

better in the short-term, but it will only make matters worse over time.

Eventually, your emotions will find their way to the surface, possibly at an inappropriate time, for example, if you find out the woman in a future relationship has had an abortion, and you take out your resentment on her. You may be reminded of your loss by seeing a baby or a pregnant woman.

The loss from abortion may have affected you dramatically. However, you may not be aware that it could be the root-cause of your problems.

Society makes it doubly tough for men to deal with abortion stress. First, many psychologists don't acknowledge that women suffer psychological after-effects of abortion. As a result, they're even less likely to acknowledge yours. Secondly, men are often taught as children that it is less than manly to show weakness or cry.

It's OK to grieve for the baby you will never see or hold in your arms. It's OK to cry for your profound loss. Cry as much and as often as you need. You must grieve to help heal the loss and shame.

Find someone to talk with. The worst thing you can do is hold it inside.<sup>4</sup> Unprocessed grief and guilt can lead to more serious problems. Share your grief and shame with someone you can confide in. It helps to talk it out. A trusted friend or counselor may help you see things more clearly.

### ***Forgiveness is essential***

In order to complete the healing process and find closure, it is important that you forgive those with whom you harbor anger or resentment, i.e., your partner who had the abortion, the abortion clinic staff, or those who encouraged your partner to have the abortion.

Don't confuse forgiveness with "excusing, pardoning, forgetting or reconciliation." Forgiveness is making a conscious decision to extend an undeserved kindness toward the guilty party instead of imparting anger and retribution.<sup>5</sup> When we hold on to anger we are giving control to

those who have hurt us.

Almost every woman who has begun the road to recovery after her abortion has given credit to the fact that she returned to, or discovered, her religious faith. That has proven to be also true with men. If possible, consult with a member of the clergy. Experience the joy of knowing that, with repentance, you have complete, divine forgiveness, which is the foundation for your next crucial step — forgiving yourself.

### ***Always remember...***

If you're suffering from the loss of a child due to abortion, there's help for you. You're not alone. The feelings that you are experiencing are also felt by millions of other men. Compassionate men and women, many of whom have also experienced abortion, are willing to assist you, free of charge, in dealing with this loss. You can reach us, anonymously if you like, at our website at [www.lifeissues.org](http://www.lifeissues.org). Go to "Men and Abortion." Our e-mail address is [info@lifeissues.org](mailto:info@lifeissues.org). Or contact us at: Life Issues Institute, 1821 W. Galbraith Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45239. Phone 513.729.3600. We will be able to put you in touch with someone who can help. Any way you choose to contact us, your privacy is our priority. Reach out for help today. Further information is on our website at [www.lifeissues.org](http://www.lifeissues.org).

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- <sup>2</sup> Wayne Brauning, *Men and Abortion, A Search for Understanding and Recovery*, 1993.
- <sup>3</sup> Gail B. Williams, Ph.D., *Dissertation Abstracts Int'l*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Sept. 1992.
- <sup>4</sup> J Lasker, LJ Toedter, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 61(4): 510, Oct. 1991
- <sup>5</sup> C.T. Coyle, Ph.D., *Men and Abortion a Path to Healing*, 1999.

# Men Hurt Too



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## *You are not alone*

If you're struggling with the loss of your child from abortion, you are not alone. The most thorough research done to date involved 1,000 men who completed questionnaires as they waited for their partners in 30 different abortion clinics.<sup>1</sup> This and follow-up research indicates that more than 3 million men may have been profoundly traumatized by abortion. This can be a deceiving statistic, because there are countless more who are suffering significantly, but to a lesser extent.

## *Why are you affected?*

In many ways men respond very differently to the loss of a child from abortion. To understand your reaction, it is important to first understand what motivates the human male.

Instinct drives men to achieve success in five key areas of their lives: the ability to procreate, provide, protect, perform and [enjoy] pleasure.<sup>2</sup>

An important element motivating men is their desire to procreate. Men provide an essential role in the continuation of the human race. Almost every man, whether he verbalizes it or not, values the idea of having offspring of his own flesh and blood — carrying on the family name or bloodline.

Men are also highly programmed to protect their family. This need to protect your offspring should not be underestimated.

Society often judges you based on your ability to be successful at procreation, provision, protection, performance and pleasure. If you experience an abortion, these key elements of life may be seriously damaged, or often totally obliterated.<sup>1</sup>

## *The symptoms*

They say that the conscience is what hurts when everything else feels so good. The conscience, in a significant number of fathers who lose a child to abortion, kicks into overtime and wreaks emotional havoc.

The most consistent and evident symptom in men due to the loss of a child from abortion is anger. You will almost certainly experience a higher level of anger after the abortion than before. In addition, it is highly likely that you will act on that anger in some way that is harmful to yourself or someone else.

You may see, hear, smell or otherwise experience something that triggers a memory of the abortion. This memory is then often translated into anger, which is usually directed at the nearest person, place or thing. This can be experienced subconsciously, leaving both you and the victim in the dark as to why you had this negative reaction. This is called “hooking.”

Your anger and frustration at not being able to protect and provide for your unborn baby, because of abortion, may manifest itself in other ways.

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## *It's OK to grieve for the baby you will never see or hold in your arms. It's OK to cry for your profound loss.*

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You may experience grief, shame, guilt and remorse. An overwhelming feeling of helplessness and hopelessness may be constant companions.

You may turn to alcohol and drugs to dull the pain of knowing you participated in or were, in your mind, too “weak” to prevent the death of your unborn baby.

You may become a workaholic to avoid contact with other people or to protect your closely held secret. You may feel a desperate need to succeed at your job — a crucial aspect of your life — to counter the failure of abortion.

Or you may be unable to hold a job due to poor coping skills or an inability to handle decision-making. Your very core, the ability to provide and

protect, has been seriously shaken. As a result, you may have little faith in your other abilities.

You may be an excessive risk-taker in work and social environments, setting yourself up for failure. This may come from the feeling that you deserve what you get for failing when it counted most — protecting your unborn baby.

Once the abortion takes place, the odds are overwhelmingly against a successful relationship with the mother of your unborn child.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, future relationships with women are often difficult or impossible. A woman has total control over the decision to abort your baby, leaving you no legal recourse. This lack of control regarding a critical, life-impacting decision often generates considerable resentment and mistrust toward the woman. As a result of a past abortion, you may not want to be put into a situation where another pregnancy may occur and you have no control of the outcome.

Other symptoms include sleeplessness, panic attacks, flashbacks, nightmares, self-imposed isolation or suicidal tendencies.

## *Sexual problems*

You may suffer from forms of sexual dysfunction such as impotency. The painful memories of abortion can be so closely associated with the act of sex that you may be uncomfortable with the thought of sex. Some men become addicted to forms of sexual gratification that allow them to maintain total control and have no commitment or fear of pregnancy. These include pornography and masturbation. Some may experiment with homosexuality.

## *Dealing with the symptoms*

It is normal to have these feelings if you have lost a child to abortion. However, it is necessary to work through these feelings of hurt, shame and grief if you are to have a future healthy relationship. Burying your emotions may feel

*If you're facing an abortion decision, or if there's one in your past, there's something you should know.*

*Evidence is mounting that the fathers of aborted children can be dramatically affected by an abortion decision.*