

As suicides rise what is the role of the church?

by Marie Bowen

What drives people to consider suicide? How can the church address such desperation and communicate God's message of love and hope?

"Among all women younger than 75, suicide rates grew across the age spectrum. But in the age of greatest vulnerability — women between the ages of 45 and 64 — the rate of suicide in 2014 vaulted 80 percent higher over 1999's rates."

I saw it first in my local morning paper, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. The paragraph quoted above from a *Los Angeles Times* article on April 22, 2016, caught my attention because I am aware that women who have had abortions are at increased risk of mental health problems that may lead to suicide.

The short article made note of two ethnic groups that have also seen marked increases in suicide rates: non-Hispanic American Indians and Alaska Natives. Suicide rates also rose in a number of other groups including men in the 45-64 age brackets, but none of those increased at the shocking rate seen in suicides among women age 45 to 64. No attempt was made in the article to assess the reasons for the rise of suicide rates generally or among women specifically.

"Abortion increases the likelihood of suicide," states a report (<http://bit.ly/1qrxo3M>) on studies conducted in United States, Britain, and Finland. Why is no one in the media talking about abortion as a possible cause for the alarming increase in suicides among women? The studies noted in the report show an astonishing 160% increase in suicide risk for women in the four years immediately following an abortion. They also note that **the increased risk of suicide for women having abortions continues long after the abortion event.** The



article makes the following comment in the sidebar:

"The primary reason for suicide after an abortion, is the long-term clinical depression suffered by a percentage of women."

Many professionals do not talk about the relationship between abortion and suicide because of the controversial nature of the issue not only

in America, but globally. The silence may compound the problem for women and men who feel alone in their struggle with the aftermath of abortion.

How can the church love women (and men) who are feeling depressed or coping with grief and guilt follow-

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What is Perinatal Hospice?

by Tracy Winsor

Excerpted by permission of Georgia Right to Life. To read this complete article and others in this series visit the GRL blog at <http://georgialifealliance.com/perinatalhospice1/>.

Perinatal hospice has been widely endorsed by prolife advocates because it provides an abortion alternative when a pregnancy is complicated by a prenatal diagnosis. About



thirteen percent of women seeking abortions in the United States identify a 'possible problems affecting the health of the fetus' as a reason for terminating the pregnancy.[1] Only three percent indicated that it was 'the most important reason' for seeking abortion.[2] The availability of perinatal hospice support can reduce the number of abortions among parents experiencing a prenatal diagnosis, because most will carry to term when

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 ing an abortion? We have the good news that Jesus Christ has come to save sinners. God stands ready to forgive whatever we have done and that includes abortion. If we remain silent about abortion in our churches, however, we will never hear the pain and sorrow of those who need the hope we have to offer.

How to open doors to abortion recovery ministry.

- 1. Pray** - Ask God to show you women and men who need ministry and how to go about meeting that need. Ask at least one other person to join you in praying about starting an abortion recovery ministry in your church.
- 2. Prepare** - Begin by visiting PPL's page (<http://bit.ly/202DOIQ>) on abortion recovery. Read the stories at Silent no More (

bit.ly/1WD5yiE). Visit The Elliott Institute (<http://afterabortion.org/>) for facts and statistics. Study biblical references about who God is, his love for us and his grace toward us.

- 3. Plan** - Begin with testimonies of God's grace after abortion during a service, or hold a memorial service for pregnancy loss. Plan a Bible Study for those who have experienced abortion. PPL can help you with this. Call us at 412-487-1990.
- 4. Post** - Make your congregation and/or community aware of this available ministry by posting flyers in women's and men's bath-

rooms, church bulletins, community newspaper. Give only a first name and phone number and keep time and location (best to meet away from church) of meetings confidential.

Take step one and God will bring leaders with passion to help and individuals who need the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

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offered a service of comprehensive support.[3]

At the same time, it should not be assumed that all perinatal hospice service providers will encourage undecided parents to continue the pregnancy as the best medical option or even as a viable one.

Frequently, parents experiencing a prenatal diagnosis are not provided with information concerning the option of carrying to term. Obstetric providers may offer abortion as the best option because they presume that ending the pregnancy at diagnosis will provide emotional benefits for the mother. On the contrary, research suggests (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/833687>) that post-abortive mothers not only

experience the same grief as those who carry to term, but are more likely to experience other emotional complications (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15715039>) as well. If doctors fail to offer information regarding carrying to term, and perinatal hospice providers are unwilling to, parents may abort without ever knowing they had another option.

Tracy L. Winsor, MPA, is Cofounder of Be Not Afraid (BNA) (<http://www.benotafraid.net>), a private non-profit corporation whose mission is to provide comprehensive, practical, and peer-based support to parents experiencing a prenatal diagnosis and carrying to term. She can be reached directly at TracyWinsor@benotafraid.net.

Notes:

- [1] *Finer et al., "Reasons U.S. Women Have Abortions: Quantitative & Qualitative Perspectives," Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2005, 37(3):110-118; www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/3711005.pdf; accessed October 20, 2011*
 - [2] <http://www.johnstonsarchive.net/policy/abortion/abreasons.html>
 - [3] *M. D'Almeida et al., Perinatal Hospice: Family-Centered Care of the Fetus with a Lethal Condition, J. AMER. PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS 11:52 (2006); B.C. Calhoun & N. Hoeldtke, The Perinatal Hospice: Ploughing the Field of Natal Sorrow, 2005*
- Perinatal Hospice Part 2** can be found here (<http://georgialifealliance.com/perinatalhospice2/>).

Related Articles:

Abortion and Suicide, by David C. Reardon, Ph.D. (<http://bit.ly/25aGWmO>)

Induced abortion and maternal suicide, The American Association of Prolife Obstetricians and Gynecologists (<http://bit.ly/1rSaVOW>)

Most Studies Show Abortion Linked To Increased Mental Health Problems, The Elliott Institute (<http://bit.ly/23Wk3NS>)

WHERE YOU CAN FIND PPL IN JUNE!



Portland, Oregon

222nd PCUSA GA
 Fri. Jun 18 - Wed. Jun 22
 AM schedule varies 1-5p daily
 Booth 155-157, Exhibit Hall A-B
 Oregon Convention Center
 777 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd,
 Portland, OR

Mobile, Alabama

PCA 44th GA
 Tues, Jun 21 - Thurs, Jun 23
 8 am - 7:30 pm
 Booth 108, So. Exhibit Hall
 Mobile Convention Center
 One South Water St
 Mobile, AL

Northville, MI

36th EPC GA
 Wed, Jun 22 - Fri, Jun 24
 8 am - 6 pm
 Ward Church
 40000 Six Mile Rd
 Northville, MI