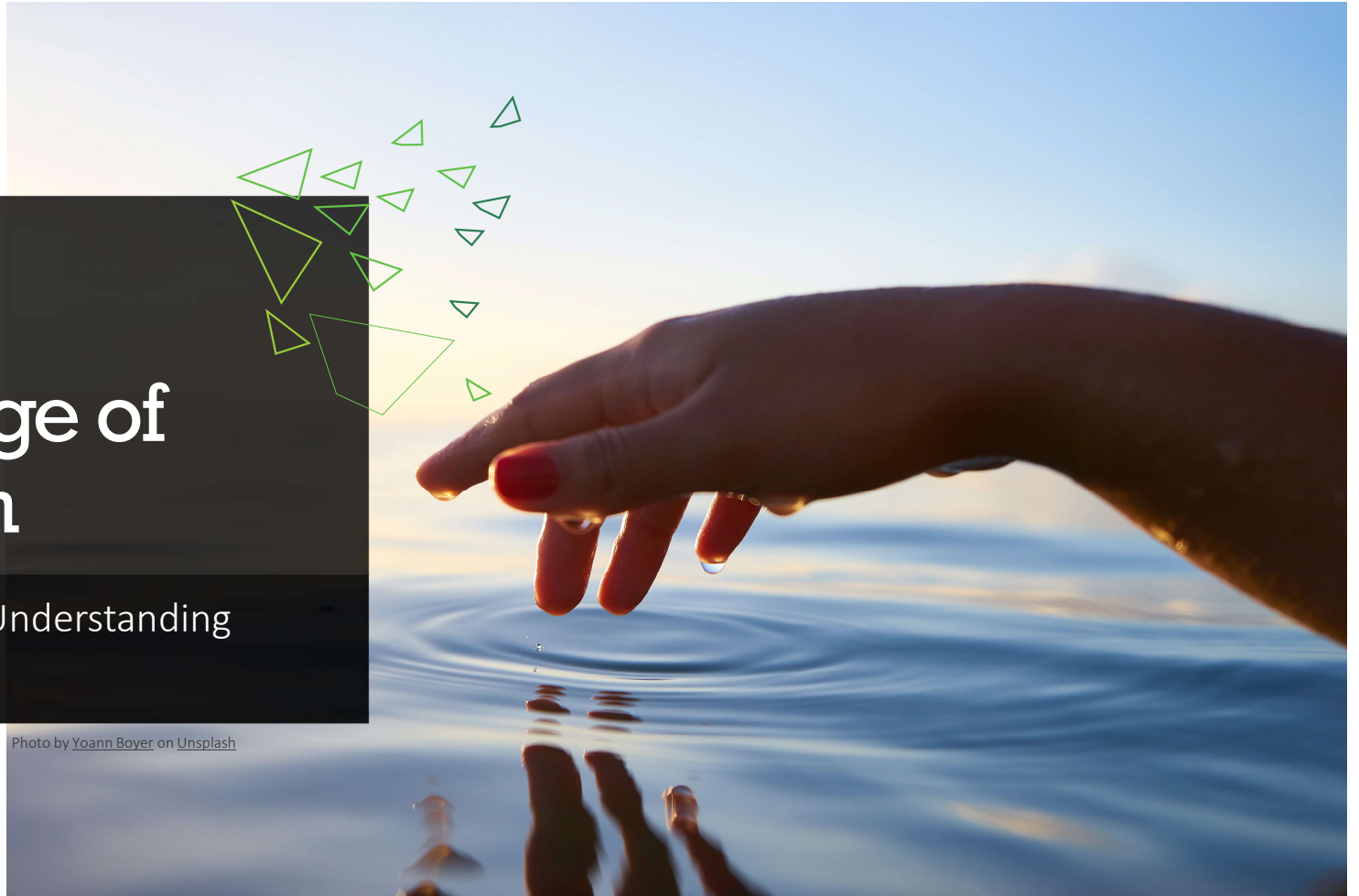




The Language of Compassion

Providing Hope Through Understanding

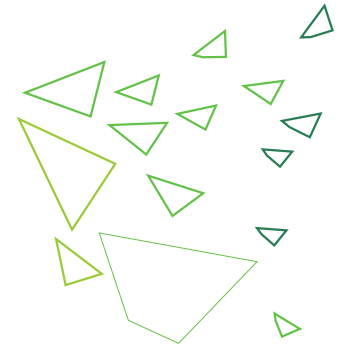
Photo by [Yoann Boyer](#) on [Unsplash](#)



part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland Project Rachel Ministry



