



'When I first came to Espod I was so weakened by the things that had happened before, during and after the abortion. It was hard work but now I'm living again. Though I didn't believe it - recovery can happen. Espod listens and helps with troubles over abortion. It saved my life'.....



Emotional Support for Pregnancy Outcome Decisions

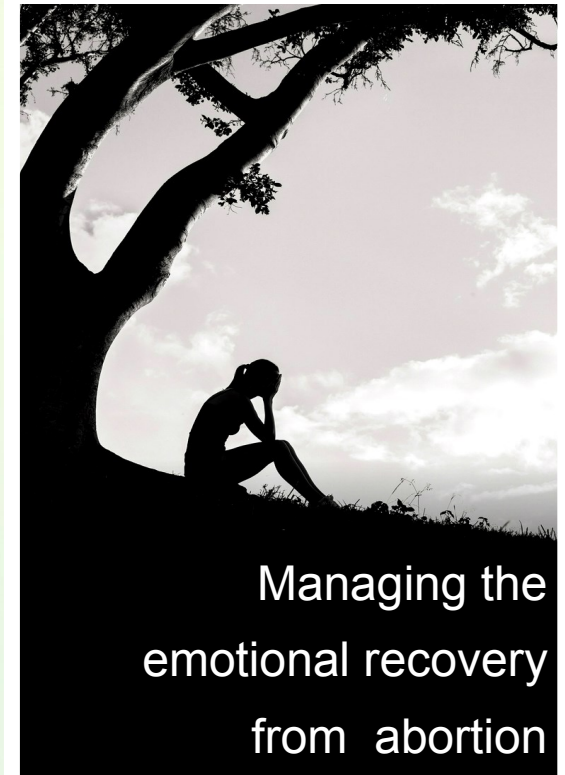
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**Managing the
emotional recovery
from abortion**

Some women say that they do not have any problems following an abortion — but other women say that they do. Here are some of the things women have said to us about what affects them after a pregnancy termination...

"...I think about it almost all the time. I see pregnant women everywhere and I'm counting the weeks like I'm still pregnant..."

"...I keep going over what it would have been like. I think I was having a girl. My friend had her daughter at the same time I would have had mine..."

“...We both agreed to the abortion and said we’d have kids later, when we were ready. But we’ve split up and I feel so ripped-off and angry...”

“...I can’t stop thinking and crying and I feel so anxious. I can feel depression in my mind and my body and my whole life. I get panic attacks too...”

“...I can’t get used to the idea that I’ll never have any more children. I’ll only ever have my three and that’s it. It’s finished...”

“...I started having a couple of drinks because it made me forget a bit — I didn’t feel it so much. But now I just drink and smoke until I pass out...”

“...All the reasons I had the abortion for have changed. I feel so unhappy because it never had to happen. — I could have made it work...”

(All the women quoted here have given permission to use their words in the hope that others will benefit from knowing the kinds of problems that brought them to the post-abortion recovery program.)

Sometimes a woman is surprised that she is having any reaction to the abortion. She may try to ignore her feelings and to carry on as normal.

This may be because she had kept the abortion a secret, because she is afraid of facing those feelings, or does not know where to get help.

And sometimes health workers, family and friends view the abortion as ‘in the past’.

There are many other reasons because *the way people respond to abortion and what follows is very individual.*

Often women feel relieved immediately after an abortion. This is because the circumstances of their difficult or unexpected pregnancy are highly stressful.

People may choose abortion for relationship, career, financial and many other practical reasons and believe that once the pregnancy is ended there will be no more stress about the pregnancy.

However, some women say they have experienced certain emotions after the termination which they did not expect and find difficult to manage. These can include:

- Low self-confidence and self-esteem
- Sadness and crying
- Anger
- Regret or remorse
- Loss
- Intense desire to become pregnant again or to avoid pregnancy

Some women report problems of living following abortion. People have relationship concerns, difficulty sleeping, sexual disturbances, or problems with eating, using too much alcohol or other drugs, and sometimes thoughts of suicide.

Others find it difficult to see pregnant women, hold babies and some women experience distress on the due date of the pregnancy and anniversary of the abortion.

Managing the emotions that may develop following an abortion

There is help for people who are experiencing post-abortion difficulties. In our recovery program, we counsel and support people managing the problems that affect them following an abortion.

We talk about the abortion experience or the parts of it that she believes are causing her problems and this allows the difficult feelings to surface in a safe environment.

Once the woman becomes conscious of what is troubling her we examine what she thinks and how she feels about those issues and how this relates to her own set of values, experiences and self-concept.

The woman works with her counsellor to identify the aspects of her thoughts and feelings that move her forward and which ones keep her stuck.

We then concentrate on new ways of thinking and feeling and develop strategies together to manage her difficulties.