of Abortion-Vulnerability: 18 to 28**

**Offsetting influences** - Marriage could impact 10 points depending on husband's attitude.

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## Personality Two

My boyfriend is waiting outside in his car. He's mad at me.

Not sure if my boyfriend got me pregnant.

I have insurance

My parents are great and would really enjoy a grandchild

My mother aborted when she was a teenager – my dad was not that baby's father.

I am currently unemployed

All my friends are telling me that abortion is the mature choice. I'm not so sure.

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## Personality Two - Answer Key

My boyfriend is waiting outside in his car. He's mad at me.

**+10 Outside influence to abort**

Not sure if my boyfriend got me pregnant. **+10 # of possible fathers**

I have insurance **+0**

My parents are great and would really enjoy a grandchild **+0**

My mother aborted when she was a teenager – my dad was not that baby's father. That's all I know... - **+10 Parental Past Abortion**

I am currently unemployed **+10 No Income/No Job**

All my friends are telling me that abortion is the mature choice. I'm not so sure. **+10 Outside Influence to Abort**

### **Level of Abortion-Vulnerability - 50**

Talk through the two +0 as offsetting friends and boyfriend as they have more impact than you realize in bringing down abortion potential.

It is difficult with boyfriend and friends encouraging abortion. *The boyfriend should be part of ultrasound to determine if he is firm on abortion.*

Her mother's abortion – and current perspective – is an unknown. Find out more – did her mother regret it. How does she feel about having a sibling that isn't on Earth.

### **E3 – Leadership – *Holistic Strategies for Personnel Management, Board Dynamics, and Succession***

Speakers: Becky Anderson with Jessica Deese

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- Understand the underlying principles of leadership
- Describe how to ensure effective personnel management
- Understand the methods for staff recruitment, selection, and training
- Explore ways to approach difficult conversations
- Understand the importance of a solid succession plan
- Outline the importance of strong and clear Board roles and leadership

#### **Foundations for Effective Leadership**

**It begins with the gospel** - The gospel message is not just for the unsaved. It is meant to be applied to our everyday lives. It defines who we are and from where our power comes. It will protect us when life feels hard and will help us in our own battle with pride.

**Who is really in charge?** - Lest we think we can cause grass to grow or the sun to shine, we would do well to remember that God is always in full control. This truth applies when clients don't come, when financial resources are limited, and when we feel as if we don't know what to do when we face a challenge beyond our capability.

**Why servant leadership is key** - God has defined leadership in His word and reminded us that we come last (Matt. 20:26). Further, the best leader sets an example for the team and does not resort to the "do as I say, not as I do" mentality. Humility is our calling, and that requires having the heart of a servant.

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**The ministry of managing the team** - One of your most key roles as leader is to be a watch over the spiritual health of the individual members of the team serving in your center. Every one of them will experience difficult seasons and it is our responsibility to intervene with loving encouragement during those seasons. Managing a team is also important as we consider the overall health of the organization. Cultivating an environment where we strive to lift each other up with encouragement is the goal and will protect against disunity.

**Aligning the team with the mission** - It is easy to get derailed from the reason your center exists. Innovative programs and priorities cause us to get distracted from the mission to protect unborn children and use unplanned pregnancy as a platform to share the good news of the gospel. Mission drift is a real thing and when the staff is clear on the primary mission, it is less likely to happen.

**A ministry covered in prayer** - Prayer, at its core, is an acknowledgement that we are not in control, and we must go to the One who is. It is a wonderful truth that the God of the universe, Creator of all things, has invited us into a relationship with Him. He has encouraged us to come to Him with our needs and struggles.

### **The Hallmarks of Effective Personnel Management**

**Hire the best and unleash them to flourish** – Micro-management will only be effective in killing motivation. It is most often employed by insecure or distrustful leaders. Allowing our staff to use their God-given talents and passions and asking God to use them for His glory are both marks of a true leader.

**Inspiring greatness** – for God's glory - Our choice, as leaders, is to use one of two approaches – carrot or stick. Most people will respond better to incentive and encouragement than to threat and punishment. While there is a time and

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place for discipline, when we can employ inspiration – that idea of helping them catch the vision – we will have both stronger staff and a healthier organization.

**Practicing patience and acknowledging personal strengths and weaknesses** - A strong leader understands how they are personally wired and where they lack knowledge or insight. Patience with others comes when we first recognize that we are not perfect. As leaders, we set an example for practicing self-reflection.

**Expect much and be willing to equip accordingly** - God expects much of us in His Kingdom work. We should also expect much from our team. Don't settle - but be ready to provide the resources needed – whether in time, staff development, tools or other resources – to cultivate staff that possess strong skills and the confidence to do the work with excellence.

**The role of humility** - God honors those with a humble heart. It is an attractive trait and one that will draw your staff to listen and learn from you. It is our calling to model what we expect of those who work under our leadership.

### **Striving to Find the Best Team Members**

**Where to look for excellent candidates** - While you CAN find people on traditional platforms, it is likely that the best candidates will be found in more non-traditional places. Church staff, pastors and ministry leaders are more likely to know individuals with the spiritual qualifications necessary for your organization. Word of mouth can also be an effective tool in finding that person who really wants to be part of a ministry.

**The process for selection** - This process should not be rushed. Do not be tempted to skip steps with even the strongest of candidates, for both legal and “fairness”

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purposes. The actual process includes a telephone screening, application review, face-to-face interview, reference check and team meeting. Respect and honor the candidate and the change this represents to the team and its overall health.

**Training is not one and done** - Initial training and orientation should include both practical training on duties, policies and practices as well as familiarizing the candidate with the culture and rhythm of the center. Prepare the team in place for change and encourage them to support and affirm the new staff member. Then have periodic review of learning needs and areas of weaknesses, and train accordingly.

### Tough Conversations

**Keep the gospel at the forefront** - Always remember that in every tough conversation, you are talking to an image-bearer and God loves them. When correction is needed, we can also use examples from our own lives to demonstrate that we understand human weakness. God does not expect us to be perfect, but He does call us to excellence in our service to Him.

**Gossip and its impact** - God's Word addresses gossip and the ugly picture it paints. We should not gossip, and we should not tolerate it within the team. This includes volunteers. It will deteriorate a culture quickly and causes loss of trust that is difficult to regain. Once spoken, words of gossip cannot be recalled and call for immediate and sincere repentance. Zero tolerance built into the culture and training will serve as a deterrent.

**Generational issues** - Begin with a recognition that each generation has its norms and tendencies that contribute to how they perform their roles, and each generation has value. We can and should be willing to collaborate with one another. Much has been studied on how each generation

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impacts various work environments and the strengths and weaknesses they bring.

