



# Abortion Counseling: A Clinician's Guide to Psychology, Legislation, Politics, and Competency

*Rachel Needle, Lenore Walker*

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The majority of women who have had abortions report feeling happy, satisfied, and relieved following their abortion. Some few women who have had an abortion may experience some feelings of guilt and sadness; however, this rarely lasts longer than a few days. Those very few women who present with prolonged feelings of sadness and mental health problems are women who have either had these problems prior to their abortion, had other risk factors, or were influenced by frightening demonstrations and inaccurate biased information provided prior to the abortion. Through this book the authors hope to train general therapists and counselors in pre- and post-abortion counseling techniques--to avoid women experiencing unnecessary psychological problems created by those who insist that the non-existent "post-abortion syndrome" exists.

Abortion counseling has a critical role to play in ensuring women's mental health is the priority and not the goals of a political agenda. Thus, Needle and Walker have taken on a complex, profound and essential task -- equipping therapists and abortion counselors with the knowledge and skills needed to help their clients -- and they have done it well. Readers of this book should [gain] an increased understanding of how women's diverse life circumstances affect their ability to cope with the difficult decisions and circumstances surrounding abortion. They will also be better able to build women's resilience and coping skills by having considered them both in the context of women's lives (e.g., coping resources, social support, partner violence, incidence of depression), and in the context of socio-political agendas that seek to manipulate women's mental health in order to undermine women's reproductive rights....In the final analysis, it is important to remember that abortion counseling is not about abortion - it is about women confronting the decision to bear a child - with all of the profound and life changing commitments and responsibilities that entails."

-- From the Foreword by **Nancy Felipe Russo, PhD**, Regents Professor of Psychology, Arizona State University

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