

## Psychological Effects of Having an Abortion

Although public morals have become more flexible and indulgent in the 21st century compared to previous epochs, there are still questions and moral problems that are difficult to evaluate and treat without bias. Abortion is one of such issues; although many progressive people have nowadays become more tolerant to abortion, there are still many arguments—apart from public opinion—that speak against this procedure. In particular, **abortion causes severe psychological and emotional damage to a woman who has undergone this surgery.**

**One of the most common dangers awaiting women who have committed an abortion is post-abortion syndrome (PAS). It is a complex of emotional and psychological symptoms connected with the traumatizing experience of terminating pregnancy.** The most common PAS symptom is the sensation of guilt, connected to recognition of an abortion as a murder; at the same time, according to studies, about 70% of women who have had abortions disapproved of abortion in general, but tended to think of themselves as exceptions. Anger is another common emotion for women who have undergone an abortion. Usually, this anger is directed at oneself when completing an abortion, and/or other people involved in making a decision about the abortion, such as spouses or relatives; however, this anger may be also directed at the woman's current or future children. Broken relationships, psychological numbing, and depression are also a part of PAS (Leadership U).

The post-abortion syndrome with its symptoms is not the only danger that possibly awaits women who have decided to terminate their pregnancies; there are other emotional and psychological problems that are not necessarily included into PAS. For example, **a woman who has undergone an abortion procedure may develop such persistent symptoms as shame, a sense of isolation, a loss of self-confidence and/or trust in other people, nightmares, insomnia, anxiety, loneliness, and suicidal thoughts.** As an unpleasant bonus, these symptoms can be accompanied with various eating disorders (American Pregnancy Association).

**Post-abortion women often develop defensive mechanisms, allowing them to cope with stress caused by abortion; one of them is repression, which manifests itself as ignoring or suppressing emotions.** This leads to various psychosomatic illnesses, deviated behaviors, and other conditions requiring psychiatric assistance. According to a study conducted in Canada throughout five years, women who had an abortion tend to seek psychiatric help much more often than those who did not terminate pregnancy—25% versus 3% respectively. Teenagers, divorced or lonely women, and those who had more

than one abortion are especially vulnerable, tending to need psychiatric care most often (AfterAbortion).

Terminating pregnancy is a serious procedure that causes harm not only to a fetus, but to a would-be mother as well. Apart from possible physiological risks, women who have undergone an abortion tend to have severe emotional and/or psychological problems. Among these problems are the post-abortion syndrome; a wide range of such problems as persistent shame, insomnia, eating disorders, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts; psychosomatic illnesses, deviant behaviors, and other symptoms requiring psychiatric help. All this proves that abortion is not a choice one should consider.

# Family Essay