

Women Caring for Women: Post-Abortion Syndrome

CBC Sunday School

November 2, 2025

Discussion question: If you could go back in time, where/when would you go?

A few things:

-Our purpose today is not to tackle the moral and theological discussion of the decision to abort. Our aim is to learn how to care for women who made the decision in their past to abort. CBC believes that while abortion is a sin, there is forgiveness and grace for women (and men) who have sinned in this way.

-We must assume that we know women wounded by abortion. Statistics tell us that 1 in 4 pregnancies (excluding miscarriage) end in abortion and something like 40% of those women claim Christianity. They are all around us – in our churches, in our families, in our lives.

1. What is lost?

- a. Much of the time, loss/suffering precipitated the decision to abort
 - i. “Abortion is not a choice most women make casually. It is something you are driven to in desperation, when the alternatives seem too awful to contemplate.” Sydna Masse, *Her Choice to Heal*
 - ii. Her story may include abuse, rejection, neglect, shame, dysfunction, manipulation, or a pattern of self-harming behaviors to cope with previous trauma
- b. Relationships - the reach of abortion is far
 - i. With the father (if there was a relationship with him)
 1. 95% of the time, the relationship doesn't last
 - ii. With family and friends
 1. She may pull away from them in shame, terrified they may find out her secret and reject her
 2. She may decide to never let anyone get close to her again, so she can never feel that much loss again
 3. She may be unable to bond with future children
 4. If a family member helped facilitate the abortion there may be blame felt toward them by the post-abortive woman, and the family member may also be feeling deep guilt and shame. The relationship may become very strained.
 - a. “Spouses and those who had a role in helping us make this choice can struggle with a form of secondary post abortion syndrome.” Sydna Masse
 - iii. With the church
 1. She may feel judged by language used by those promoting sanctity of life
 2. It may be too painful for her to be involved in children's ministry, etc
 3. She may avoid joining a small group lest someone ask her to share her story and find out her secret.
- c. Health
 - i. Reproductive health
 1. There is a lie that says abortion is safer than birth. It is not.
 2. Long term complications from the abortion procedure: scar tissue, cancer (cervical or breast), infertility, ectopic pregnancy, miscarriage
 - ii. Mental health
 1. Abortion PTSD

- a. Trauma symptoms (can be delayed for many years)
 - i. Flashbacks, nightmares, uncontrollable emotions on abortion anniversaries, inability to speak when the topic comes up (a response of the brain when reliving trauma)
- b. Depression, suicidal thoughts
- c. Anxiety/fear over childbearing issues
 - i. "Some expect to have handicapped children because they have 'disqualified themselves as good mothers.' Many refer to these fears as punishments from God." Sydna Masse
- d. Survival guilt
 - i. "In the end, the decision boils down to a sorrowful 'it's me or you, and I choose me.' But while the abortion frees them from the current trauma, it frequently produces in them an unrelenting guilt for choosing their own comfort over the life of the child." Sydna Masse
- e. Eating disorders
- f. Alcohol and drug abuse
 - i. She may, like Sydna Masse, think: "I've done the worst thing possible in taking the life of my firstborn. Why hold back from doing anything else? Nothing I can do now could be worse than the abortion!"
- g. Self-degrading or self-punishing behaviors
 - i. Abusive relationships, promiscuity, deliberately hurting herself
- d. Inability to grieve
 - i. There is no external evidence that a baby ever existed
 - ii. No permission to grieve openly, culture tells her that no human died, therefore grief is not appropriate.
- e. Her own moral code is violated
 - i. No matter her views on the morality of abortion are, we are made in God's image and have an aspect of God's morality written into our DNA. (Rom 1:18-20)
 - ii. Abortion destroys a human life: she has lost her child, a child that can never be replaced

Discussion question: Are there any ways we might express our pro-life views that could be unintentionally hurting the abortion wounded women in our midst?

