

Post Abortion Counseling

Depression vs. Grief

Every pastor in the western world is aware of the statistics on depression in our culture. You know that many in your congregation suffer from it as well. There are many causes of depression as you know from your conversations. Often, we speak of depression during post abortion healing groups because it is a nearly universal experience.

One exercise we do is to have the women draw a picture of depression, not related to abortion. "You lost your job, your health has taken a bad turn, you don't feel significant." We ask them what their depression looks like in those sorts of times. Then we ask them to draw a picture of their feelings about their abortion, not related to their forgiveness from God but related to their feelings about the child that was lost. Next, we compare and contrast the pictures. Depression is generally dark, isolated and burdensome. The abortion picture is dark but also

full of tears and broken hearts. Sometimes there is blood and violence in the abortion pictures. The point is, the two pictures of depression and their feelings about their abortion are always quite different.

You may want to consider this when you are counseling because we often use the terms depression and grief interchangeably. A woman may be experiencing grief and calling it depression.

There may be depressive issues surrounding abortion. Unforgiveness and denial are two big ones. But grief is a separate emotion. We encourage you to counsel such women (and men involved) in a healthy way to grieve.