

Had an abortion?



..... **Few women readily choose to have an abortion.** But when facing an unplanned pregnancy they can feel there is no alternative.

The pressure of circumstances can seem overwhelming and there is often lack of support at this critical time.

Following an abortion, a woman's immediate feeling is often one of relief. It seems as if the problem is solved and life is back to normal. But for some, the initial relief is replaced with emotional difficulties that they had not expected.

These difficulties can surface years after the abortion and may include:

- Emotional numbness
- Depression
- Inability to be near babies or children
- Recurrent dreams of the abortion or unborn child
- Feelings of regret or guilt
- A sense of loss and emptiness
- Relationship difficulties
- Anger at partner, family, friends or even children
- Eating disorders, alcohol or drug abuse
- Feelings of helplessness and isolation
- Low self-worth.

Most women have little alternative but to **bury these painful feelings** in order to survive. The abortion is sometimes a secret. The woman herself may fear being judged or misunderstood. If family or friends do know, they are often uncertain how to react or talk about it without hurting her feelings.

This buried pain is sometimes called **post-abortion stress**.

If you are suffering following an abortion, **help is available**.

Healing emotional hurt following an abortion is possible . . . and the process starts as soon as you are willing to say you would like some support. Many women have already been helped to come to terms with their decision to have an abortion, either with one-to-one counselling or in a group, using a sensitive recovery programme called 'The Journey'.



'I have been able to come to terms with my loss. The sting of the past has been taken away and I feel I can hold up my head again.'



..... **If you would like to talk to someone** about your
abortion experience...

**Call the national CAREconfidential helpline
0800 028 2228**

Log on to the website www.careconfidential.com

Email help@careconfidential.com

Information about your local centre is available from any of
these sources.