**Is it a knowledge gap or rebellion?** - This is a critical question to ask yourself, as the leader. It will drive how you respond and the tools you use to deal with weaknesses within your team.

**Formal and informal accountability measures** - In-the-moment correction can often be enough to change behavior and improve productivity. Always begin with a mindset and approach of coaching first. When informal accountability is not working, do not shy away from formal corrective action. Keep in mind that it is for the benefit of the individual and the health of the team.

### Succession Planning

#### From the Retiring Director Perspective - (Becky Anderson)

**When and how does it begin?** - Ideally, succession planning begins on day one for the leader, but at the very least, is a long-term process. The longer the leader has been in place, the longer the succession planning. It should begin with a conversation with the Board, to learn how they see this process playing out.

**The design of the succession plan** - Think through and write down all the ways your departure will impact the organization and what will be needed to leave it healthy and growing after your tenure. Consider your organization's key distinctives and what you believe needs to remain true after you are gone. Be prepared to design the plan with that in mind.

**Communicating the plan** - Be careful who you share your plans with, including timing. If you have given your plans to the Lord, allow Him to lead you on when to share and with

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whom. Talking with your supporters and other key constituents too early can harm your effectiveness before you are ready to turn over the reins. Leave with a message to your supporters that encourages and inspires people to support the new leader in being successful in leading the ministry when you leave.

**Execution of a strong succession plan** - The Board has a role and voice in the execution of the plan. Voice your wishes and concerns and be up-front on your needs.

**Challenges that arise as the plan unfolds** - Communicating too early can become a central focus and cause for concern among supporters. Leaving during turmoil or staff change is risky. Prepare yourself for how you will manage the long exit. It is likely that your emotions will at times ignite regret, sadness, or uncertainty.

**Ending strong** - While God will ultimately be sovereign in the unfolding of the organization's change in leadership, let your goal be to leave a center that is stronger on the last day you are there than when you first arrived. Help the team to see a vision for growth beyond today and encourage them to dream and grow in anticipation of greater things to come. You are not just leaving. You are mentoring those you leave behind to know how to end strong as well.

### **From the New Director Perspective - (Jessica Deese)**

When discussing the receiving end of a succession plan and its impact on a center, donors, and overall life at the center, consider highlighting the following points:

**Stability and Continuity** - Successfully implementing a succession plan ensured stability within the center, allowing operations to continue smoothly without interruptions.

**Impact on Donors** - Clear communication during and after the transition helped maintain donor confidence, showing them

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that the leadership transition was well-managed and that their contributions would continue to be used effectively.

**Center Operations** - The new leadership brought in fresh perspectives and ideas, which might have led to enhanced programs or services, positively affecting the center's day-to-day activities.

**Staff and Volunteer Morale** - A well-executed succession can boost morale by demonstrating a commitment to the center's long-term vision and goals, encouraging staff and volunteers to remain engaged and motivated.

**Community and Relationships** - Strong leadership transitions help preserve and strengthen community relationships and partnerships, ensuring ongoing collaboration and support.

**Challenges and Adaptations** - Every succession comes with challenges, but a strategic plan can address these early on, minimizing disruptions and focusing on adapting to new leadership styles or strategic directions.

**Vision and Future Growth** - Succession can be an opportunity to revisit the center's mission and vision, setting new goals for future growth and development that align with both historical values and current needs. Each of these areas highlights how effective succession planning not only sustains but also enhances the success and impact of the center, its constituents, and its wider community.

### Cultivating a Strong Board

**It begins with showing strong support for those on the Board**

- The leader is responsible for shepherding the relationship between Staff and Board. The Board indirectly supports the staff. The view the staff have of the Board will depend largely on how they are portrayed by the leadership.

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**Know why each of your Board members came to serve and what makes them tick in their role** - Not only does this strengthen your relationship with each person who serves on the Board, but God can use their stories in the ministry in ways they may not consider because you know those stories and can draw on their experiences and passions.

**Determine learning needs they have and provide training for gaps** - You must be the expert in every role in your organization, including what being a Board member's duties entail. There are legal responsibilities and practical responsibilities. Know them and see where you may have gaps or training opportunities. Then seek out resources you can provide them that will strengthen them in their roles.

**Communicate your needs...clearly** - Be aware of what you don't know or training that would benefit you. Go to the Board to advocate for those needs and come prepared with possible resources to help you.

**Recruiting new Board members** - Present the need as God guides. Events, church speaking opportunities, calls with pastors and other faith leaders, current supporters. Cover this in prayer, asking God to guide the right people to your organization. Also consider what areas you feel weakness (finance, human resources, donor connections, spiritual)

**When a Board member is not a good fit** - It is the responsibility of the Board to address this issue, but you may play a pivotal role. As with everything else, it begins with prayer. Apply generous grace to the individual.

## **Keynote 6: *When They Abort Anyway: Handling Your Emotions***

Speaker: Sydna Massé

**God's Plan in Tragedy** - I remember a day early in my ministry when two women I had spoken with chose abortion despite knowing exactly what pain they would face. Even though a caller chose life that same week, that joy was overshadowed. One abortion can eliminate the joy of hundreds of saved lives in this ministry.

Just as the story in Luke 15:1-7, God has given us the heart of a Shepherd that goes in search of the one lost lamb.

While driving home I had a conversation to God. I was angry and asked Him, "WHY??!! When will you step in, Lord, and stop this bloodshed?" There was no immediate answer, but I was confident that God understood my emotions.

Before I reached home, I was determined to find another line of work because the pain was too overwhelming to endure on an ongoing basis. I also heard the voice of the enemy saying, "You can't do this work. It's your fault those children are lost!" Sound familiar?

During my devotions the next morning, God opened my eyes to why He allowed these tragedies to occur. I started reading about the martyred saints in Revelations 6:9-11 - *When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?' Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the*

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*number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.*

God clearly spoke to my heart that morning. It was easy to identify with the statement of the saints because I had said something similar the day before. In giving them a white robe, He comforted them and asked for their patience.

God had a plan when He told them that more would die before his vengeance would be conducted completely. I realized that since He created these aborted children and knew every one of their days here on Earth, He also knew they would be aborted.

He asked me to trust Him despite the lost lives. My role wasn't to be successful in turning their hearts towards a life decision – that was God's job. I had no right to question His will for these lives! My role was to be patient and obedient. Maybe their mothers would be the next person God would use to save other lives.

**Let the Praises Begin** - God speaks to me in my own voice and sometimes I'm amazed at what He asks me to do. One day I heard from a young woman I'd been working with that she had just had a late term abortion. For weeks we had e-mailed, and I thought the threat of abortion was long past. Her news hit me like a hot poker for she had been more than 24 weeks pregnant. God's instant remark to my heart was to praise Him for this child's death.

