

The Power of Your Story
For Men
Facilitator Guide

THE POWER **of your story** *for Men*

Facilitator Guide

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ABANON.org
Abortion Anonymous

The Power of Your Story For Men
Facilitator Guide

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INTRODUCTION FOR FACILITATORS

Welcome to the Abortion Anonymous, Inc. (AbAnon) curriculum. Thank you for volunteering to serve as a facilitator for an AbAnon group. We believe that your personal story and interaction with the men in your small group will have a profound impact in their lives and beyond. As you embark on this experience, we are praying for your protection and for God's favor and wisdom as you lead.

YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR

Please view your role as that of a facilitator rather than a teacher or counselor. Your primary goal is to help facilitate the healing of post-abortive men. Skills of a good facilitator include:

- Leading by example
- Getting others to open up and speak as soon as possible
- Asking great, open-ended questions
- Listening intently
- Managing group dynamics

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- Keeping the group on task
- Managing time
- Being “all there”

To a great extent, we have tried to design the curriculum in such a way that makes it easy for you to follow through with those facilitation skills. Below are some warning signs to watch for that may indicate that you’ve slipped from facilitating into teaching or counseling. Please try to avoid these:

- Talking too much
- Lecturing or instructing
- Correcting or shutting down a participant
- Advising participants
- Assuming that your experience should be theirs
- Losing control of the group
- Asking leading or closed-ended questions
- Trying to “fix” people

Again, we’ve attempted to design the curriculum to help you avoid the pitfalls above, so please follow the curriculum to the fullest extent possible. Because you are representing AbAnon, we trust you to conduct yourself and each of the sessions according to the curriculum and guidelines we’ve provided.

Also, you may be co-facilitating with another man. If so, learn to work together humbly and harmoniously. Never contradict one another or usurp one another’s authority as facilitator. Nothing will destroy the trust in a group faster. Instead, pray together beforehand, support one another and trust each other. Allow the Holy Spirit to use both of you in the special areas of your gifting and experience.

HOW TO USE THIS FACILITATOR GUIDE

In order to facilitate the AbAnon curriculum, you will need both the Participant Manual and the Facilitator Guide.

- Use the Facilitator Guide to lead you through the agenda for each session.
 - a. Text for you to read is presented as normal text.
 - b. Text in ***bold italics*** is intended as instructions for you and should not be read aloud to your group.
- Use the Participant Manual to keep up on the reading with the participants and to guide them to specific pages during each session.

SESSION ONE

PREPARATION

- *Read Session One in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Be sure to have extra Participant Manuals on hand in case*
- *Have pens and name tags available*
- *Sign-in sheet*

Start the first session here:

WELCOME

_____ and _____ will be your facilitators for the next eight weeks. You are very courageous for taking this step toward processing your role in an abortion. We're glad you're here.

If you'd like to open your Participant Manual to Session One, you can follow along with me.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions: (facilitator will lead out and model this.)

At this time, let's go around the room and introduce ourselves. For now, let's start with:

- Name
- Whatever you'd like to share with us to help you get to know you
- What would you like to take away from your experience over the next eight weeks?

I'm going to send around a sign-in sheet. Please provide your phone number and email address so we can stay in touch with you.

(Pass around sign-in sheet.)

SESSION ONE

OVER THE NEXT EIGHT WEEKS, WE WILL TALK ABOUT

- Your abortion story and the role you played
- How your role in an abortion may have affected you
- Ways you may have coped with your abortion involvement
- Your relationships
- Your child
- Common emotions surrounding abortion
- God & faith
- Healing & forgiveness

ESTABLISH GROUP NORMS

We like to establish group norms or ground rules by which we agree to conduct our meetings together. This way we all have the same expectations and can get the most from this experience. Some group norms we see as essential are:

Keep confidences — What we say here stays here. We pledge to keep confidences and ask the same of each member of the group.

Be present and ready — Attend all the sessions (except in an emergency). Your presence here is not only important for you, but for the other participants as well. Being present includes keeping up with the light reading or homework between sessions.

Be respectful — We agree to respect each other: our individual situations, our ethnicity, our faiths, the choices we've made, the things we may say, how we each process our abortion.

