

Chapter 20 Summary: Who are the experts? What 101 women told us

Narrative research is an increasingly recognized field in psychology and medicine.¹ However, the professional literature rarely, if ever, includes narratives of post-abortive women.

In 2008, the American Psychological Association (APA) disseminated a report on the psychological impact of abortion on women, which concluded that the research did not support the existence of post-abortion psychological distress.² Yet, the APA task force failed to address the narratives of thousands of women who have experienced psychological distress after abortion, despite the fact that many US courts have accepted the validity of affidavits from such women.

The overwhelming force of testimonies from large numbers of post-abortive women continues to challenge the common assumption that induced abortion is safe, easy, and uncomplicated. Among 101 women who told the deVeber Institute their stories, many reported a lack of informed consent and pressure or coercion to abort; moreover, all testified to the devastating impact of abortion in terms of depression, broken partner relationships, and the resort to alcohol and other non-medical substances.

¹ Stevens PE. Marginalized women's access to health care: a feminist narrative analysis. *Advances in Nursing Science* 1993 December; 16(2): p. 41.

² American Psychological Association Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion (August 2008). Task Force – Brenda Major (Chair), Mark Appelbaum, Linda Beckman, Mary Ann Dutton, Nancy Felipe Russo) Report available at <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/mental-health-abortion-report.pdf>. See also Adler NE, David HP, Major BN, Roth S, Russo N, Wyatt G. Psychological responses after abortion. *Science* 1990 April; 248(4951): pp. 41-4.