My first reaction was to be horrified at the thought of praising Him for something so horrible. Yet as He spoke to me that day, He made it clear that He had a plan I knew nothing about. When He conceived that child, He knew the death it would experience. In praising Him, my faith in His almighty will would be enhanced.

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While it took most of the afternoon, I was eventually able to surrender my horror to Him and praise Him. It's clear I may never be privy to His plan in this young woman's life, but I know His will to be sovereign even in death.

The hardest time to praise is during our darkest hours. Yet it is in these trials of our faith that God expects our praise! The next time you are during a trial, reach out to God with praise. It's a clear way to mix Satan up and allow God's power through your faith to flow into the situation.

**Comfortable Memories** - It takes only one abortion to take away your confidence. Satan just loves to make us feel guilty and discouraged by whispering to our hearts that it is our fault this child died. We've all heard the enemy's accusations - "Just give up. You are horrible at helping and the blood of that child is on your hands!"

These thoughts come straight from the pit of Hell and need to be treated as such! God was clear in II Corinthians 10:5 that we were to *demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*. It's God's job to save the life, not yours.

The best way to be obedient and allow God to work through you is to have the best information available to help them understand an abortion decision. Positive fetal development tools are essential along with the outline of post-abortion trauma.

Allowing women to hear a testimony from a post-abortive individual can also help. **Yet there will certainly be times that no matter what you do or say, people will abort anyway.** They may even say things like, "Yeah, I know it's a baby. Too bad I have to kill it." The only thing that helps bring comfort is to

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know that you did all you could to help them understand the pain of an abortion with God's help.

**Hometown Prophets** - Working with family members who are considering abortion can be impossible. Even Jesus couldn't minister in his own hometown! Consider that doctors rarely operate on family members. I doubt many psychologists counsel their own children effectively. So why should we expect to be effective in our own families on this topic?

Make sure that you have someone else who can help should a family member be considering an abortion. Always share your heart with them first because your transparency can be the tool God uses to help them make a life decision. If you feel that they are still considering an abortion, introduce them to the other person. Then start praying for God to move in their lives.

**Withstanding Their Reaction** - This work becomes harder when you follow up with the person after the abortion. Their feelings of relief will increase your horror, but you must understand this is a normal reaction and often a temporary emotion.

It took me nearly seven years to verbally regret my abortion decision. My self-defenses presented messages like, "That was the best decision I could ever have made," and "You can forget all about this and go on with your life like nothing ever happened."

Sharing about the pain they inflicted upon your heart won't help them come to God. While you may want to beat them over the head with truth, you need to "walk in their shoes." Rarely are their comments meant to increase your pain. Justifying statements are meant to reduce their own apprehensions.

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Some can hurt immediately after the abortion and run back to your arms for support. When they return to you, full of remorse and pain, it can be difficult to put your own emotions aside and help them. Ask God to allow His love to flow through you to her during these times. If you are still struggling to love them, involve another advocate that can assist you.

### Stirring Emotions

When you have worked with a woman who aborts despite your Christ-like efforts, you need to understand that you have become post-abortive in a **secondary** sense. You are connected to the aborted child through your heart and prayers on their behalf.

While you had nothing to do with their actual death, it is normal to experience some aspects of post-abortion trauma. These stirring emotions are unexpected but need to be embraced to help you mourn this lost child.

**Grief – Give Yourself Permission** - *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. | Peter 1:6-7*

A child that you prayed for has died. No matter how long they lived on Earth, you know they are now with God. This abortion was not a secret from you or God even though it may be for others directly related to that child's mother/father. God has given you the opportunity to embrace this grief so that your faith can be made stronger.

Doesn't this child deserve to be mourned? You may be the only other person who knows about his/her death, so God is

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allowing you the opportunity to honor this child through your tears.

Even though you weren't related by blood, this child deserves your grief. Embrace the anguish and understand that this emotion is precious to God and has a purpose in your walk with Him. It will build your faith and help you become more effective for Him in the future.

**Anger/Outrage – Keep Control** - It's a normal human reaction to combat the feelings of grief with anger. Many times, you are upset with the woman for making this choice. She knew better and had all the information to understand that she was taking the life of a baby. Sometimes your anger can be justified, especially when it relates to unsupportive family or friends and even abortion providers! These emotions need to be released in a healthy way.

I recommend that you write out your feelings in letters that you **never** send. Sharing your anger with a ministry friend is also a good idea. Be careful and remember Proverbs 29:11 – *a fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

**Vengeance – Belongs to God** - Feelings of vengeance towards others related to this choice can be overwhelming and hurt your ministry efforts. Many times, we just are overwhelmed that abortion is legal in our world!

God is truly clear in Romans 12:19-21: *“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink’ For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

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Showing the unconditional love of God enhances the Holy Spirit's power in each circumstance. They aren't expecting it. Many don't even know what the word "love" means. It could be that God will use this experience in the person's life to bring them to Him.

**Forgiveness – It's Not Optional!** - Matthew wrote in Matthew 6:12, 14-15, *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your father will not forgive your sins.*

Many times, my struggle is to forgive the woman who had the abortion. We are not responsible for anyone's emotions or decisions but our own. Forgiveness is an act of the will and impacts one's intimate relationship with God. The act of forgiving is **not optional** as relayed by Jesus in His sample prayer, which we refer to as the Lord's Prayer.

While you may not be called to continue to minister to her heart, your sincerity in forgiving her, and others who have caused this hurt in your heart, is essential. God could hold you accountable for an unforgiveness that may exist in your soul. A friend of mine, Karen Fifer, outlines this principle as follows:

How do we forgive someone who is not sorry? This could be a person who may still think it was the best thing for us or that the abortion was no big deal. It is important to look at what forgiveness is NOT:

- Forgiveness is not **forgetting** what they did to us.
- Forgiveness is not **excusing** them for their actions.
- Forgiveness is not **understanding** why they did what they did.

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- Forgiveness is not **trusting** them again because trust must be earned.

Forgiving others is for US! Otherwise, we are invisibly chained to them by the chain of bitterness, hatred or anger as outlined in Ephesians 4:31: *Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.*

Forgiving them takes the chains off us and gives them to God. He will not let them off his hook. He will deal with their sin. Rest assured that revenge belongs to Him and He's better at it than you are.

**Memorializing – Honoring Their Lives** - Throughout all cultures and time periods individuals have had the need for rituals or memorials commemorating life-changing events. These include birth, circumcision, coming of age, marriage, job training, graduations, and death.

In acknowledging these children as truly human individuals, and members of our community, it is important to dignify their memories with a memorializing event.

We hear many stories in heavily populated senior citizen areas filled with those who outlive family members and die in obscurity. Sometimes only county workers are present at their gravesides. It's heartbreaking to consider but very similar in concept to the death of a child through abortion. They are cast aside and disposed of without care.