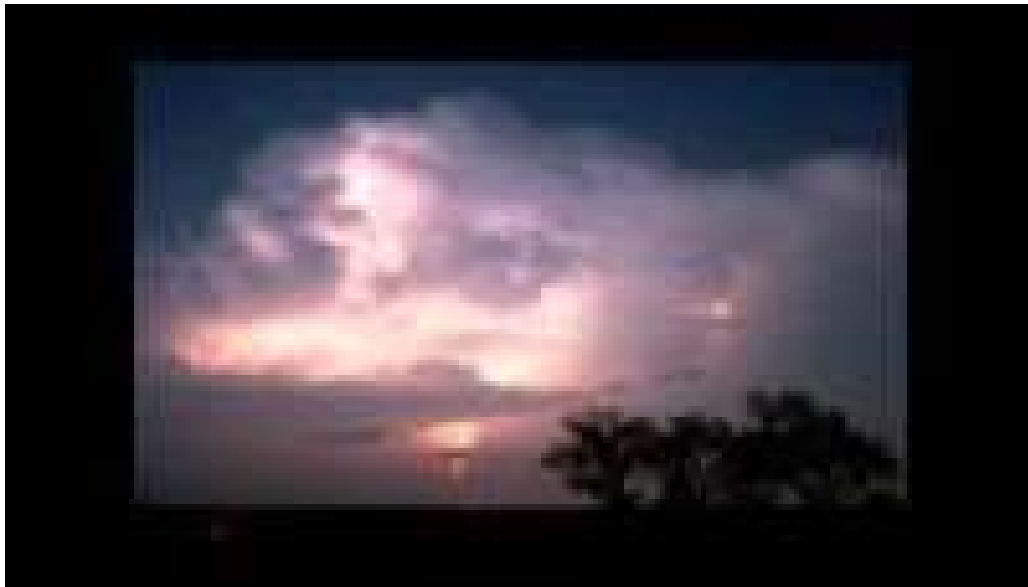
About this presentation



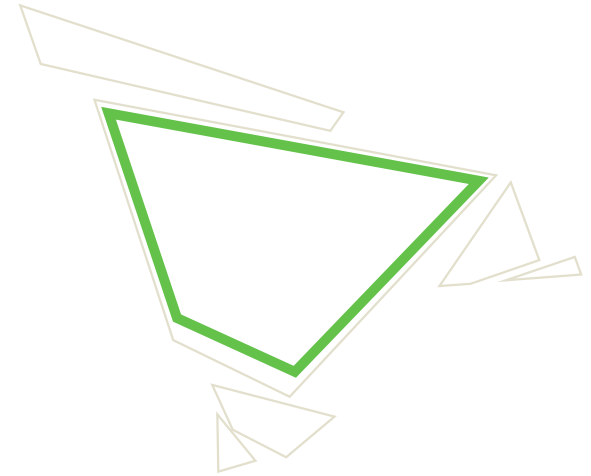
It's about you

... aim is to help you feel confident in sharing empathy and sorrow for others in our community stricken by grief resulting from abortion, informed by understanding of the related trauma and symptoms of grief