Function as a team — We agree to function as a team: no one dominates the conversation; we listen to each other; we're here to assist, encourage and care for each other.

Be humble — We're not here to judge or *fix* each other. Sometimes the way we suppress our own need is by comparing ourselves to someone else or trying to fix them.

What else would you like to set down as a group norm?

DISCLAIMER

We recognize that every person is different and working through issues surrounding your role in an abortion usually occurs over time. Our sincere hope is that you will experience some measure of healing through this 8-session experience.

Also, we openly declare that our facilitators and co-facilitators are not professional counselors or life coaches. But having personally experienced a man's role in an abortion, they are passionate about providing a safe, supportive environment for others.

Any profits from the sale of the Participant Manuals go to cover the cost of printing, shipping and the support and expansion of AbAnon.

Abortion Anonymous, Inc. (AbAnon) is a registered, 501c(3) not-for-profit organization and is financed primarily through the generous donations of financial partners.

If you are actively harming yourself or having suicidal thoughts, please seek the help of a professional counselor immediately. We can discretely help you locate a counselor if you like. This workshop is not intended to replace professional counseling or therapy.

Continue reading...

INTRODUCTION — THE POWER OF YOUR STORY: FOR MEN

Welcome! We are so glad you've chosen to join us for this eight-week experience designed to help you process your abortion experience. Be assured that we will maintain the utmost confidentiality as you participate with this small group of men.

All of the facilitators or group leaders come with their own abortion stories and are in various stages of dealing with their role in an abortion. Your facilitators are all volunteers and do not receive payment for leading a group.

The manual recognizes that although there are some basic issues that we all experience, or need to face, each man processes his role in an abortion in a different way. Some express the need for healing and others do not.

Whatever it is you seek with regard to your role in an abortion, some sort of change is inevitable. Change can be difficult and scary, but necessary if we want to experience different outcomes than we're currently experiencing. Please avail yourself of every method and opportunity that we provide to help facilitate your desired change.

AbAnon is not an overtly religious organization and does not represent a particular religion, denomination or faith. Anyone, regardless of their faith or lack thereof, who has had a role in an abortion, is welcome to our gender-specific programs.

However, part of our 8-week program involves discussion about God, faith and forgiveness. Thousands of people have found change and healing through faith and AbAnon would be remiss in our responsibility if we failed to include God and faith in our curriculum.

Some of what we'll be discussing together will be inherently difficult to discuss, but remember, we're all in this together.

HOW THE PARTICIPANT MANUAL WORKS

Each week or chapter has pre-work that you will complete *prior* to the next session. For instance, if you turn to Session Two (page 37) in the Participant Manual, you'll see that it begins with Mike's Story, followed by some discussion questions and then a short reading on why it's so vital to share your story.

Some of the chapters also contain projects. Please do this homework early in the week so that you're not scrambling at the last minute to finish. Take your time and seek to gain all you can from this experience. The more you invest, the more you'll take away.

ABORTION

We are here to acknowledge and empathize with you as you process your role in an abortion experience. You are not alone.

In fact, according to the Guttmacher Institute, 21 percent of all pregnancies end in abortion in the US.¹ And between 35-40 percent of all women alive in the US today have had at least one abortion.² It is safe to assume that the number of men involved in an abortion would be similar. Each year, over 1 million abortions occur in the US. As of the writing of this curriculum in 2016, about 60 million abortions have been performed since its legalization in 1973.³

POST ABORTIVE STRESS SYNDROME

AbAnon is in the process of gathering data from men involved in abortion but since men's role in abortion is a vastly understudied topic,

1 Guttmacher Institute, "Induced Abortion in the United States," July 2014, http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html.

