

## THE REALITY OF POST ABORTION SYNDROME

From the very start of pregnancy, a woman's body begins to undergo hormonal and physical changes. Pregnancy also alters "brain regions involved in understanding the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and intentions of others," according to a recent study in *Nature Neuroscience* (Dec. 19, 2016). Could an abortion suddenly alter natural preparations to nurture a child, sending a shock wave of confusion through the mother's body, mind and spirit?

Since the nationwide legalizing of abortion in 1973, Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), have been counseling those hurt by abortion experiences and dealing with the symptoms of Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS). For many women, abortion initially provides short-term relief, but as time moves on, the symptoms of PAS can become overwhelming. These symptoms include depression, nightmares, anger, guilt, physical and mental pain, anxiety, attempting suicide, and other pathologies. PAS can also be experienced by men who lose a child through abortion.

Those suffering with PAS might identify with the words of King David in Psalm 38: "There is no health in my body ... no soundness in my bones because of my sin ... all day long I go about mourning ... I groan in anguish of heart ... even the light has gone from my eyes."

Regrettably, PAS has not been acknowledged by many professional mental health associations in the United States, including the American Psychological Association (APA). However, studies such as the one from University of Siena, Italy, in 2013 showed "a clear link between abortion and subsequent mental illnesses like depression, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)." Similarly, in the *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* a New Zealand study showed a link between abortion and mental illness. In a January 2006 *Washington Times* article, the lead author of that study, Professor David Fergusson, criticized the APA for its handling of research and noted that the political issues surrounding abortion severely negate scientific objectivity on this controversial issue. Fergusson provided the following candid statement: "I'm pro-choice ... I might rather not have found what we did, but we found it and you can't be intellectually honest and only publish results you like."

The CPCs with all their years of counseling men and women wounded by abortion know the truth. Numerous women and men who have suffered from abortion know the truth and can relate to what is described in Psalm 38. PAS is real and devastating! Yet, the overcoming reality is that there is healing, wholeness and unconditional love awaiting anyone experiencing PAS—and these are found in Jesus Christ.

**To locate PAS counseling near you, call Rockville Pregnancy Clinic:  
301-770-4444, Laurel Pregnancy Center: 301-776-9996, or 800-712-3457.**

Bill & Pirkko O'Clock, January 2017