

3. About you:

Talking with women and research has helped us understand some factors in a woman’s life that make it easier or harder for her to handle having an abortion. How do you see yourself?

Circle: 1) Not true for me 2) Somewhat true for me 3) True for

- 1. I suffer from depression or diagnosed personality disorder----- 1 2 3
- 2. I feel good about myself-----3 2 1
- 3. I feel in charge of my life and what happens to me----- 3 2 1
- 4. I really feel a connection to this pregnancy-----1 2 3
- 5. I am emotionally mature----- 3 2 1
- 6. I think I will be able to handle having an abortion well----- 3 2 1

4. Your beliefs about abortion:

A woman’s beliefs about abortion naturally affect her ability to feel whole and emotionally healthy when she is making a decision about her pregnancy. What are some of your beliefs?

Circle: 1) Not true for me 2) Somewhat true for me 3) True for me

- 1. I believe abortion is the same as murdering a born person-----1 2 3
- 2. I am not sure if I am making the right decision----- 1 2 3
- 3. I don’t want an abortion, but I have to have one ----- 1 2 3
- 4. I know I will regret having an abortion----- 1 2 3
- 5. I think God will punish me for having an abortion---- 1 2 3
- 6. I will not be able to forgive myself for having an abortion----- 1 2 3
- 7. Someone else is forcing me or pushing me into an abortion----- 1 2 3

5. Support:

Studies have shown us that a woman’s perception of the kind and amount of support she has in her life can make a difference in how she experiences the choice of abortion. What is your support like?

Circle: 1) Not true for me 2) Somewhat true for me 3) True for me

- 1. My parents are/were rejecting, critical, and abusive----- 1 2 3
- 2. The man involved is abusive, rejecting, and controlling-----1 2 3
- 3. Family and friends who know support my decision-----3 2 1
- 4. Most of the people I know think that abortion is wrong----- 1 2 3

6. After the abortion:

Since an abortion is a decision that lasts for all of your life, it can be very helpful to know what your thoughts and expectations are for how you will deal with this experience afterwards:

Circle: 1) Not true for me 2) Somewhat true for me 3) True for me

- 1. I am never going to think about it again after it’s over----- 1 2 3
- 2. I’m afraid I will think about the abortion all the time-----1 2 3

- 3. I will feel relieved, and positive about the future----- 3 2 1
- 4. I will not be able to talk about the abortion with anyone----- 1 2 3
- 5. Bad things that happen in my future might be a punishment.-- 1 2 3

7. Spiritual/religious:

For many women abortion brings up spiritual or religious questions. Perhaps some of these have been troubling you?

If you are religious, what religion are you? _____

If you have a religion, do you think your religion is AGAINST abortion?

YES NO DON'T KNOW

How important are religion/spiritual beliefs to you? (circle one)

very important important not very important not at all important

do not have any religious beliefs

Do you need guidance or forgiveness from God/a higher power? YES NO

If YES, have you asked for it? YES NO

What is your definition of abortion?

Sometimes other experiences with pregnancy may be unresolved:

Have you had any abortions in the past? YES NO If yes, when?

Have you placed a child/children for adoption? YES NO If yes, when?

Do you have memories or feelings about past pregnancies that get in your way?

YES NO

Self-scoring

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This sheet is designed to go with the Issues form that asked you questions about your feelings and beliefs. Add up your scores for each section and write them in the space next to the section. The purpose of this test is to help you feel peaceful about whatever choice you make--now, next month, ten years from now, and for the rest of your life. Some issues can be resolved in a short time as you think about and write about your feelings. Other issues may need more time and attention, or even professional help. You have all the wisdom you need inside to handle your own life. Sometimes you just need help to find it.

This form is just a guide. There may be other issues you know you need to work on. **It is up to you** to work through any feelings or issues that might leave you unresolved or even regretting your choice **before you have an abortion.** There will usually be someone in a clinic or doctor's office who can help you, or tell you where to get help if you need it. We want to help you connect your feelings--what's in your heart; with your thoughts---what's in your head. These questions will give you a good idea of areas where you might need to do some work before you have an abortion---and some things you can do. Several of the resources we suggest can be found in the **Pregnant Need Help?** workbook. This book may be available from your clinic, or you can find it on the web at **pregnancyoptions.info**. The form starts by asking what feelings you've been having. Sometimes it just helps to see that this is a complicated experience with different feelings.