2 Guttmacher Institute.

3 Guttmacher Institute.

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we will share with you some conclusions as to how abortion affects women taken directly from ***The Power of Your Story***, the AbAnon curriculum for women. It reads as follows:

Joan Appleton was the head nurse at Commonwealth [Abortion] Clinic. Joan was a very active member in the National Organization for Women (NOW). As a registered nurse, she felt she had a wonderful opportunity to practice and voice her beliefs in pro-choice.⁴

She was convinced that pro-choice was truly the best thing for women and began to work more and more with organizations like Planned Parenthood, NARAL and NAF. As a nurse she was issuing birth control pills to women after abortions and comments, "This is where I learned the real business, the real work of the abortion industry."⁵

Joan explains that abortion clinic workers handed out low-dose birth control pills with a high failure rate. They also neglected to tell women that taking a birth control pill while on antibiotics interferes with the action of the pill, making it useless. In this way, when their birth control failed, they were able to get more women to come in for abortions.⁶

Joan explains, "I often saw women who were injured emotionally by abortion. However, my supervisor told me, 'If she's having a problem after her abortion, it's because she was having a problem before her abortion.'"⁷

But it kept bothering Joan while she was head nurse at the clinic. "Why was it such an emotional trauma for a woman and such a difficult decision, if it was a natural thing to do? If it was right, why was it so difficult? I had to ask myself that all the time. I counseled these women

4 Clinic Quotes, "Former Clinic Worker Joan Appleton," September 11, 2012, <http://clinic-quotes.com/former-clinic-worker-joan-appleton/>

5 Clinic Quotes.

6 Clinic Quotes.

7 Clinic Quotes.

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so well, they were so sure of their decision. So why were they coming back now, months and years later, psychological wrecks?"⁸

Joan continues to explain that in the pro-choice movement and abortion industry, "We deny that there is any post-abortion syndrome. Yet it is real, and they do come back, and I couldn't deny their presence, and their numbers were increasing, and I kept asking, Why?"⁹

Joan soon realized that she wasn't helping women at all. Joan writes:

"If I was right, why are they suffering? What have we done? We created a monster, and now we don't know what to do with it. We created a monster so that we could now be pawns to the abortion industry, those of us women who really, really still believe in women's rights. Those of us who still believe in care and are pro-woman, who still believe that we are worth something, we are intelligent, we aren't doormats, we aren't something to be used, and we used ourselves. We abused ourselves."¹⁰

We refer to these very real psychological effects as Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (or PASS). Proponents of abortion often deny the existence of PASS. This brings additional pressure to bear on women who are feeling the negative effects of abortion, but are told that their feelings are not real or necessary.^{11,12}

However, Susanne Babbel, PhD, MFT, a psychologist specializing in trauma and depression has the following to say: "No matter your

8 Clinic Quotes.

9 Clinic Quotes.

10 Clinic Quotes.

11 National Abortion Federation, "Post-Abortion Syndrome," 2010, https://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/myths/post_abortion_syndrome.html.

12 Christina Martin, "Tears Streamed Down Her Face as She Talked about Her Abortion, but Abortion Doesn't Hurt Women?" LifeNews.com, July 30, 2014, <http://www.lifenews.com/2014/07/30/tears-streamed-down-herface-as-she-talked-about-her-abortion-but-abortion-doesnt-hurt-women/>.

SESSION ONE

philosophical, religious, or political views on abortion, the fact of the matter is, the actual experience can affect women not only on a personal level but can potentially have psychological repercussions.”¹³

Dr. Babbel goes on to explain:

*Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS) is the name that has been given to the psychological aftereffects of abortion, based on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It is important to note that this is not a term that has been accepted by the American Psychiatric Association or the American Psychological Association. Nevertheless, any event that causes trauma can indeed result in PTSD, and abortion is no exception.*¹⁴

PASS

How widespread is Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS) and the trauma on women (and men) brought on by abortion?

Nearly everyone agrees that feelings of loss and depression follow at some point after an abortion. Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS) describes more severe and extensive trauma that may include: ¹⁵

- Self-harm, strong suicidal thoughts or suicide attempts
- Increase in dangerous and/or unhealthy activities (alcohol/drug abuse, anorexia/bulimia, compulsive over-eating, cutting, casual and indifferent sex and other inappropriate risk-taking behaviors)

13 Susanne Babbel, PhD, MFT, “Post Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS) – Does it Exist?” Psychology Today, October 25, 2010, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/somatic-psychology/201010/post-abortion-stress-syndrome-pass-does-it-exist..>

14 Susanne Babbel.

15 AfterAbortion.com, “What is PASS?” http://afterabortion.com/pass_details.html.

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- Depression that is stronger than just ‘a little sadness or the blues’
- Inability to perform normal self-care activities
- Inability to function normally in her job or in school
- Inability to take care of or relate to her existing children or function normally in her other relationships (i.e. with a spouse, partner, other family members or friends)
- A desire to immediately get pregnant and ‘replace’ the baby that was aborted, even when all the circumstances that led her to ‘choose abortion’ the first time are still in place.