What an honor it is to remember this lost child even if their parents are unable to at the time. The next time your center or community has a memorial service, ask if you can attend and use this time to remember this lost child. It will help bring closure to the situation.

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### Releasing Them to God's Care

Keep in mind that you probably won't be the one to help these clients should they seek healing. This is because you were part of their abortion decision. Whenever they see you, they will be reminded of their loss and shame.

Given the fact that it can take many years to finally face this pain, your role in her life could end when she walks out the door. Maybe you'll never know if she had an abortion but something in your spirit tells you to grieve. It is demanding work, and we must continue to rely on the Lord for His strength to persevere each day.

In working with these clients, respond according to the "fruits of the Spirit" as those outlined in Galatians 5:22 (NIV): *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.* You could be the only person praying for them in the years to come so be sure to remember them when the Holy Spirit places them on your heart.

Encourage yourself that they could someday experience a Saul/Paul transformation! Be sure that you invite them to church and are willing to provide transportation.

Remember that the abortion can be the tool God uses to lead them to Himself! Even in the short amount of time you have with them, allow them to see Jesus through you!

### As They Leave...

When the post-abortive understand the cause of their pain, they can find help. They also need information to reinforce your message when they are alone and pondering this

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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choice. Here are some points to make, and information to provide, as they leave:

- A business card with a QR code that features HerChoicetoHeal.com.
- A description of their rights in an abortion procedure.
- Ask for permission to contact them by phone, text, or e-mail in the days to come. You may have an additional opportunity to reinforce your message of hope to their souls.
- Your e-mail address or business texting line and ask them to let you know how things go.
- A copy of the book, **Her Choice to Heal**. This book has found its way into abortion clinics and been used to save lives. This will also help them should they choose abortion and suffer regret afterwards. It will comfort your heart to know that they have possession of something that can help them in either situation.
- A link of a post-abortion testimony video or a link to Sydna Massé's video on HerChoicetoHeal.com, Module 1, Lesson 3 - <https://herchoicetoheal.com/the-first-step/>.
- Information about your abortion recovery programs.
- An invitation to a church service.
- A promise that you will be praying for them.
- State that no matter what choice they make, you are there to help them.

You never know what God can do to their hearts when they leave. It could be this information will reinforce your message of the pain of abortion and lead them to a life decision!

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## Memorial Service Outline

**Introduction/Welcome** – Group Leader/Pastor

**Song:** “Rushing Wind” (Keith Green)

**Scripture Reading** – Psalms 51

**Intro to Candle Lighting** - Mention to the attendees that candles are a wonderful way to remember the lost. Ask each one to come up individually and light a candle for children in their life that have been aborted. Then they can return to their seats or go to the pastoral person for personal prayer. If prayer is incorporated, then time needs to be given for the prayer to be completed before the next candle is lighted.

**During Candle Lighting play song of your choosing.**

**Saying Goodbye** - Leader should take the time to comment on where the children live now. Statements like: “Jesus is the greatest parent a child can ever have,” “There will come a day when you hold them in Heaven,” could be immensely helpful. Ask them to take a few moments while the next song is played to give these dear children into God’s hands. Warn them that after the song, the candles will be blown out.

**Song, Your Selection** -- During the song, the Leader or group blows out candles GENTLY and SLOWLY.

**Scripture reading** – Isaiah 61

**Song** - Ask the audience to stand and sing the first and last verses of "Amazing Grace."

**Closing prayer**

## Speaker Biographies



**Sydna Massé**

is author of the book/abortion recovery program, *Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion*. She is internationally known for her initial work with Dr. James C. Dobson as Focus on the Family's Manager of Crisis Pregnancy Ministries (1991-1998). For the last 25 years, Sydna has served as CEO & Founder of Ramah International, an abortion recovery outreach and abortion-vulnerable ministry training organization ([www.ramahinternational.org](http://www.ramahinternational.org)), and author of the [HerChoicetoHeal.com](http://HerChoicetoHeal.com) website.

Sydna experienced an abortion as a teenager while attending a private Christian college. She was the first post-abortive woman to share her abortion story publicly on the Focus on the Family broadcast (1992). Over the years, Sydna has likely listened to more post-abortive testimonies than anyone else living in our world today and is one of the few experts on abortion related pain. She is an internationally recognized leader of the pregnancy center/abortion recovery movement.



## **Becky Anderson**

Becky, with over a decade of experience as the Executive Director of Verity Pregnancy & Medical Resource Center in Fort Myers, FL, has demonstrated exceptional leadership in overseeing all aspects of the organization's programs, personnel, and day-to-day operations. Her role encompasses fundraising, financial management, strategic planning, donor engagement, staff training, and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards.

Before her tenure at Verity, Becky held diverse roles, including serving as Adjunct Faculty at Rasmussen College for five years, owning Anderson Medical Legal Consulting for four years, and spending nearly two decades as Director of Quality and Strategic Clinical Development for NCH Healthcare System. Her extensive background underscores her expertise in various domains within the healthcare and education sectors.



**Jessica Deece**

Jessica serves as the Executive Director of Coastal Choices Pregnancy Center in Deland, FL, where she directs all leadership responsibilities, including staff and volunteer management, as well as the day-to-day operations. Her journey with Coastal Choices began as a volunteer advocate and progressed to the Center Director position. In 2021, she transitioned into the position of Executive Director when the former director retired. With licensure in ministry and Clinical Pastoral counseling, Jessica brings a distinctive perspective to her work at Coastal Choices, enriching her ability to support individuals in need.



**Karen Fifer**

Karen is the co-author of Ramah International's *Legacy Lost: Healing Abortion's Heartache in Grandparents* abortion recovery program, and the new study *Boundless Love: Healing Abortion's Heartache in Relationships* and the novel, *The Wichita Watcher*. She is a post-abortive grandparent who previously served for 25 years as the director of Client Services at a pregnancy center in Wichita, KS. She is a Ramah International board member and has over 33 years of experience helping women, men and grandparents find hope and healing after abortion.

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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**Melissa Horton**

Melissa serves as Ramah International’s Educational Director and has over 20 years’ experience in serving, training, and educating staff and volunteers in local pregnancy centers and leading abortion recovery ministry efforts. Currently she serves in a leadership role for women’s ministry all the while supporting her husband in his role as a pastor of a local church the past 17 years. She loves counseling women and equipping them to find healing and peace with God in the trauma that comes from abortion.