2. Where is God in the pain?

- a. God already knows your story
 - i. Nothing is a secret from him - nothing can shock or surprise him (Ps 139)
 - ii. "It may be comforting to remember that, to Him, your abortion has never been hidden. He knew your baby before you even knew of his or her existence. He has always known the circumstances of his or her conception, He was with your child as it was being formed in your womb, and He was present when your baby died." Sydna Masse
- b. God loves you anyway
 - i. God's love is not based on our behavior, it is based on his goodness, which does not change
 - ii. "He knew of all your turmoil way back then. He knew what you thought. He knew what you had been told, what pressure you were under, what fears you faced, and

what cowardice or temptations won you over. He loved you then, and He still loves you now. His love will never end.” Sydna Masse

- iii. God include examples of his mercy toward “horrible sinners” in the Bible for our instruction: Paul (1 Tim 1:15-16), Israel (Jer 3:6, 12-14, 22), Us (Rom 5:8)

Discussion question: Do you find it comforting or exposing that God knows every part of your story?

3. What does healing look like?

- a. Confront the source of pain
 - i. Denial can be based on misinformation and omission of information
 - 1. Our culture would deny the loss “it’s just a clump of cells”
 - 2. Her heart may make many excuses for why she did “the right thing”
 - ii. Guilt - there is true guilt and false guilt
 - 1. “Feelings of guilt that occur when you’ve done nothing wrong, or that linger after forgiveness has been granted—these are false guilt, and they should be put aside. But true guilt is another matter. When you have broken one of God’s laws, true guilt results.” Sydna Masse
 - a. Guilt may not be appropriate in cases where a woman was forced to have the abortion
 - b. “Guilty feelings probably played a role in [her] having an abortion in the first place.” Sydna Masse
 - i. She may feel guilty about the circumstances surrounding her becoming pregnant, whether she is guilty or not (i.e. sexual abuse)
 - 2. True guilt for sin against God must be borne by someone. It can be yours forever. But if you truly face your sin/guilt and confess it to God, he offers a “guilt bearer” who will take it from you. Jesus died to pay the debt of sin for all the guilty who throw their desperate selves at him in submission and thankfulness. For the woman who bears the guilt of an abortion, Jesus can take her guilt away and it will not belong to her anymore.
 - a. “The blood shed by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross was sufficient to pay my debt and his blood speaks louder than the blood of my child that cries out from the ground.” Karen Ellison
- iii. Shame
 - 1. Shame tells her that if people around her found out about the abortion, they would hate her.
 - 2. Just like guilt, shame is also something Jesus can fling far away.
 - a. “I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.” Ps 34:4-5
 - b. “As long as you fix your attention on your sin, you will fail to see how you can be safe. But as long as you look to this high priest, you will fail to see how you can be in danger. Looking inside ourselves, we can anticipate only harshness from heaven. Looking out to Christ we can anticipate only gentleness.” Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*
- b. Grieve
 - i. Grieving is the natural process by which humans deal with death. When a woman can grieve for her child who died, she acknowledges her child’s humanity, his or her existence, both past and present.

1. "In acknowledging the truth, you will be giving yourself the opportunity to mourn consciously what you have been grieving subconsciously all along – the death of your own child." Sydna Masse
2. Some women choose to name their child as a tangible way to acknowledge their existence, others had memorials, told family, etc.
- c. Accept God's forgiveness - God forgives in full the sin of abortion for those who confess in faith
 - i. God's forgiveness is unmatched - all debts owed to God are the most costly
 1. In the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:22-40) the servant was forgiven a huge debt by his master. His ensuing unwillingness to forgive the small debt of another is highlighted.
 2. "But if God, whose standards are holier than yours, whose hopes for you were even higher than your own – if he has forgiven you, can you not forgive the former version of yourself?" Sydna Masse
 - ii. God's forgiveness is full - no takebacks, further punishment or passive aggressive reminding
 1. "So that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"—what does that mean, for those in Christ? It means that one day God is going to walk us through the wardrobe into Narnia, and we will stand there, paralyzed with joy, wonder, astonishment, and relief. It means that, as we stand there, we will never be scolded for the sins of this life, never looked at askance, and never told 'enjoy this, but remember you don't deserve this.'" Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly* (quoting Eph 2:7)
 - iii. God's forgiveness is dramatic
 1. "I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him." Ps 40:1-3
 2. "Even in the choice of abortion, there's nothing God cannot use for his own glory and power." Sydna Masse
- d. Seek out support - she is not alone
 - i. Taking that first step to get help - to tell a trusted person about her abortion - is often the hardest part.
 - ii. "Support groups break through the shame and the guilt much better than personal reading or study." Karen Ellison
 1. Typically all the leaders of the Bible studies/support groups are post-abortive themselves.

