

# Helping the person suffering from a past abortion experience

## Do:

- Listen patiently. They are trying to sort out their feelings. Verbalizing with someone who will listen helps.
- Reassure them that we all make mistakes.
- Reassure them that their feelings are normal. Others have experienced the same thing and found healing.
- Allow them to vent their anger toward others. Remind them that it is a sign of an even deeper hurt that lies beneath the anger. Encourage them to get in touch with both the anger and the hurt, which they need to do before they can “let go” of their anger and work through the grief process.
- Allow them to regret their choice. Women and men who have found healing after an abortion often become more humble, compassionate, and sensitive. Even a negative experience can be used to help others.
- Give them Post-Abortion Recovery referral information.
- Show that you care by keeping in touch and continuing to be a sounding board for them.
- Encourage them.

## Don't:

- Shut them off by changing the subject.
- Condemn them for making a bad or immoral choice.
- Deny that they lost a child.
- Encourage them to blame others for the abortion.
- Push them to forgive others when they are in the initial stages of venting their anger and rage.
- Insist that they did the “right thing” or the “best thing” at the time.
- Suggest that having another child “someday” can make up for the one that was lost. Future children are a blessing and comfort, but they can never replace the lost child.
- Leave them without encouraging them, over and over again, to find and accept the help of post-abortion counselors or peer support groups.
- Be afraid to follow up.
- Ignore them, fearful you’ll say the wrong thing. Love covers all.
- Stop giving them opportunities to acknowledge their pain and loss – in their <sup>[[[</sup>time.