In addition to the above, PASS sometimes does not appear until months or even many years after an abortion and may continue for months and even years. Other short- and long-term PASS symptoms may include:¹⁶

- Emotions, and dealing with emotional issues
- Anxiety and panic disorder
- Difficulty sleeping and sleeping problems
- Disturbing dreams and/or nightmares
- Problems with phobias, or increase in severity of existing phobias

16 AfterAbortion.com.

SESSION ONE

- Repeated unplanned pregnancies with additional abortions
- Repeated unplanned pregnancies carried to term
- "Atonement marriage," where the woman marries the partner from the abortion, to help justify the abortion
- Distress at the sight of or socializing with other pregnant women, other people's babies and children
- Codependence and inability to make decisions easily
- Problems with severe and disproportionate anger
- Distress and problems with later pregnancy
- Added emotional issues and problems when dealing with future infertility or other physical complications resulting from the abortion
- Unhealthy obsession with excelling at work or school to justify the abortion
- Obsessive Pro-life or Pro-choice activism
- A gay or lesbian lifestyle

PASS SELF-ASSESSMENT

In your homework for next week, you will be asked to come back to these two lists of PASS symptoms in order to assess your own situation with regard to PASS.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Some of you may be thinking, “I’ve been trying to put my abortion behind me for years. Why would I want to revisit that experience again? I just want to put it behind me and forget about it.” Others may be processing an abortion in a different way that’s difficult to describe at this time. That’s okay.

In the following seven weeks of *The Power of Your Story...For Men*, we want to join with you in processing your abortion. We’ll provide you with tools and strategies for doing so. We want to help you find answers, support you, and offer you hope.

CLOSING

Read the following information that is not contained in the Participant Manual:

Each week at the end of our session, we want to ask each of you what you’re walking away with today that will help move you forward in working through your abortion. I’ll start...***(share)***.

Who would like to share next? ***(Don’t force anyone to share if they’re unwilling or not ready yet.)***

In what ways can we support you this week?

SESSION ONE

HOMEWORK FOR THE NEXT SESSION

There is probably more homework this week than there is with all of the other weeks combined. We ask that you each take the time to complete all of these assignments as they will give you an excellent foundation for our discussions that will take place during the coming weeks. If you haven't already:

- 1) Please read "The Foreword" in the Participant Manual
- 2) Please read the "Warm Up" in the Participant Manual
- 3) Please reread "Session One" in the Participant Manual
- 4) Please read "Session Two" in the Participant Manual
- 5) Please complete the PASS self-assessment (page 33-35)
- 6) Please complete the tasks outlined in Session Two before our next session. You will find these on pages 45-47 in the Participant's Manual. Let's turn there and go over these now.

LOGISTICS

Be sure you have the sign-in sheet and that everyone's name, phone number, and email address are on it.

We'll meet here each week for seven more weeks at _____(time).

Thank you for coming.

SESSION TWO

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Two in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Be sure to have extra Participant Manuals on hand in case*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. Let's briefly review our Group Norms. What were those? ***(To the extent possible, let them state these.)***

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- **Keep confidences**—What we say here stays here. This is really important as we trust each other with our stories.
- **Be present and ready**—We are following a path to lead you through healing. Your presence here is not only important for your healing but for the other participants as well. So, please be here next week if it's your turn to share.
- **Be respectful**—We agree to respect each other: our individual situations, our ethnicity, our faiths, the choices we've made, the things we may say, how we each process our role in an abortion.
- **Function as a team**—We agree to function as a team: no one dominates the conversation; we listen to each other; we're here to assist, encourage and care for each other.
- **Be humble**—We're not here to judge or fix each other. Sometimes the way we suppress our own need is by comparing ourselves to someone else or trying to fix them. We're naming these coping mechanisms up front.

(Any additional norms your group came up with)

Each week, we'll spend some time discussing what we read in preparation for that week. This week we asked you to read Session Two. Please do the reading each week so you can enter into the discussion.

Let's turn to Session Two to the discussion questions of Mike's story.