Section I. Questions

For some women unanswered fears, misperceptions or concerns about abortion, fetal development, future fertility, pain, etc. may get in the way of working through feelings. If you don't have the information you need, it's hard to even begin to explore your feelings. It is very important that you understand what's happening and that you get your questions answered. Make a list of the things you are wondering about, and be sure you understand.

Section 2. Reactions to being pregnant

Sometimes an experience like an unexpected pregnancy can be so upsetting that it can create a kind of emotional shock. When this happens you may be sort of obsessed with the problem---or even kind of numb. You may also feel numb if you have unresolved feelings about a past pregnancy or abortion. This question is to help you see if you are in touch with how you are feeling. It's very important to recognize if you are having this kind of reaction. It's not realistic to think you can make a considered choice about your situation if you are numb. To make a decision that you can live with and be at peace with requires that you feel all the feelings you're having---and that you also be able to examine your beliefs and your thinking.

Your section score _____

In this section, if you score:

5-7 You're probably relatively in touch with your feelings

8-11 You may be having a hard time connecting with your feelings

12-15 You may be emotionally 'numb'--and it is likely that you may need help knowing and feeling your emotions.

It is very important to “thaw out” before you try to make a decision.

What to do if you have a high score:

If you score 9 or more, it may help you to write or tell your story and share it with a counselor or trusted friend--using words that express feelings--happy, sad, angry, scared, ashamed.

If you answered true or somewhat true to #6, “Sometimes I think about hurting myself”, PLEASE ask for help from a friend, relative, clergy, or counselor. Your community probably has a crisis and suicide hotline. No matter how hopeless or frightening your situation may seem this terrible time will pass. If you can look for the gifts in your situation, you can create a life worth living.

Your section score _____

Section 3 . How you see yourself

6-9 You probably have good inner resources

10-13 You may need assistance to tap your inner resources

14-18 You probably need assistance to create and use your inner resources

What if you have high scores on the following questions?:

1. If you have a diagnosed personality disorder, or are on medication for emotional or psychological issues, you may wish to be in touch with your clinician to help you determine if you're in an OK place to make this significant decision. If you need additional support or assistance you deserve to have it!

2. If you do not feel good about yourself let's make some distinctions. Are you feeling 'bad' about your behavior/choice/actions; or are you feeling 'bad' about your self--your own inner value? If you are feeling bad about your behaviors and choices, how you would like to **be**

different---not what outer circumstances would you like to have different, but what could you change within yourself. If you feel that you do not have value or worthiness it may be hard for you to feel resolved or positive about much of anything, including your choice about abortion. If you are spiritual or religious, you might ask whether the higher power you believe in would make you worthless? Or you might ask yourself, if anyone benefits by you holding a low opinion of yourself. As with other issues, you actually have a **choice** about how to experience your own value. What you choose affects all your other choices, relationships, work, future, etc. How would you be with your best friend in a similar situation? What if you could be your own best friend?

3. If you don't feel in charge of your life, who **is** in charge? If you see yourself as a victim of events in your life--Ask 'what experience of myself do I **want** to have? ' Who decides what experience you **will** have? Though you can't choose everything that happens, you always choose the interpretation. Why not choose the interpretation that **empowers** you?

4. If you feel a connection to the pregnancy it's important to explore it. Abortion may not be the best choice for you. Is this a baby for you? Do you believe the pregnancy has a spirit or soul? Where was it before you became pregnant? Where would the spirit go if you have an abortion? If you feel a strong connection it could be very important to write a letter saying goodbye. There are some examples of letters like this in "Pregnant Need Help?". Or do a guided imagery such as those in "Pregnant Need Help?" Or seek guidance from god, from the spirit of the pregnancy within you, or from your own wise inner knowing.

5. If you don't think you are emotionally mature there are some ways you can begin to become aware of and take responsibility for your own feelings. What do you think are the characteristics of emotional maturity? See if you can think of some times when you did have those characteristics. Since you are capable of being like that, who decides whether you are going to be like that or not? One way to begin to be in touch with your feelings is to do what's called an 'emotional inventory". That means you take some time every day or a few times a week to go through a list of feelings---happy, sad, angry, scared, and

ashamed. So, you say to yourself, here are some things I'm feeling happy about----then what are some things I'm feeling sad about, etc.