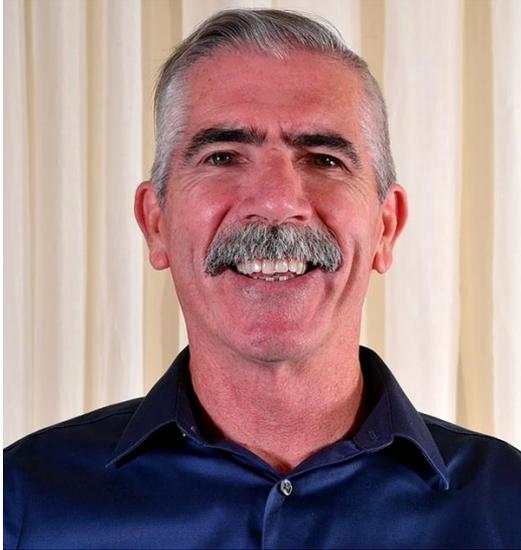
# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## **Bettina Loughman**

Bettina has dedicated the past 20 years to the pregnancy center and abortion recovery ministry, serving communities in both California and Arkansas. Her diverse roles have ranged from receptionist to center director, showcasing her deep commitment and versatile leadership. Currently, she ministers to individuals through the HerChoicetoHeal.com team and leads a church-based abortion recovery effort. Bettina is also at the helm of the “Embrace Grace” program, providing support and hope to those in need. Residing in Centerton, AR, she cherishes her three children and two grandchildren.



**Tom Massé**

serves as the Chief Technology Officer for Ramah International, Inc. He was a pioneer in website programming with RamahInternational.org going online in 1998 as one of the first pro-life websites. Tom has in-depth skills in pregnancy center website design. His search engine optimization skills have resulted in many clients finding their local pregnancy center.

His technological accomplishments include the following:

- HerChoicetoHeal.com
- RamahInternational.org
- RamahInstitute.com
- HelpinYourArea.com (listing of pregnancy centers)
- RamahsVoice.com
- PregnancyCenterTraining.com
- PregnancyCenterWebsites.com
- Sydna.com

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## Suzanne Reed

Suzanne Reed is currently enjoying retirement with her husband Craig, and nine rescue cats, while living in rural Indiana. She earned her degree from Purdue University in Restaurant, Hotel and Institutional Management and has a diverse management background in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors. Having worked for Hyatt, Red Lobster, Bob Evans, Girl Scouts, Ivy Tech Community College, and Chrysler Corp. (now Stellantis), she can appreciate and work with people from many walks of life. Active in her church and women's prayer group, Suzanne is particularly enthusiastic about supporting post abortive women and men. Most days she can be found cooking for her family, and spending time with her children and grandchildren.



## **Melissa Rodriguez**

Melissa’s journey into pregnancy ministry is deeply personal, rooted in her own experiences navigating post-abortion healing as a young mother. Her connection to Coastal Choices Women’s Clinic is fueled by a desire to support others facing similar challenges, evident in her commitment to the clinic’s mission and operations. As Executive Assistant to the Executive Director, Melissa provides vital support, ensuring seamless coordination and effective execution of the clinic's initiatives. With a profound understanding of the emotional complexities, Melissa helps extend the clinic’s reach and its transformative impact on the community.

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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**John, Marlene, and their daughter, Hannah, will share their profound journey through frozen embryo adoption, which began with a simple yet pivotal question from Marlene: “Can frozen embryos be adopted?” Their answer led to Hannah’s**

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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birth, making her the first human symbol against embryonic stem cell research, a science threatening countless frozen embryos.

The Strege family's story, which has touched stages from Focus on the Family to the halls of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the White House, will highlight their intersections of faith, family, science, and politics. John's 2020 book, *A Snowflake Called Hannah*, outlines their fascinating story of God leading them to participate in the first human embryo adoption.

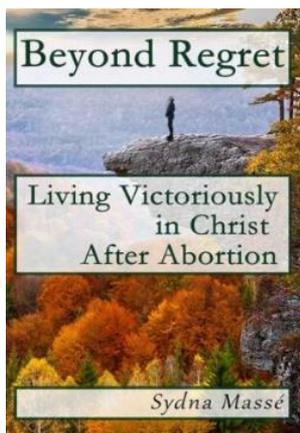
**Hannah Strege** is a licensed social worker, who received her master's degree in social work from Baylor University. Prior to that, she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Biola University. Hannah is the first adopted frozen embryo in the world and is hoping to open her own adoption counseling practice.

**Marlene Strege** is a retired occupational therapist and a graduate of the University of Southern California. She and John have been married for 39 years. She is mother to Hannah and is passionate about supporting embryo adoption families and their journeys.

**John Strege** is a semi-retired sportswriter (Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register, and Golf Digest magazine) and the author of eight books, most recently *In the Big Inning: Where Faith Meets Sports: A Christian Sportswriter's Perspective*, and *Tiger: A Biography of Tiger Woods* Paperback.

## Ramah Catalog of Resources

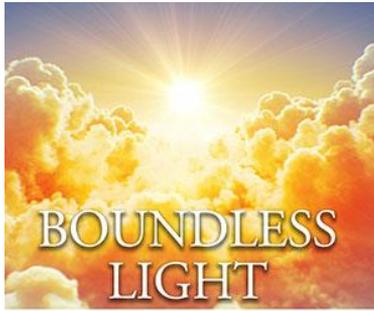
To order, visit [HerChoicetoHeal.com](http://HerChoicetoHeal.com) – SHOP button



### **Beyond Regret: Living Victoriously in Christ After Abortion**

*Beyond Regret*, Sydna Massé, author of the HerChoicetoHeal.com abortion recovery program, goes deeper into her own healing journey and shares new information on the impact of abortion. Included is distinctive content on the post-abortive experience to bring enlightenment and comfort for those waiting to hold a child in heaven. This is the perfect study to follow-up after a retreat as well as to do after a weekly/individual session is complete.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**



**Discovering Peace When  
Someone You Love  
Chose Abortion**

SYDNA MASSÉ & KAREN FIFER

**Boundless Light: Discovering Peace When Someone  
You Love Chose Abortion**

Did you have a girlfriend, wife or relative who aborted?  
Did you support someone's abortion decision, drive her to a clinic, or help pay for it?  
Have you learned that you have a sibling, or another family member that was aborted?  
Are you struggling with conflicting emotions regarding someone's abortion and don't know how to resolve them?

Abortion impacts every life it touches. The silent fingers of abortion reach into many lives and cross all generational lines. Perhaps you're questioning why another person's abortion decision has had such a profound impact on you. Intrusive thoughts may make you feel like you're lost in the dark, colliding with unexplainable emotions.

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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It's common to struggle with conflicting feelings and pain when someone you love and deeply care for has undergone an abortion. This can lead to emotions that are not easily understood or resolved.

