

After an abortion - Information for men who are supporting their partner

The Royal Women's Hospital Fact Sheet / www.thewomens.org.au



the women's
the royal women's hospital
victoria australia

Practical things you can do

Your partner will need to be picked up after her procedure - talk to her about these arrangements

Read the medical information sheet given to her by staff about post-abortion care; keep it in a handy place.

Ask her what she wants to do that evening - sleep, relax, talk?

She may feel nauseous or tired afterwards - organise to cover any childcare or domestic arrangements.

Just like before the abortion, offer to discuss concerns or feelings she might have. She may not want to talk straight away so let her know you are around to talk to at any stage.

Accept that she may have many mixed, normal feelings about the abortion - relief, some sadness or curiosity about what happens next. If she wants to talk further to someone and/or if she begins to worry that her feelings are becoming more intense and less manageable there are a number of options for her, including: friends, family, the Pregnancy Advisory Service at the Women's, or other counsellors.

Take care of yourselves - you've been through another of life's challenges and you've made it through to the other side. Acknowledge what you've been through and take some time out.

More information on ways some women feel after an abortion

Women may experience a range of positive and negative reactions following an abortion. Some examples of positive feelings following an abortion include:

- a re-enforced sense of control over her life
- a sense that it has brought her and you closer together
- improved knowledge and understanding about fertility and contraception
- discovering that she does want to have a child when it is the right time
- improved ability to make important decisions
- mixed feelings and a range of emotions
- relief that she has made the decision and can begin to move on.

She may also feel sad at having to have made a decision to have an abortion, particularly if she felt attached to the pregnancy or to the idea of having her first or another child. Feeling sad might not mean that she has made the wrong decision, but can be an acknowledgement of the complexity of having to make a very difficult decision.

Other feelings she may experience might be:

- worried about her health or the effect the decision has had on the relationship
- guilt because she feels she has done something that society or anyone else in her environment that she values might disagree with
- anger towards you as she had to carry more of the responsibility for the decision or she may feel angry at herself for getting pregnant
- disappointment, if she felt there was a lack of support from those around her.

Being able to express these feelings in a safe, supportive and non judgemental environment can play an important role in helping her to not become overwhelmed by these feelings. She may need reassurance that she made the right decision for herself based on the circumstances at the time. If she is finding these feelings unmanageable then it may be helpful to recontact the Pregnancy Advisory Service for post abortion counselling or for referrals to other appropriate counsellors.

Research shows that where women are able to make their own decision and are given support to do this, they will most likely experience a sense of relief and feel a continued sense of confidence in their decision¹.

Useful telephone numbers at the Women's

The Pregnancy Advisory Service

(03) 8345 3061

The Women's Health information Centre

(03) 8345 3045

Women's Social Support Services

(03) 8345 3050

Sexual and Reproductive Health organisations (contraception, STIs, unplanned pregnancies)

Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

<http://www.mshc.org.au/>

(03) 9341 6200

Family Planning Victoria

<http://www.fpv.org.au/>

(03) 9257 0100

The Action Centre (aged 13-25)

http://www.fpv.org.au/1_5_5.html

(03) 9660 4700

Children by Choice (Queensland)

www.childrenbychoice.org.au

MensLine Telephone Counselling

<http://www.menslineaus.org.au/>

1300 78 99 78

Community Health Centres who provide counselling

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/communityhealth/service_provider/community_health_directory.htm

*Men and Family Relationship Counselling at the
Family Mediation Centre*

http://www.mediation.com.au/men_and_family_relationships_counselling.html

Footnote

1 Children by Choice Assoc. Inc, 1995.

Reference

Children by Choice Association, Inc Information series No. 30, 2004

'How to Support a Woman through an Abortion'

For more information on unplanned pregnancy and abortion look at the Women's website www.thewomens.org.au Other websites such as www.childrenbychoice.org.au and www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au also offer comprehensive information on unplanned pregnancy and abortion.

To the best of our knowledge this information was current as of May 2010.

The Women's is a smoke free hospital. For more information and support visit www.quit.org.au

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