6. If you don't expect to be able to handle having an abortion well, you are powerful enough to make sure that you're right! What does 'not handling the abortion well' mean to you? What problems do you think you might face after an abortion? How would you handle the problems? What **should** a woman's experience of abortion be? What would it be like if you did handle abortion well? Do you want/deserve to handle the abortion well? Does it make sense to you to do something if you have negative expectations about it?

Your section score _____

Section 4. Patient's beliefs

- 7-9 Your beliefs are often associated with a good outcome
- 10-16 Your beliefs could predict difficulty in coping well after abortion
- 17-21 Your beliefs could predict *serious* difficulty in coping well after abortion

What to do if you have high scores on the following questions:

1. If you truly think abortion is the **same as murder** even after you have explored some of these issues, then abortion is **not** be the best choice for you. Most doctors and clinics do not want to help you commit murder. But of course it is true that abortion **is** a kind of killing. That's hard to accept. Do you believe there are differences between killing and murder? What is the intention of murder? What is your intention in considering abortion? Is there a difference in the pregnancy before birth and after birth? Would you bring a two year old to a clinic and ask to have it killed? It is very important for you to be clear about your beliefs.

2. Maybe you're not sure you are making the right decision. What if there is no 'right' or 'wrong' decision? What if there is only right or wrong for you? If there are just different roads to travel? Abortion, adoption, parenthood---each journey has its own joys and sorrows---its own prices and rewards. In terms of the question of 'moral rightness'--who decides what is morally right for you? If abortion is

not morally right, what price do you pay for doing it? What *would* be morally right for you to do?

3. If you don't want an abortion, but think you **have** to have one, then you are being a victim. **No one has** to have an abortion. Abortion is a choice, even when it is a difficult one. No one has the right to force you to have an abortion. No doctor or clinic wants to do an abortion for a woman who is not choosing it for herself. That's why so many people have worked so hard to make sure **you** have a choice. If you really don't want an abortion, perhaps it's time to turn your energy to figuring out how you can **have** the baby. This will help you know whether you really want an abortion but you are having a hard time 'owning' that decision---or if you really **don't** want an abortion and you are getting pressure from someone else. It's very important for you to know what you really want in the very deepest part of your heart.

4. If you know you will regret an abortion, and you're saying that **you will wish you had made another choice**, don't have one! If you are really saying you think you'll have **feelings** about it, then know it is normal to have feelings. What exactly will you regret? How will you handle any sadness/grief you may have? How have you handled losses in the past?

5. If you believe God will punish you... Have you prayed about this? How? Does God know what is in your heart? Have you asked for God's guidance? Forgiveness? What kind of God do you believe in? If you are Christian, how did Jesus treat women...even women who were condemned by others? This would be a good time to have a conversation with God. Ask if you need help from a counselor or clergy person. Faith Aloud is a wonderful organization that has pro-choice clergy you can talk with. 314-531-5010. Faithaloud.org.

6. If you do not believe you will be able to forgive yourself... What do you create by not forgiving yourself? Who benefits from it? Do you think that not forgiving yourself proves that you are moral? That you really care?

7. If someone else is forcing or pushing you into an abortion that you don't want, **DO NOT HAVE ONE**. It doesn't work to have an

abortion because someone else wants you to---**or** to have a baby because someone else wants you to. Sometimes when you are feeling pressure it's hard even to know what you really want for yourself. You may find it helpful to do some exercises to help you see what you really want, such as those in *before abortion*. These include drawing a pie and shading in the part of you that wants to have a baby and the part that wants to have an abortion. You can also draw a picture of your life in one year if you have a baby--or in one year if you have an abortion. Sometimes just writing about your choices with the hand you don't usually use can help you get in touch with your feelings about it more.

You section score _____

Section 5. Support

- 4-6 You probably have adequate support
- 7-9 You may not have good support from others for an abortion choice
- 10-12 You don't have support for an abortion choice--this may cause you distress

What to do if you have high scores on the following questions:

1. If your parents are rejecting/critical/abusive. Whether or not your parents know about or are involved in this decision, the way they were when you were growing up can have a lot to do with how you handle stressful things now. With parents like this, you may have learned to be very self-critical, or passive. You may see yourself as a victim. It may help to sort out inner voices--which are actually yours, and which are voices you have taken on from a critical parent.

2. If the man involved is abusive/rejecting/controlling. Does he know about the pregnancy? If so, what is his reaction to the pregnancy? If he doesn't know, do you wish you could tell him? Are you afraid of him? Are you afraid of what kind of father he would be? What is his role in process of decision? Do you have a pattern of choosing controlling/rejecting relationships? What do you get out of that?