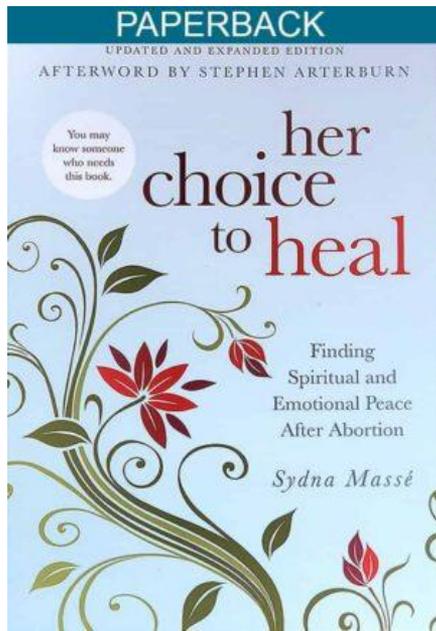
If you have struggled with this pain, know that you are not alone. It is impossible to count the number of people, just like yourself, who are impacted by abortion in this indirect way. Rest assured God can heal this pain and help you cope with this loss.

Boundless Light addresses the pain that can affect anyone associated with someone who has aborted. It is specifically for the father of an aborted child, the sibling of an aborted child and other family/friends that may have aborted a child. Extended family relatives, friends, a boyfriend, or girlfriend of someone who has aborted in the past could also discover God's peace within the pages of this book.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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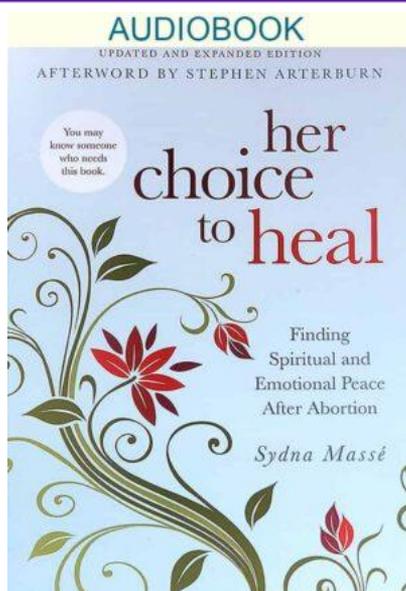
## **Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion Paperback**

Her Choice to Heal is designed to help women find a way to God’s healing after making the devastating choice of abortion. Written by a post-abortive woman, Sydna Massé, it includes testimonies of strength, healing, and hope. Sydna compassionately leads you on the difficult journey through denial, anger, and grief, to forgiveness, redemption, and letting go. Her Choice to Heal offers a road map to healing – practical suggestions, resources for help, space to journal, with the encouragement and hope found in Christ alone.

**\$12.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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### **Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion Audiobook**

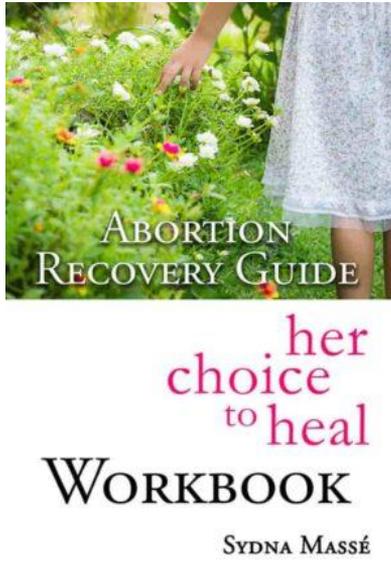
Her Choice to Heal is designed to help women find a way to God's healing after making the devastating choice of abortion. Written by a post-abortive woman, Sydna Massé, it includes testimonies of strength, healing, and hope. Sydna compassionately leads you on the difficult journey through denial, anger, and grief, to forgiveness, redemption, and letting go. Her Choice to Heal offers a road map to healing – practical suggestions, resources for help, space to journal, with the encouragement and hope found in Christ alone.

**Narrated by:** Sydna Massé **Length:** 4hr and 53 mins (Unabridged)

**\$12.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

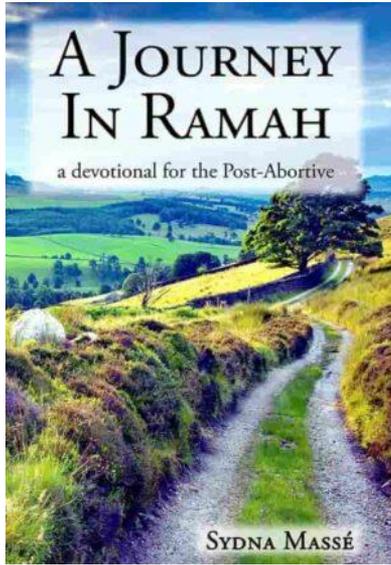
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## Abortion Recovery Guide Workbook

Ramah International's **Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery Guide** supplements Sydna Massé's book, *Her Choice to Heal*, making it into a weekly abortion recovery program that can be used to help individuals work further through the recovery process in a group or one-on-one setting. Each week the individual will read a chapter in the book and then do the exercises in the recovery guide.

**\$12.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**



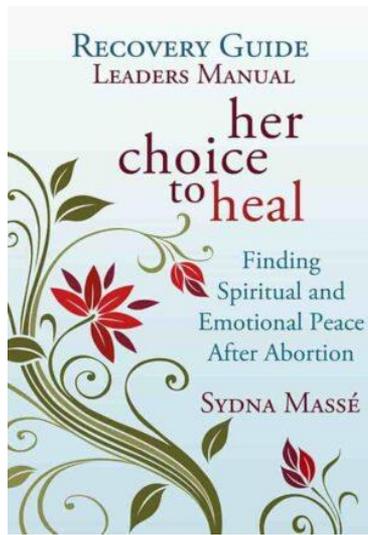
### **A Journey in Ramah Daily Devotional**

A Journey In Ramah is a 70-day, daily devotional for women working through the healing process after abortion. *A Journey In Ramah* is an ideal companion to any abortion recovery program. It also helps non-post-abortive individuals understand the mindset of women enduring the grieving process of healing. This devotional can supplement **any** abortion recovery program.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## Recovery Guide Workbook Leaders Instruction Manual

Designed to help abortion recovery program leaders utilize the Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery guide and book in a 9-week abortion recovery class or individual setting. It is packed with forms, activities as well as a detailed daily assignment chart in the back.

**\$29.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## *Her Choice to Heal* RETREAT

## WORKBOOK

SYDNA MASSÉ & KAREN FIFER

### **Her Choice to Heal Retreat Workbook**

The Her Choice to Heal Retreat Workbook has been developed for use in an abortion recovery retreat setting. Designed to walk women through the various stages of spiritual and emotional healing after abortion, topics include:

- What a personal relationship with Jesus means after abortion,
- Scriptures to help you sleep,
- What does the Bible say about forgiveness,
- Will I know my child in heaven,
- What we are like in heaven.

