

Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline is a pro-life organization that respects life from conception until natural death. Because our society today does not place great value on preborn human life, we at PAH feel compelled to recognize and affirm the dignity and value of all human life and respond to the needs of those who have experienced pregnancy loss.

In our society, the death of a preborn infant is dealt with differently from other types of death. Men and women, who have experienced the loss of a child through miscarriage or abortion, are not afforded the comfort of institutionalized methods of grieving that are available to those who experience the death of other family members. A unique individual dies, and there is no funeral, no memorial service, and there are no sympathy cards. However, clinical and research data indicate that the parents of these preborn infants experience as much grief as the parents of full-term infants.

Parents who place a child for adoption also grieve because the adoption placement means permanent separation.

The counselors at PAH understand the trauma and grief experienced by all of these people. They are prepared to listen and will offer objective, non-judgemental support. If you or someone you love could benefit from this kind of help, please call. Remember — all calls are confidential.

TAKE HEART...

there is
HELP
after a
CRISIS
PREGNANCY



**PREGNANCY
AFTERMATH
HELPLINE**

Post Office Box 49
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201
(414) 332-7888



Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline is a free, confidential telephone counseling service which was created for the purpose of helping men and women who have been through a crisis pregnancy. A crisis pregnancy is one that may have been unplanned or unwanted and has ended in the subsequent loss of the baby through miscarriage, abortion or adoption placement.

The telephone counselors at Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline are paraprofessionals who receive initial and ongoing training in annual sessions which are conducted by professionals from the community. The volunteer counselors are given insight into the needs and feelings of those who have suffered the loss of a child through miscarriage, abortion, or adoption placement. Special attention and education is given in grief counseling and in recognizing post-abortion trauma or post-abortion syndrome.

If professional counseling or financial and spiritual support are considered necessary, counselors are prepared to make referrals to professionals or agencies within the community.

MISCARRIAGE

Many women suffer the loss of a child through miscarriage. While it is sometimes helpful to know that miscarriage is not uncommon, such information provides little comfort to parents who have longed for a child and have been deeply disap-

pointed. These parents may feel angry, bitter, depressed, lonely, and even guilty.

Friends and family members are usually supportive at first, but frequently they do not understand the depth of the hurt and sense of loss. Comments such as "You'll get pregnant again," or "You can have another baby," can be deeply resented, because they completely ignore the fact that the baby that died was unique and irreplaceable.

It is important for parents who have experienced miscarriage to talk to someone who will understand how they feel, who knows that this child was special and that the parents need to grieve.

ADOPTION PLACEMENT

Placing a child for adoption is one of the hardest decisions parents can make. Even when the decision is carefully thought through and is believed to be the very best for the baby and the parents, it is still a very painful and difficult decision to make. These parents may feel angry, depressed, and lonely. Remarks such as "I could never give up my baby" are frequently heard and add to their grief. These parents need to be reminded that the decision to place a child for adoption can be the most loving and selfless decision that they can make. Talking to someone who understands, who can be objective and supportive, can be of great benefit to these parents.

ABORTION

A woman chooses to have an abortion when she believes it is the only solution to a crisis pregnancy. If she is in any one of these situations: unmarried, busy with a career, or not planning to marry the father of her baby, abortion may seem to be the answer to her problem. And, in all of these circumstances, abortion may **initially** bring a great sense of relief.

Eventually, however, most women and men do have problems because of the abortion experience. Feelings of anger, grief, isolation, shame and low self esteem surface. A lot of anger may be felt for the medical personnel who performed the abortion and counselors, boyfriends, husbands, and family members who encouraged the abortion and did not offer support for having or keeping the baby. Feelings of guilt, shame and low self esteem may persist because, even though the abortion decision may have been made under pressure and with inadequate information, these parents realize that it was their choice to abort their babies.

To avoid developing psychological problems, such as post-abortion syndrome, these people must work through the emotional responses that occur as a result of abortion, must grieve the loss of their babies, and must come to some kind of peace with themselves and their God.