Discussion question: Has anyone ever shared something deeply personal and vulnerable with you and how did you respond?

4. What can comforters do?

- a. As a community of Christian sisters, who may not know who the abortion wounded that walk among us are:
 - i. She's listening, so speak carefully.
 1. "God values all life as well as people who make wrong choices." Bev Hislop
 2. Speak with compassion, especially on days like Sanctity of Life Sunday, Mother's Day, when Two Lines comes to share in the service. Make it

obvious that your “life-affirming” stance cares about the life of the post-abortive woman as well as the babies.

3. Be kind and considerate as you voice your politics
4. Refrain from all gossip: This communicates to women that you’re the type of person who may share her story for your own gain. She won’t feel free to be open.
- ii. Communicate unconditional love and the path of wisdom to the younger generation.
 1. Many churched teens/women choose abortion because of the overwhelming fear of rejection by parents, the church, etc. We hope our daughters and friends are never in the situation of an unplanned pregnancy but let’s not assume they know we will love them no matter what and that they can come to us with a huge mistake. Communicate that we know they’ll make mistakes as they enter adulthood and we want to help them deal with consequences wisely.
 2. Say: “I will love you no matter what you do or have done.”
 3. Say: “If you ever make a really, really big mistake, please come tell me. I won’t get mad, I won’t publicly shame you, and I really want to help you deal with the consequences wisely.”
- b. When the post-abortive woman shares her story with you:
 - i. Be compassionate - she is in pain
 - ii. Be trustworthy - You may be the only person she has ever told
 1. Be careful about your reaction-she’ll be hyper sensitive to judgement and rejection
 2. Don’t tell anyone else - unless she’s suicidal, then get help.
 - iii. Don’t forget about her, follow up - It’s a long journey to healing, and she will need support
 1. Pray for her - she must fight valiantly against the accuser, who will constantly seek to heap condemnation on her for what she’s done.
 - a. Pray that she will fill her mind with the truth of the gospel to fight against Satan’s lies of condemnation
 2. Remind her of what you know to be true about God
 - a. “But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Ps 86:15
 - b. “Put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.” Ps 130:7
 3. Don’t feel like you need to have all the answers. Just being a safe person to carry her story with her will be a huge help.
 - iv. Offer hope for healing
 1. Say with Nancy Guthrie: “My sister, Jesus has taken the punishment you deserve on himself so you can live in peace. Because he was wounded in your place, you don’t have to go through life as a wounded woman. As you abide in Christ, you are being healed.”
 - v. Refer her to someone who has experience in post abortive healing
 1. Local:
 - a. Insight Women’s Center in Lawrence, KS
 - i. Abortion healing Bible studies
 - ii. Free, confidential counseling weekend retreats
 2. Online:
 - a. Her Choice to Heal – www.herchoicetoheal.com

- i. Offers free online abortion healing Bible Studies with support from staff
- 3. Kelly Carter – kcradiantone@gmail.com
 - a. A lovely person who shared her post abortive healing story with Maggie. She has taught post abortive Bible studies at (then) Advice and Aid and offered to be a point of first contact if any women would like to reach out and find a compassionate ear from someone who has been there and been healed.
- 4. Out of State:
 - a. Deeper Still - www.deeperstill.org
 - i. Offers free abortion healing weekend retreats in NW Arkansas

Recommended Resources:

Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion by Synda Masse

Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinner and Sufferers by Dane Ortlund

Crushed: Finding Hope and Forgiveness after Abortion, Article by Nancy Guthrie

on www.thegospelcoalition.com

Ask Pastor John Podcast: *Will God Forgive My Worst Sin?* www.desiringgod.org

Ask Pastor John Podcast: *Did God Forgive Me if I Don't Feel Forgiven?* www.desiringgod.org

Women Caring for Women CBC Sunday School Syllabus

Part 1

Oct 5:	Introduction to loss, grief, suffering and healing
Oct 12:	Infertility & Miscarriage
Oct 19:	Depression
Oct 26:	Chronic Illness & Terminal Illness
Nov 2:	Post Abortion Syndrome
Nov 9:	Divorce

Part 2

Jan 18:	Domestic Abuse
Jan 25:	Sexual abuse
Feb 1:	Eating disorders
Feb 8:	Addiction
Feb 15:	Pornography / Infidelity
Feb 22:	Same Sex Attraction

Questions or feedback? Contact us!

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