These topics and many more provide the foundation for beginning the healing process after the trauma of abortion. This Bible-based retreat can help begin your healing journey to emotional and spiritual peace. God loves you. He wants you to be restored with His grace and mercy.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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*Her Choice to Heal*  
RETREAT

## LEADER'S MANUAL

SYDNA MASSÉ & KAREN FIFER

### Her Choice to Heal Retreat Leader's Manual

The Her Choice to Heal Retreat Leader's Manual provides you with everything you need to facilitate a woman's retreat using the Her Choice to Heal Retreat Workbook. This includes:

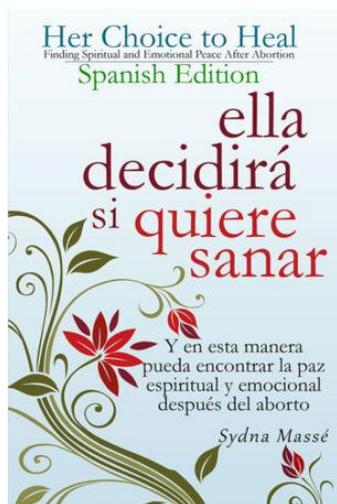
- Initial Interviewing of potential attendees,
- Numerous ways to promoting the retreat,
- Copies of administrative forms to use during the retreat,
- Detailed schedules with topics to be covered
- Meals for the retreat including menus and discussion topics,
- Supply list for what is needed to facilitate the retreat,
- Teaching guides for every topic covered during the retreat,
- Weekend recovery guidelines,
- Page numbers to topics in Retreat Workbook,

And much more. If you are new to using the retreat format, this Leader's Guide will cover everything and give you more confidence in facilitating this program.

**\$29.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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### **Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion Español Spanish Edition**

**PAPERBACK VERSION - SPANISH LANGUAGE EDITION:** Her Choice to Heal is designed to help women find a way to God's healing after making the devastating choice of abortion. Written by a post-abortive woman, Sydna Massé, it includes testimonies of strength, healing, and hope. Sydna compassionately leads you on the difficult journey through denial, anger, and grief, to forgiveness, redemption, and letting go. Her Choice to Heal offers a road map to healing – practical suggestions, resources for help, space to journal, with the encouragement and hope found in Christ alone.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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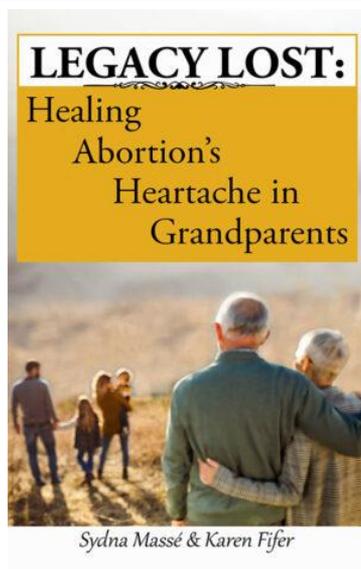
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SYDNA MASSÉ

## Abortion Recovery Guide Workbook Español Edition:

**Español SPANISH LANGUAGE EDITION:** Ramah International's **Her Choice to Heal Abortion Recovery Workbook** supplements Sydna Massé's book, *Her Choice to Heal*, making it into a weekly abortion recovery program that can be used to help individuals work further through the recovery process in a group or one-on-one setting. Each week the individual will read a chapter in the book and then do the exercises in the recovery guide.

**\$12.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**



### **Legacy Lost: Healing Abortion's Heartache in Grandparents**

Abortion impacts every life it touches. The silent fingers of abortion reach across all generational lines. The pain a grandparent of an aborted child can endure can be like that of the mother or father. Many do not realize that they have a need and a right to grieve this loss, even if the baby's parents may not be able to do the same. This book contains a step-by-step process to help grandparents – as well as anyone impacted by someone else's abortion – address this loss to find peace with themselves and God. With 50 plus years of ministry experience, this book includes all that we have learned to help you understand how this abortion(s) has touched your life to walk you through the emotions of healing with God's help.

**\$14.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

## Her Choice to Heal Sets

### **Abortion Recovery Program Her Choice to Heal Book and Recovery Workbook Set**

This abortion recovery program allows women to work further in the abortion recovery process. Incorporating new areas like breaking sexual soul ties will allow abortion recovery ministry leaders to use Her Choice to Heal in a 9-week abortion recovery program.

**\$19.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**

### **Her Choice to Heal Book, Recovery Workbook and Daily Devotional**

This three-book set abortion recovery program offers personal support to the woman who is working through the pain of a past abortion.

**\$29.95 FREE SHIPPING!**

### **Her Choice to Heal Book, Recovery Workbook and Daily Devotional**

The four-book set abortion recovery program offers in-depth support using Scripture and personal testimony to help guide a woman through God's wonderful healing. Her Choice to Heal Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion, the accompanying Recovery Guide Workbook, Beyond Regret and the "Journey in Ramah" devotional. When using the Her Choice to Heal book and workbook, adding Beyond Regret and A Journey in Ramah daily devotional is the perfect way to supplement each woman's healing through Christ.

## Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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The homework is not overwhelming, and the daily devotional provides personal support and encouragement and addresses emotions that may not be verbalized within the class setting.

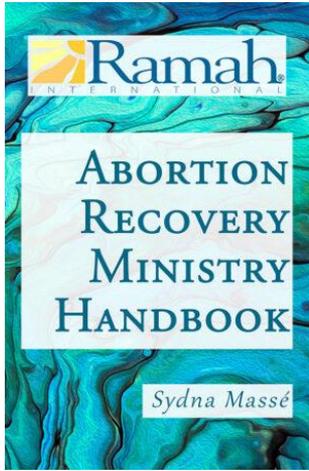
**\$39.95 FREE SHIPPING!**

### **Abortion Recovery Program – Review Copy**

Ramah International's "Her Choice to Heal" abortion recovery program has been used by thousands to discover the hope of God's healing.

It is the perfect companion to any abortion recovery program ministry related to pregnancy loss and pain after abortion. This review copy is complete with a copy of Sydna Massé's book, Her Choice to Heal Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion, the accompanying Recovery Guide, The Leaders Manual, Beyond Regret and the "Journey in Ramah" devotional. This is a perfect program for new ministry efforts!