DISCUSS MIKE'S STORY

Lead a discussion based on the questions below that were in the Participant Manual.

1. In what ways could you identify with Mike's story? What were you feeling?
2. In what ways did Mike's role in an abortion affect him?
3. What are you taking away from Mike's story to help you process your abortion experience?

Discuss the segment:

WHY IT'S SO VITAL TO SHARE YOUR STORY

The pre-work you read talked about why it's so vital for us to share our abortion story. Let's briefly review that portion.

1. To what extent do you feel you lost your voice in connection with your abortion experience?
2. Based on what you read in the Participant Manual, why is it so important to share our stories with each other in a safe environment?
(Why else? Any other reasons?)
3. What happens when we continually view ourselves as victims?

4. Who would like to share how you reworded some of the statements on page 44?
5. What benefits did you experience through writing out your story? What else did you experience?

SHARING YOUR STORY

This week and subsequent weeks we want to give each of you an opportunity to share your story. This is perhaps not a pleasant exercise for any of us and for some it will be very difficult. Nevertheless, countless men and women have indicated that it was a key to processing their abortion.

The Participant Manual lists five reasons to share our stories in a safe environment like this. Let's go over those five reasons:

- Hearing other men's stories encourages us that we're not alone.
- We'll realize things that we hadn't thought of that may help us identify harmful behaviors.
- Hearing other's stories will evoke compassion in us and allow us to extend grace toward each other.
- Sharing our stories with each other will help us bond together.
- We will experience the power of standing together.

Telling our story is vital for getting our voice back and processing our role in an abortion. Also, many men feel that they need healing following their abortion, but that feeling sometimes does not surface until

SESSION TWO

many years after their abortion experience. If you are one of those men, by sharing your story in a safe, caring environment, you will find release and a measure of healing.

Principle: Hiding our shame magnifies it and prolongs our agony. But when we reveal and renounce our shame, we find forgiveness and healing.

I will begin by sharing my story and we'll also hear from one of you today. The rest of you will have an opportunity to tell your story next week or the following week.

Also, as we share our stories with each other, we want to give each other permission to emote openly. Express love, empathy and understanding toward each other freely.

Facilitator: be ready with words of comfort and encouragement.

DEBRIEF

After the last man has shared in this session, debrief and end the meeting.

1. If you shared today (tonight) how are you feeling about that right now?
2. In what ways has it helped the rest of you to hear these men's stories today (tonight)?

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Three in your Participant Manual before our next session.

SESSION THREE

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Three in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. Let's jump right in by turning in our Participant Manuals to Session Three and discuss Bill's story.

DISCUSS BILL'S STORY

1. In what ways can you identify with Bill's story? What were you feeling?
2. What did Bill do to process his abortion?
3. What can you take away from his story that may help you heal?

SHARING YOUR STORY

We want to take time to allow each of you to share your abortion story. Remember, we want to provide a safe, caring environment as we share. Let's hear two more stories tonight. Who would like to share first? Have both men share before debriefing.

DEBRIEF

After the last man has shared in this session, debrief.

1. If you shared today (tonight) how are you feeling about that right now?
2. In what ways has it helped the rest of you to hear these men's stories today (tonight)?

TAKING STOCK

On pages 53 – 55 there is a section on “Taking Stock.” If you have not done so already, take five minutes to answer these fifteen statements. Did any of these questions strike a sensitive nerve or make you feel uncomfortable? Which one(s)? Did any of these questions bring disappointment in yourself or any feelings of despair? Which one(s)? We will come back to these questions in a few weeks.

DISCUSS THE READING

In the reading for this week, we read about the role that despair often plays in a man’s abortion.

In what ways might despair have played a part in your own involvement in abortion?

How has despair played a role in your life since your abortion experience?

Why do feelings of despair prevent healing from an abortion?

This chapter provides four ways we can destroy the beast of despair in our lives. Let’s review those four ways:

1. Recognize that the accusations of the beast of despair are false. You are worthy and capable of love.
2. Identify and reject self-destructive behaviors.
3. Strive to let go of anger and bitterness and seek to forgive others.
4. Draw near to those who love you deeply.

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With which of those four ways do you resonate most? Which one or ones did you decide to put into action?

