

## LESSON EIGHT: PREGNANCY LOSS AND THE GRIEVING PROCESS

### OVERVIEW OF POST ABORTION GRIEF

The choice to have an abortion may cause grief that is difficult to talk about or acknowledge. This form of grief is referred to as disenfranchised grief because it is a loss that is not openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported. Disenfranchised grief occurs in our society for three main reasons: the loss is not recognized, the relationship is not recognized, or the griever is not recognized. As a result, a woman may use denial to protect herself. Yet, her denial blocks her natural grieving process, forgiveness, and healing, leading to post abortion stress.



Post abortion stress (PAS) can be defined as the chronic inability to:

- Process the thoughts, emotions, and losses attached to an abortion experience<sup>1</sup>
- Identify and grieve the loss that has occurred and move forward with her life<sup>2</sup>
- Come to peace with herself, others, and God

### A SAFE PLACE

At pregnancy care centres we cannot take the pain away, or heal women experiencing post abortion stress, but we can be a companion on their grief journey and provide a safe place for them to process their emotions and create an environment for healing to take place.

PCC client support training provides an overview of the stages of grief, how abortion impacts relationships and other people, post abortion support for men, and the spiritual aspects of abortion. This training, however, does not prepare someone to provide post abortion support to clients. This type of support requires highly specialized training and mentoring.