3. If you have no support from family/friends. It only makes sense that your perception of the opinion of your closest community could affect your own judgments about your choice. This is especially true if

you believe that the source of authority for your life is outside yourself. If you do not have support for your choice from close friends or family, you may easily doubt yourself no matter what decision you make. Who is there in your life who **could** be supportive? If there is no one, you may wish to set up some special follow-up with a counselor. If your answer to this question is 2, explore who does give support, who doesn't, and how do you plan on believing in yourself and your decisions even if others disagree? Think about other times you have stood up for yourself.

4. If you believe that most people you know think abortion is wrong. This is similar to question 3, but may involve your perception of **society's** view of abortion. It may be helpful for you to know that regardless of the views of people right around you, most people are pro-choice--and yet also have their discomforts about abortion, just as you do. Nearly 30% of women in this country will have an abortion at some point in their lives. Isn't it strange that we can still be afraid of other peoples' judgments? How do you feel about making a choice that you think most people disapprove of?

Your section score _____

Section 6. After the abortion

- 5-7 You seem to have good skills for handling the experience of abortion
- 8-10 You may need some assistance in handling feelings after abortion
- 11-15 You may have very unrealistic or unworkable approaches to coping after abortion

What to do if you have high scores on these questions:

1. You think you're never going to think about it again. You have unrealistic expectations. Of course you will think about this. You have faced a major challenge and you will remember many things about it, including how you handled it. You may need help in deciding **how** you are going to remember it.

2. You're afraid you'll think about it all the time. Obsessing is simply the other side of the coin of 'never thinking about it again.' It is often a way of thinking about something without truly getting anywhere--like a hamster going around and around in one of those exercise

wheels. In order to actually work through feelings, it's usually helpful to identify whatever areas are the most uncomfortable and difficult-- and to explore those issues fully.

4. You think you will not be able to talk about it... It is very important for human beings to be able to share our experiences with others. It is part of creating intimacy and part of healing. Not to be able to talk about a profound experience can be an indicator of an unhealthy degree of shame. The way to handle shame is to explore it more fully-- e.g. What would happen if you **did** talk about it? How do you think it will work for you to do something that you can't ever discuss? Is there anyone you really **wish** you could tell? Research shows that the support of family and friends can be very helpful in creating a positive outcome mentally and emotionally.

5. You think bad things will be a punishment... Anticipating punishment for an abortion is clearly setting up negative expectations. It might be useful to explore whether you think any bad things are ever going to happen to you even if you **don't** have an abortion. Then check on the spiritual aspects--who would determine whether bad things happened in punishment for abortion? What would you need to do to make amends or atonement for having an abortion? What **exactly** is/are the sin(s) that would be punished?

7. Spiritual/religious

Many times a woman facing an abortion finds that her level of spiritual or religious understanding is not sufficient to help her find peace with her choice. Spirituality and religion may be the same thing for you, or they may be very different. Even if you do not find comfort through your religion it may help you to contact your own spirit--your own inner knowing. If you have a need for guidance or forgiveness, from whom do you need it? You can enter into a guided imagery in which you ask for what you need and listen to the internal answers to your requests, whether it is from a spirit guide, your own 'wise woman', the spirit of the pregnancy, or God. Some women may wish to create a kind of ritual or ceremony to mark the importance of their experience. Some may wish to make a kind of atonement---to honor the importance of the life that has been ended. For some women,

writing their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a journal may help --not only in the present but to have a reminder and understanding in the future of how they came to their decision. For some women it may be important to seek help and guidance from a recognized religious figure. Faith Aloud is a wonderful organization you can contact to talk with a pro-choice member of the clergy. Faithaloud.org 314-531-5010.

The last section on past pregnancies is designed to let you see if there are past unresolved pregnancy issues. If there are, they should be addressed first using the same approaches that you would if they were the current experience. When these are resolved, begin anew working on the current pregnancy.

Listening to *before abortion* and spending the time to explore your feelings before you have an abortion is a very important step. Part of being a good woman is exploring these issues as deeply as you need to. You have the ability to come to a sense of peace with your choice---and you deserve to have that sense of peace. While you are in this process, you are not alone. There are thousands of women facing these same questions at this very moment. When you open your heart to your own process you are part of sending strength and love to all.