In the Take Action section, we asked you to hold a mirror up to your face and identify at least 10 positive attributes about yourself. What are some of the positive attributes that you identified about yourself? ***(Ask the men to name just two or three.)***

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Four in your Participant Manual before our next session.

SESSION FOUR

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Four in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. How are you all doing? Let's begin tonight by turning in our Participant Manuals to Session Four and discuss Jerry's story.

DISCUSS JERRY'S STORY

1. In what ways can you identify with Jerry's story? What were you feeling?
2. What did Jerry do to process his abortion?
3. In what ways does reading Jerry's story give you hope and comfort?

SHARING YOUR STORY

We want to take time to allow each of you to share your story about your involvement in an abortion. Remember, we want to provide a safe, caring environment as we share. Let's hear two more stories tonight. Who would like to share first? Have both men share before debriefing.

DEBRIEF

After the last man has shared in this session, debrief.

1. If you shared today (tonight) how are you feeling about that right now?
2. In what ways has it helped the rest of you to hear these men's stories today (tonight)?

SESSION FOUR

DISCUSS THE READING: REGRET AND YOUR BABY

The pre-work for this Session talks about regret and your baby. Regret is another emotion many men manifest to express the pain of their role in an abortion. We all have past regrets. Regret is sorrow over things we've done that we wish we hadn't; and things we didn't do, but wish we had.

Men commonly express a number of regrets around their abortion. In your Participant Manual, there is a list of common regrets. If you feel comfortable sharing these, which ones did you check? What other regrets did you add to the list?

- I was even dating that girl/woman.
- I had sex with her at the time.
- I got her pregnant in the first place.
- We listened to those who urged us to get the abortion.
- We didn't listen to those who tried to dissuade us from having the abortion.
- Our friends, parents, siblings or someone else close didn't keep us from aborting our child.
- I had anything to do with having the abortion.
- I couldn't do anything to prevent my child from being aborted.
- I don't know my child, its gender, or anything else about him/her.

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Other: _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why does regret prevent us from healing?
2. In what ways do regrets weigh us down and encumber us in life?
3. Regret is often connected directly to our baby. And even though our culture has tried to depersonalize and dehumanize our child, at some point along the way, the truth set in that our child was a human being—a person. When and how has this happened for you?
4. The manual talks about two approaches to regret. We either suppress it or take steps to cope with it. Why is suppressing regret not a good option?
5. In what ways have you felt weighed down by regret?
6. The manual offers three steps for coping with the baggage of regret. With which of those steps could you most identify and why? How did it feel to finally put the weight of that extra baggage down?

SESSION FOUR

7. There may be instances where we realize that we've picked up this old baggage again. What do we do with it in such cases?
8. Were any of you able to reveal another heavy piece of baggage that we did not identify? How were you able to deal with it?

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Five in your Participant Manual.

SESSION FIVE

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Five in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. Let's open our Participant Manuals to Session Five and begin by discussing Terry's story.

DISCUSS TERRY'S STORY

As you read Terry's story in this chapter:

1. In what ways did you identify with his story? What were you feeling?
2. What did Terry do to promote his post-abortive healing process?
3. In what ways does reading Terry's story give you hope and comfort?

SHARING YOUR STORY

We want to take time to allow each of you to share your abortion story. Remember, we want to provide a safe, caring environment as we share. Let's hear two more stories tonight. Who would like to share first? Have both men share before debriefing.

DEBRIEF

After the last man has shared in this session, debrief.

1. If you shared today (tonight) in what ways did you find this to be helpful for you?
2. In what ways has it helped the rest of you to hear these men's stories today (tonight)?

DISCUSS THE READING: ANGER

1. To what extent have you identified anger in your life? How is this anger related to your involvement in an abortion?
2. Why is anger so dangerous and destructive?
3. In what ways can you see that anger has hurt you and others around you?
4. According to the reading, how do we get rid of anger? When have you experienced that forgiving others dispels anger?
5. Why is it often so difficult to forgive others? How about ourselves?
6. Where have you recognized patterns of anger that have developed in your life?
7. Who are some people that you have identified that you've been angry with and need to forgive?
8. Who did you find was most difficult to forgive? Why do you suppose that is? How did you (or will you) overcome that hurdle and forgive this person?
9. As the manual says, "Anger is a two-way street." We have undoubtedly offended others too. Would anyone like to share what has happened as you've begun to go to others and ask their forgiveness?
10. In the future, what can we do when we realize that anger has raised its ugly head in our lives again?