**\$54.95 - FREE SHIPPING!**



## Abortion Recovery Ministry Handbook

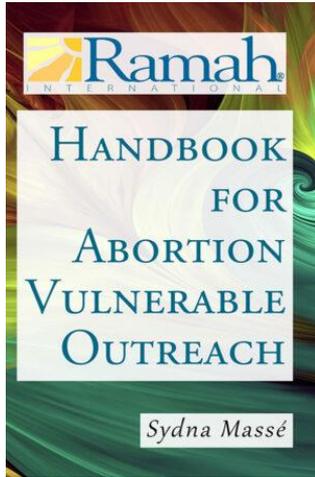
Ramah International's Abortion Recovery Ministry Handbook is designed to equip individuals who desire to begin a ministry outreach program to reach abortion's wounded.

Topics include:

- How Many Women
- Abortion Recovery Formats
- Unwrapping an Abortion Story
- Abortion's Extended Wounded
- Common Issues of Post-Abortive Women
- The Emotions of Healing
- Abortion Recovery Leadership Administration
- When They Abort Anyway: Handling Your Emotions

The Abortion Recovery Ministry Handbook is the perfect tool to educate anyone in understanding why people chose abortion and how to help them find the hope of God's healing.

**\$14.95** - FREE SHIPPING!



## Handbook for Abortion Vulnerable Outreach

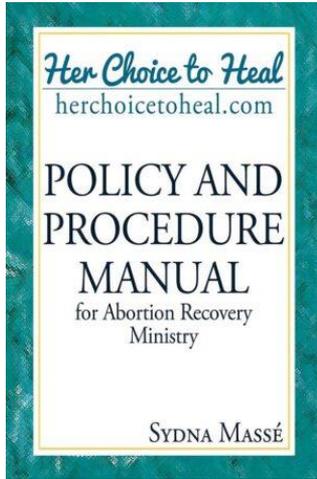
Ramah International's Handbook for Abortion-Vulnerable Outreach is designed to equip those who are working with individuals who may be considering the abortion option.

**Topics include:**

- Common Issues of Post-Abortive People
- Discussing Medication Abortion
- Determining Level of Abortion Vulnerability
- The Lifecycle of an Abortion Decision
- The Cultural Impact of Choosing Abortion
- The Cellular & Biological Impact of Abortion
- The Grief Impact of Ultrasound Scans
- Abortion Anesthesia & Pain
- Reaching Abortion-Vulnerable Men
- When They Abort Anyway: Handling Your Emotions

Handbook for Abortion-Vulnerable Outreach is the perfect tool to educate anyone in understanding why people chose abortion and how to help them make life affirming decisions for their unplanned pregnancies.

**\$14.95** FREE SHIPPING!



## Policy and Procedure Manual for Abortion Recovery Ministry

Available in 3-ring binder format, the HerChoicetoHeal.com Policy and Procedures Manual is a comprehensive text that details every aspect of abortion recovery outreach, resulting in a reference tool for everyone involved in the ministry program. This tool can be used as a back-up when more information is needed to explain a policy or when a deeper understanding of the abortion recovery step-by-step process is desired. This manual includes best practices, core process descriptions and specific methods and standards for how this ministry work should be performed.

**\$49.95** - FREE SHIPPING!

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## **WEATHERING THE STORM**

A Bible Study for Women Who Have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss

Janet Caldon

## **Weathering The Storm: A Bible Study for Women Who Have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss**

Each year, innumerable women endure the heartache of miscarriage and infant loss, grappling silently with profound sorrow and feelings of incompleteness. The hushed agony of a child's passing often remains unspoken, leaving many to grieve in solitude.

Janet Caldon, herself a survivor of infant loss, offers a sanctuary of understanding and empathy in *Weathering the Storm*. Delicately navigating the tempestuous sea of emotions and myriad questions accompanying such a profound loss, Janet offers solace and guidance. At its heart, this book is a beacon of hope, illuminating the path to healing through the unwavering love and grace of Christ.

If you have experienced miscarriage or infant loss, you are not alone. Give yourself the grace to grieve and find strength in the storm. This Bible study can help you find God's peace.

**\$14.95** - FREE SHIPPING!

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## **WEATHERING THE STORM**

A Bible Study for Women Who Have  
Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss

Leader's Manual

Janet Caldon

## **Weathering The Storm: A Bible Study for Women Who Have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss Leader's Manual**

Each year, innumerable women endure the heartache of miscarriage and infant loss, grappling silently with profound sorrow and feelings of incompleteness. The hushed agony of a child's passing often remains unspoken, leaving many to grieve in solitude. This Leader's Manual is designed to equip group administrators in working with women who have experienced miscarriage or infant loss utilizing the Weathering the Storm Bible study program. This resource contains detailed notes relating to each week's topic along with an answer guide to the questions found in the program's homework sections and much more. This Leader's Manual program also contains a copy of the participant's version of this program.

**\$29.95 – Free Shipping**

# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## **WEATHERING THE STORM RETREAT**

A Bible Study for Women Who Have  
Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss

WORKBOOK

Janet Caldon



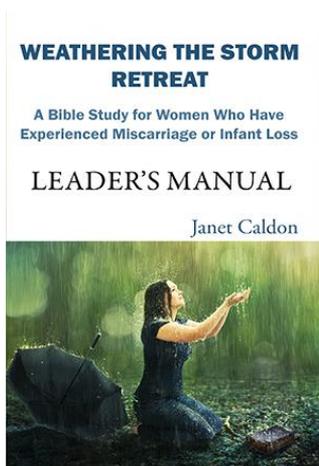
## **Weathering The Storm: A Bible Study for Women Who Have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss Retreat Version**

Each year, innumerable women endure the heartache of miscarriage and infant loss, grappling silently with profound sorrow and feelings of incompleteness. The hushed agony of a child's passing often remains unspoken, leaving many to grieve in solitude. Janet Caldon, herself a survivor of infant loss, offers a sanctuary of understanding and empathy in *Weathering the Storm*. Delicately navigating the tempestuous sea of emotions and myriad questions accompanying such a profound loss, Janet offers solace and guidance. At its heart, this book is a beacon of hope, illuminating the path to healing through the unwavering love and grace of Christ. If you have experienced miscarriage or infant loss, you are not alone. Give yourself the grace to grieve and find strength in the storm. The RETREAT version Bible study can help you find God's peace.

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# Her Choice to Heal 2024 Conference Notebook

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## **Weathering The Storm: A Bible Study for Women Who Have Experienced Miscarriage or Infant Loss Retreat Leader's Manual**

Each year, innumerable women endure the heartache of miscarriage and infant loss, grappling silently with profound sorrow and feelings of incompleteness. The hushed agony of a child's passing often remains unspoken, leaving many to grieve in solitude. This Leader's Manual for the Retreat is designed to equip group administrators in working with women who have experienced miscarriage of infant loss utilizing the Weathering the Storm Bible study program. This resource contains detailed notes relating to each week's topic along with an answer guide to the questions found in the program's homework sections and much more. This Retreat Leader's Manual program also contains a copy of the participant's version of this program.

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