LANGUAGE MATTERS

SUPPORT AFTER ABORTION

Using **best-practice language** is about **leading with compassion**, not being judgmental, not making assumptions, and focusing on the person. Instead of being an obstacle to someone seeking help, it creates safe spaces that **open the door to dialogue and foster trust**.

We defer to experts within intersecting fields (such as suicide prevention, addiction, sex-trafficking, etc.) for the best-practice **trauma-informed language** that is vital when caring for individuals.

DON'T SAY	DO SAY	WHY
Post-Abortive	**After Abortion**	"Post-Abortive" labels the person rather than focusing on the action. Post-abortive has a strong negative connotation.
Abortion	**Abortions**	45% of all abortions are repeats. [1] Using the word "abortion" stigmatizes those who have had multiple abortions and may be an obstacle to seeking support.
Chose Abortion **Decided to have an Abortion**	**Experienced Abortion**	"Chose" / "Decided" can have a negative, judgmental connotation. Most women report feeling they had no real choice due to their circumstances or pressure from others.[2] And, a majority of men report feeling they had no role in the abortion decision.[3]
Committed Suicide	**Death by Suicide**	"Commit" implies crime or sin, reinforcing the stigma that it's a selfish act and personal choice. Using neutral phrasing like "died by suicide" helps strip away the shame/blame element. [4]
Victim **Rescued**	**Person who was Sex-trafficked** **Entered into Care**	Words like "rescue" can keep people from getting help and focus on the "savior" rather than the person being trafficked. [5] "Victim" labels someone, whereas "sex-trafficked" focuses on what happened to them.
Alcoholic **Drunk** **Addict** **User**	**Person with alcohol/substance use disorder** **Person who misuses alcohol/substances** **Person with an addiction**	Using person-first language shows that a person *has* a problem rather than *is* a problem. [6] Neutral language removes stigma and judgment.
Former Addict/Alcoholic **Relapsed**	**Person in Recovery** **Return to Use**	Person-first language removes stigma and focuses on actions rather than labeling a person as their problem and reflects the common ups and downs in recovery.