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Six in your Participant Manual.

SESSION SIX

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Six in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. How are you all doing? Let's open our Participant Manuals to Session Six and begin by discussing Ron's story.

DISCUSS RON'S STORY

1. In what ways can you identify with Ron's story? What were you feeling?
2. What did Ron do to process his role in an abortion?
3. In what ways does reading Ron's story give you hope and comfort?

(By now, you've probably had an opportunity to hear everyone's story. If not, refer back to Session Five and conduct that segment here now.)

DISCUSS THE READING: FEAR

Please check any of the things below that have evoked fear in your life. As post-abortive men, we may have harbored fears about:

- Being found out
- The long-term consequences resulting from our abortion
- Whether people will reject us
- Whether God will punish us for what we did
- Whether God would ever trust us or allow us to have children

SESSION SIX

Whether our children will repeat the same mistakes we've made

Other: _____

1. Why is fear so debilitating in our lives? How is fear different from anger?
2. In what ways can you tell that fear has hindered your healing?
3. What are some things that prevent us from loving and being loved by others?
4. How does love conquer our fears and help us heal?
5. How do we overcome the fear of trusting others and accepting their love?
6. What does it mean to deal with our irrational fears rationally?
7. The manual suggests three action steps for freeing ourselves from fear. The first step is to make a list of people who truly love you just as you are. How did it go for you in making this list?
8. The second step asks us to identify a person with whom we can mostly like be a confidant. Who have you

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identified who is or could be a confidant in your life?
Who among you are already meeting with a confidant?
(Share your own experience to reinforce how vital this step is.)

9. The final step in the manual is to seek out a healthy group of like-minded people. Where have you found a group like this? If you have not yet attached yourself to such a group, where are you most likely to find this group?
10. Who among us found these action steps discouraging? Remember that we are here for you. Perhaps there is a man here with whom you can be a confidant. Also, when this group ends, we can help you find another safe, healthy group where you'll experience the kind of love that frees from fear.

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Seven in your Participant Manual.

SESSION SEVEN

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Seven in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of each man*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. How is everyone doing this week? Let's begin by discussing Dave's Story in the Participant Manual in Session Seven.

DISCUSS DAVE'S STORY

As you read Dave's story in this chapter:

1. In what ways can you identify with Dave's story?
2. What triggered Dave's shame over his role in an abortion?
3. How did Dave process his role in an abortion?
4. What can you take away from his story that may help you heal?

DISCUSS THE READING: SHAME

1. What is shame?
2. Shame is an appropriate response when we have done something or failed to do something about which we feel guilty. But left unresolved, shame can be destructive in our lives. Why is this?
3. We read that shame breeds a sense of unworthiness. In what ways has shame over your role in an abortion bred a sense of unworthiness in your life?
 - Having children
 - Being loved by a good woman

SESSION SEVEN

- Experiencing love and acceptance from others
- Receiving or experiencing anything good in life
- Other: _____

4. In what ways does shame prevent our healing? Why does shame prevent us from experiencing meaningful relationships?

5. Who would like to recap the incident we read about with The Story of King David?

6. In what ways did King David bring shame on himself?

7. What is the core message in this story for us?

(Tell your own brief story of how you've trusted Christ to forgive you and cleanse you from guilt and shame.)

8. Who else has experienced the forgiveness that Jesus offers?

9. What other questions or comments do you have about turning to God for healing from your abortion?

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?
2. What are you walking away with tonight?
3. In what way can we support you this week in your healing process?
4. Please complete the pre-work for Session Eight in your Participant Manual. Also, the tasks that we ask you to complete before the last session will take some reflection and time to complete, so please start working on them early in the week.
5. Next week is our last session together. Would you like to celebrate with some light finger foods or dessert? Who would like to bring something?

