



Project Candlelight
Awareness, Education & Outreach
During Coerced Abortion Awareness Week
April 3-10, 2011

Coerced Abortion Awareness
Background Information and Key Messages
for Op-Ed Pieces, Letters to the Editor and Other Outreach

In writing or speaking about this issue, it is important to first educate people that most abortions are unwanted or coerced and that forced abortions are happening here.

This is a terrible assault on the fundamental human rights and lives of both the unborn and women. It's an assault that is often lost in the rush to educate and advocate on a national scale. It is also evidence that exposes abortion's exploitation of women and families at risk. Finally, it educates others about the urgent need for non-presumptive outreach and compassion toward individuals and families already hurt.

Before people can accept new evidence they often must "unlearn" what they think they know. Words like "choice," and "safe" have been used so long by people on all "sides" of this issue, that many well-intended people may mistakenly believe they are true.

First and foremost – a prelude to educate people that coercion is common and to express our concern and compassion

Share new evidence that most (not some, not all, but most) abortions are unwanted or coerced. Forced abortion is happening here, too. We are concerned for teens and women of all ages and from all walks of life being coerced or even forced and for those already hurt by these and serious post-abortion issues.

Key Messages for You to Share

Most Abortions Are Unwanted or Coerced

1. Most abortions are unwanted or coerced. Forced abortion is happening here, too. Coercion is common, comes from all sides and in many sectors of society, including schools, doctors' offices, employers, in the helping professions or even in shopping mall storefronts that refer to abortion clinics.¹
2. Coercion can escalate to violence. Women are dying, too, whether from homicide – the #1 killer of pregnant women² – or aftereffects, including post-abortion trauma³ and maternal

death rates that are nearly 4 times higher compared to death rates among women who give birth.⁴

3. Abortion endangers the rights and lives of both the unborn and women.
4. The “risks” of abortion exist “before, during and after.” Abortion puts all women from all walks of life at risk of coerced, unwanted or even forced abortions. When coercion escalates it can put women at risk of homicide – the leading killer of pregnant women.
5. During or after abortion, women are being exploited, abused, traumatized or even killed. In addition to botched abortions, poorly regulated clinics, and negligent or unaccountable and often profit-driven abortion providers, statistics indicate that maternal death rates are nearly 4 times higher among women who abort. Abortion – before, during or after – is dangerous to the rights and lives of both the unborn and women.
6. The rhetoric of “choice” hides the reality of coercion. Why are they calling abortion The UnChoice?

Before abortion ... the synergy of coercion

- 64% of women having abortions said they felt pressured to abort.¹
- 84% said they were not fully informed.¹
- 52% felt rushed and 54% uncertain beforehand¹, yet
- 67% received no counseling beforehand¹, and
- 79% were not informed about alternatives.¹
- Most suffer trauma symptoms¹ and face a significantly higher risk of injury or death after abortion.^{3,4}
- Coercion can escalate to violence.²
- Homicide is the leading killer of pregnant women.²

This is not a free, fair or fully informed “choice.” Nor is it a just substitute for the full disclosure, authentic support, meaningful alternatives and other essentials that women need and deserve.

Those who would pressure or even force teens and women into unwanted abortions need to know that this is not just, humane or “safe” and that, furthermore:

After abortion ... higher rates of injury, trauma, maternal death

- Risk of death for women is 62% higher after abortion.⁴
- 31% suffer health complications after abortion.¹
- 65% suffer symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹
- 60% said “part of me died.”¹
- Teens are 6 times more likely to commit suicide if they’ve had an abortion in the last 6 months, compared to teens who have not had an abortion.⁵
- Women’s risk of clinical depression risk is 65 percent higher after abortion.⁶

- Suicide rates are 6 times higher for women who've had abortions compared to women who give birth.⁷

Learn more. Find or offer help.

These issues affect teens, women, men and families from all walks of life. Learn more about this issue, how to find help, and how to offer it to others at www.TheUnChoice.com.

Citations

1. Rue VM, Coleman PK, Rue JJ, Reardon DC. Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women. *Medical Science Monitor*, 2004 10(10): SR5-16. See also www.theunchoice.com/coerced.htm.
2. I.L. Horton and D. Cheng, "Enhanced Surveillance for Pregnancy-Associated Mortality-Maryland, 1993-1998," *JAMA* 285(11): 1455-1459 (2001); see also J. Mcfarlane et. al., "Abuse During Pregnancy and Femicide: Urgent Implications for Women's Health," *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 100: 27-36 (2002). See also www.theunchoice.com/coerced.htm.
3. For a list of studies, see Priscilla Coleman, "A Tidal Wave of Published Data: More Than 30 Studies in Last Five Show Negative Impact of Abortion on Women," at <http://afterabortion.org/?p=4814>.
4. Gissler M., et. al., "Pregnancy Associated Deaths in Finland 1987-1994 -- definition problems and benefits of record linkage," *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica* 76:651-657 (1997); and DC Reardon et. al., "Deaths Associated With Pregnancy Outcome: A Record Linkage Study of Low Income Women," *Southern Medical Journal* 95(8):834-41, Aug. 2002.
5. Garfinkel et al., "Stress, Depression and Suicide: A Study of Adolescents in Minnesota," *Responding to High Risk Youth* (U. of Minnesota: Minnesota Extension Service, 1986)
6. JR Cogle, DC Reardon & PK Coleman, "Depression Associated With Abortion and Childbirth: A Long-Term Analysis of the NLSY Cohort," *Medical Science Monitor* 9(4):CR105-112, 2003.
7. Gissler, Hemminki & Lonnqvist, "Suicides after pregnancy in Finland, 1987-94: register linkage study," *British Journal of Medicine* 313:1431-4, 1996, and M. Gissler, "Injury deaths, suicides and homicides associated with pregnancy, Finland 1987 2000," *European J. Public Health* 15(5):459-63, 2005. See also DC Reardon et. al., "Deaths Associated With Pregnancy Outcome: A Record Linkage Study of Low Income Women," *Southern Medical Journal* 95(8):834-41, Aug. 2002.