

His family pushed for abortion. His family pushed for abortion—because I was in their home and they were having to help care for my children while I was bedridden ... I felt obligated, totally helpless. A part of me died that day.

Lori Rachuleta

After making us feel like dirt, she reassured us Medicaid would pay for the abortion. Since [my husband] was unable to find another job, we had to go on welfare ... When our caseworker found out I was pregnant with a third child, she was just disgusted with us. She urged us to have an abortion, saying, “You just can’t go around having babies all the rest of your life.” After making us feel like dirt, she reassured us that Medicaid would pay for the abortion. From that point on, there was pressure from everyone around me to have the abortion. The only one that didn’t want me to do it was my mother-in-law who was herself a survivor of a failed abortion attempt. Confusion mounted, tension and pressure took control, and I became another victim of “free choice.”

Lorijo Nerad

I wanted to keep my child but I had no say. My mother took me to [the clinic] ... They told her ... abortion was the best decision. Everyone made the decision for me. I really wanted to keep my child even at that age. At that time, parents made the decision for a minor. I really had no say.

Tambra Plummer

My relatives made the arrangements. The baby’s father retracted his marriage proposal as soon as he found out I was pregnant. I had no money, no medical insurance, and didn’t realize that there were places to turn to for help ... My relatives [made] all the arrangements ... Everyone was there to give advice before the abortion, but afterwards I was on my own. If I had had love, support, and above all, the true facts, I would have never even considered an abortion. The pain never goes away.

Carolyn Walton

It wasn’t *my* choice. It should be called “Your Parents’ and the Guy’s Choice.” No one would support me ... The worst day of my life got closer and closer ... I think in more cases than not, it isn’t the woman’s choice. It should be called “Your Parents’ and the Guy’s Choice ...” I needed someone to tell me that it was possible to keep my baby, but no one did ...

Amanda

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Portraits of Coercion

“I don’t know why they call it a choice.”

I was only 14. School counselors arranged it. Every Tuesday a scheduled bus picked up students and took them to the Planned Parenthood clinic. School counselors arranged the visits. It was all so organized ... Still today, I feel like I did not decide to have the abortion ... I was only 14 ... The nurse said this was not the time to be asking questions, that I should have asked them sooner.

Gaylene, survivor of two post-abortion suicide attempts.

He was furious and insisted the child be aborted. When I told him, he was furious and insisted that the child be aborted as soon as possible ... I did not want to kill this baby, but my co-dependence and addiction to this man won out. I finally made an appointment with the abortion clinic.

Cynthia Greenwood

The counselor played on my fears. She told us it would be very difficult for us to have a baby. She said she had three kids herself and the financial aspect was difficult for her. She never gave me alternatives or asked if I wanted to keep the baby; she just kept playing on my fears and making me believe that it would never work out.

Kelly

Everything in me was yelling, “No! No! No!” Everything within me was yelling,

“No! No! No!” But they all advised strongly against my having the child. So I allowed them to control the situation ... Inside, my voice was screaming, “Please do not do this!”
Lee

They all looked down on me for being pregnant. There I was alone, having an abortion. I was really low ... I didn't want an abortion ... But all the people at the abortion clinic were real helpful and friendly and tried to make you feel like you were doing the right thing. Nobody else in my life had tried to help me ... Everybody else would just look down their noses at me for being pregnant.
Cathe Birtwell

I screamed that I didn't want the abortion. The doctor said, “Shut up and quit that yelling.” I was a victim of incest at 15 ... In spite of the pain and guilt I felt, it was far better to have a baby than the alternative—to kill it. I refused to have an abortion ... My father flew into an uncontrollable rage and demanded that I consent to the abortion ... [The doctor] asked three nurses to hold me while he strapped me to the bed ... I continued to scream that I didn't want an abortion. He told me, “Shut up and quit that yelling!” ... I was violated by my father ... I was violated again by the abortionist.
Denise* (Name has been changed)

He destroyed our apartment.
“Get rid of it. Now!”

He destroyed our apartment ... and told me to get rid of it. Now! The whole time he cornered me ... throwing things and killing me with his words. The abortion ripped me apart. Any strength I had to leave the abuse was torn away from me.
Mary

My mother arranged my abortion. Our pastor had assured her that it was fine. My mother arranged my abortion. She didn't like my boyfriend and wanted to protect my “reputation” ... Our pastor had assured her that having an abortion was fine. No one helped me ...
Jane Crawford

My parents locked me in the house for two weeks. My parents told me I was to get an abortion. They locked me in the house and took the phone off the hook for two weeks. They told me not to tell anyone I was pregnant ... Two weeks later they took me 240 miles to Spokane for the abortion ...
Julie Woodley

My husband said he'd leave if I didn't abort. [My husband] told me, “Either you have an abortion, or I'll leave you.”
Sandra Morean

My mom said that I must abort. I told my boyfriend I was pregnant and he acted as if he were happy. He left town a short time after that leaving me to face the pressure of what to do. My mother figured out that I was pregnant ... and she told me I must abort. She said my life would be ruined if I stayed

pregnant. She also sent me to Planned Parenthood [and two counselors] ... who all agreed with my mother and counseled me to abort. I had no one who said that I could give life to my child ...
Carla Matrisch

The doctor begged me to abort. [The doctor said that the medication I'd been taking] causes birth defects. He was very concerned about my decision not to have an abortion and literally pleaded with me ... “Please reconsider ... There are so many dangers. You're a fool to think of not aborting.” [I've suspected he was afraid I'd sue him if the baby had birth defects] ... My decision came from a seed the doctor had planted ... that I should have that abortion. He was so serious that it frightened me.
Deborah Hulebak

Just to get them off my back . . . I finally told everyone that I would have the abortion just to get them off my back.
Anonymous, survivor of post-abortion suicide attempt

I sped away—my mother caught up with me. When I told my mom I was pregnant, she immediately made the appointment [for an abortion]. I kept hanging the phone up on her and she kept re-dialing. Finally she got through ... The next morning, I crept downstairs, got into my car and sped away—she quickly followed and finally caught up with me.
Laura O'Brien