SESSION EIGHT

PREPARATION

- *Read Session Eight in the Participant Manual so you're familiar with it*
- *Pray beforehand for God's presence, power and work in the lives of the men*
- *Bring a full box of tissues!*
- *Have pens and name tags available*
- *Bring Next Steps Cards (you can download and print these at this web address: www.AbAnon.org/facilitator)*
- *Check out our other resources on the AbAnon website for additional small group sessions and other resources.*
- *Determine whether you and/or your co-facilitator are willing to serve as mentors to one or more men. If you are short of mentors for those who would like to meet with one, please let us know right away.*

- ***Encourage the men to consider supporting AbAnon financially so that others may too find the healing that they have.***
- ***If your group decided to bring snacks for the final session, remember to be prepared for that.***

WELCOME

Welcome back! Thank you for being here. I can't believe that these eight weeks have gone by so quickly! I am so thankful to have been able to meet all of you and get to know you in these past weeks. Before we leave tonight, I'll share with you some options for your continued healing.

Let's turn to Session Eight in our Participant Manuals and discuss Kevin's story.

DISCUSS KEVIN'S STORY

1. In what ways can you identify with Kevin's story? What were you feeling?
2. What did Kevin do to process his role in an abortion?
3. What can you take away from his story that may help you heal?

DISCUSS THE READING: BRINGING CLOSURE TO YOUR GRIEF

1. If you have ever lost a loved one and attended a memorial or funeral service in honor of that person, what happened at that service and what impact did it have on you?
2. In what ways have you grieved over the loss of your aborted child?
3. Why is it that we seldom experience closure to our grief over our miscarried or aborted child?
4. Why is it important to experience some kind of closure to our grief over our lost child?
5. As the manual states, we believe that death is not the end state of a human being. If this is true and we look forward to seeing our baby in the afterlife, what impact does this have on you?
6. One of the action steps for this week was to write a letter or note to your baby. This is a very private matter and we don't expect you to share this with us, but if anyone would like to share their note or letter, we want to give you this opportunity now. (***If no one wants to read their note or letter, ask:*** Would anyone care to share with us what kinds of things you mentioned in your note?)

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7. We also suggested that you do something that represents a memorial for your child. This too is a very personal expression and what is meaningful for one person may not be for another. But that's okay. Would anyone like to share with us how they honored and remembered their child? Your example may help another man with his grief. At AbAnon, we believe that recognizing the humanity of your child is essential to your healing.
8. Has everyone had an opportunity to complete the AbAnon survey? ***(If they have, collect them, thank them and drop it. If some haven't, please remind them how important this is to changing our culture's perception of abortion and its impact on men and ask them to complete it at this time)***

TAKING STOCK

On pages 114 – 116 there is a section on “Taking Stock.” If you have not done so already, take five minutes to answer these fifteen statements for the second time. Has anything changed from the first time you answered these questions? Does anyone care to share? What else would you like to change? How can we help?

CLOSING

1. What else would you like to bring up to the group tonight?

SESSION EIGHT

2. What are you walking away with tonight and from this eight-week experience?
3. In what ways can we continue to support you in your healing process?

ADDITIONAL STEPS FOR HEALING

In your manual, we gave you five additional steps for you to choose from to continue your healing process. I'd like to pass out some Next Steps Cards for you, so you can let us know how we can continue to serve you in your healing. ***(Pass out the Next Steps Cards now.)*** Let's go over these steps briefly:

1. Continue to meet with your confidant on a weekly basis.
2. Meet with a mentor for a period of time. A mentor is usually a man who has been through the AbAnon curriculum and has experienced a measure of healing. He has volunteered to work with other post-abortive men to help them in their healing process.
3. Join another post-abortive small group session like this one.
 - a. You are welcome to go through this experience again with another group.
 - b. We can also assist you to find another group with a different curriculum to further promote your healing.

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4. If you would like to hear more about God and Jesus Christ, please let us know and we can provide additional resources and opportunities for you.
5. If you would like to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ, please let us know and we can help facilitate this as well.
6. Please fill out the Next Steps Card and check which ones of these next steps we can help you pursue.

(Allow time to fill out cards and collect them.)

As we close, I want to thank all of you for being here each week and for participating so openly. It has been a pleasure to get to know you all. May I end this session with a prayer?

Pray a short prayer for the men.

Hang around and be generous with your time, with hugs, etc. Try to determine what each man has chosen for his next steps and encourage him in these.

