

Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS) affects everyone and is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. The process of making an abortion choice, experiencing the procedure and living with the grief, pain and regret is certainly, at its very core, traumatic. As with any trauma, individuals often try to “forget” the ordeal and deny or ignore any pain that may result. Many simply don’t relate their distress to the abortion experience. At some point, however, memories resurface and the truth of this loss can no longer be denied. During these moments, the pain of post-abortion syndrome reveals itself in the hearts of millions of lives. The symptoms of post abortion syndrome will not necessarily appear at the same time, nor is likely that any woman will experience the entire list. Some may occur immediately after an abortion and others much later. If you can identify with more than two of these symptoms, it could be that you are experiencing post-abortion syndrome.

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Below are the symptoms that describe post-abortion syndrome, as described by Dr. Paul and Teri Reisser in their book, *Help for the Post-Abortive Woman* (now entitled *A Solitary Sorrow*):

Guilt A mother’s heart is genetically designed to “protect their child at all costs.” Abortion short-circuits that basic human instinct. That can lead to feelings of guilt. A common guilty reaction after abortion could be that the individuals believes future bad events happen because they “deserve it” for making this choice.

Anxiety (i.e., anxiety attacks) Many individuals state that after their abortion they started feeling tense and could not relax. Some outline physical reactions like dizziness, pounding heart, upset stomach, headaches. They may worry about the future, struggle to concentrate and not be able to sleep. It is often difficult to understand the source of anxiety.

Avoiding Children or Pregnant Women It is common for post-abortive people to avoid children, especially pregnant women or children that would have been around the age of their aborted child. This avoidance can include: skipping baby showers, avoiding the baby aisle at the grocery store, walking around the block to avoid a playground, or making excuses to escape events that include children or pregnant women.

Feeling “Numb” To avoid painful thoughts after abortion, many work to shut off their emotions. That could mean abandoning friendships and family,

particularly if they remind them of the abortion experience. When someone shuts down emotionally, they don't feel sorrow or joy. Many turn to drugs or alcohol to assist in numbing these memories that result in guilt or anxiety.

Depression Everyone is sad once in a while. After abortion, gloomy feelings can make the person feel hopeless and unlovable. They may cry uncontrollably for no reason and/or feel like they are going crazy. Perhaps they can't eat or sleep. Others eat too much and sleep all day. The things they used to enjoy are avoided.

Thoughts of Suicide Some post-abortive people get so sad that they think it would be easier to die than continue living. Others miss their lost child so much that they want to join them to hold them at last. **Anniversary**

Reminders This "anniversary" can be the aborted child's due date, or the date of the abortion. On these dates, individuals can feel horrible for no apparent reason. It can take years to realize these dates are related to their abortion experience.

Experiencing The Abortion Again A post-abortive person can be suddenly transported back to the abortion clinic and remember everything in their minds. Memories can be triggered by simple sounds heard during the abortion procedure – like a vacuum cleaner or a dentist drill. For those who endured medical abortions, it can be the sound of a toilet flushing. Yearly pap tests can also resurrect these memories. Others experience ongoing nightmares involving children, perhaps in pain. They can even have the same nightmare over and over again.

Wanting To Get Pregnant Again It is normal to want to get pregnant again as soon as possible after any pregnancy loss. Most do so out of a desire to make sure they can still have a baby. Others hope to "replace" the life that was lost during the abortion.

Fear of Infertility A common reaction after abortion is to worry about being able to get pregnant again. Many fear they have aborted the only child they will ever have. Others suspect the abortion could have mutilated their body in some way.

Unable to Bond with Present or Future Children Some post-abortive people live in fear that children they had before or after the abortion could easily die. This fright can lead these parents to overprotect their children at an unhealthy level.

Fear that Future Children Will Die Some post-abortive people live in fear that children they had before or after the abortion could easily die. This fright can lead these parents to overprotect their children at an unhealthy level.

Eating Disorders Episodes of anorexia or bulimia is common for people who have chosen abortion. Some get fat or thin to avoid anyone wanting them at a sexual level as that could lead to another pregnancy decision. Eating is also

something an individual can personally regulate when their life feels beyond their control.

Alcohol and Drug Use Drugs and alcohol often serves as a tranquilizer to help keep the memories of an abortion at a distance. They can help calm anxiety and promote sleep. Sadly, the overuse of these elements can lead to other problems at a mental and physical level (downloaded from postabortionsyndrome.org).