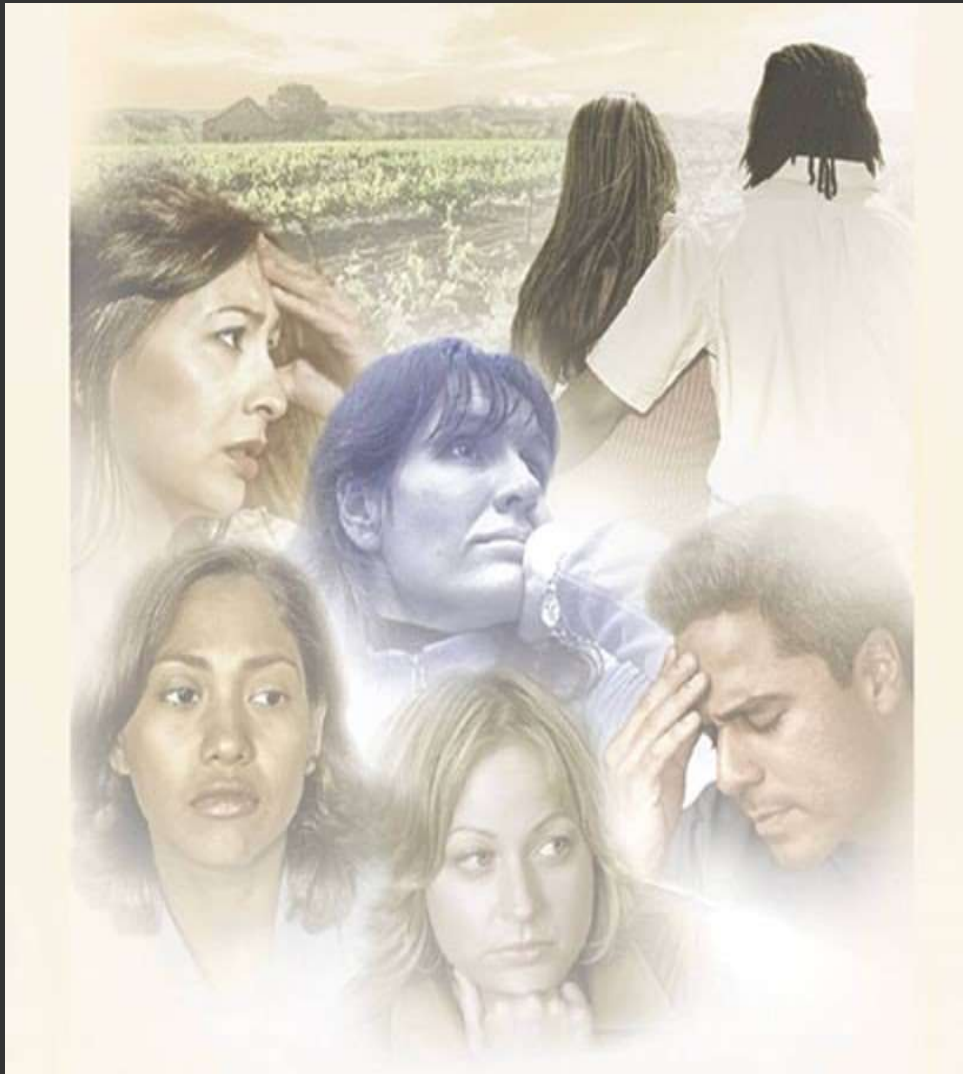
A Mother's Lament



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUgxPypkXQA>



- What is one word that came up for you while listening to this song?



Who are the Post- Abortive?

They are all around us

U.S. Abortion Patients

INCOME

75% poor or low income

RELIGION

62% religiously affiliated

FAMILY SIZE

59% already have a child

AGE

60% are in their 20s (only 12% are teens, of which 4% are minors)

RACE

39% White

28% Black

25% Hispanic

6% Asian/Pacific
Islander

3% Other



Whose having abortions?

1 in 4 women by age 45
will have had at least one abortion

2014 Stats – most recent available from www.guttmacher.org

U.S. Abortion Patients

45% reported having one or more prior abortions

- Age factor: 30 and older twice as likely to have had a prior abortion or abortions as compared to those 20 to 24
- Children: increased likelihood for those with one or more children
- Persons of color have a higher likelihood

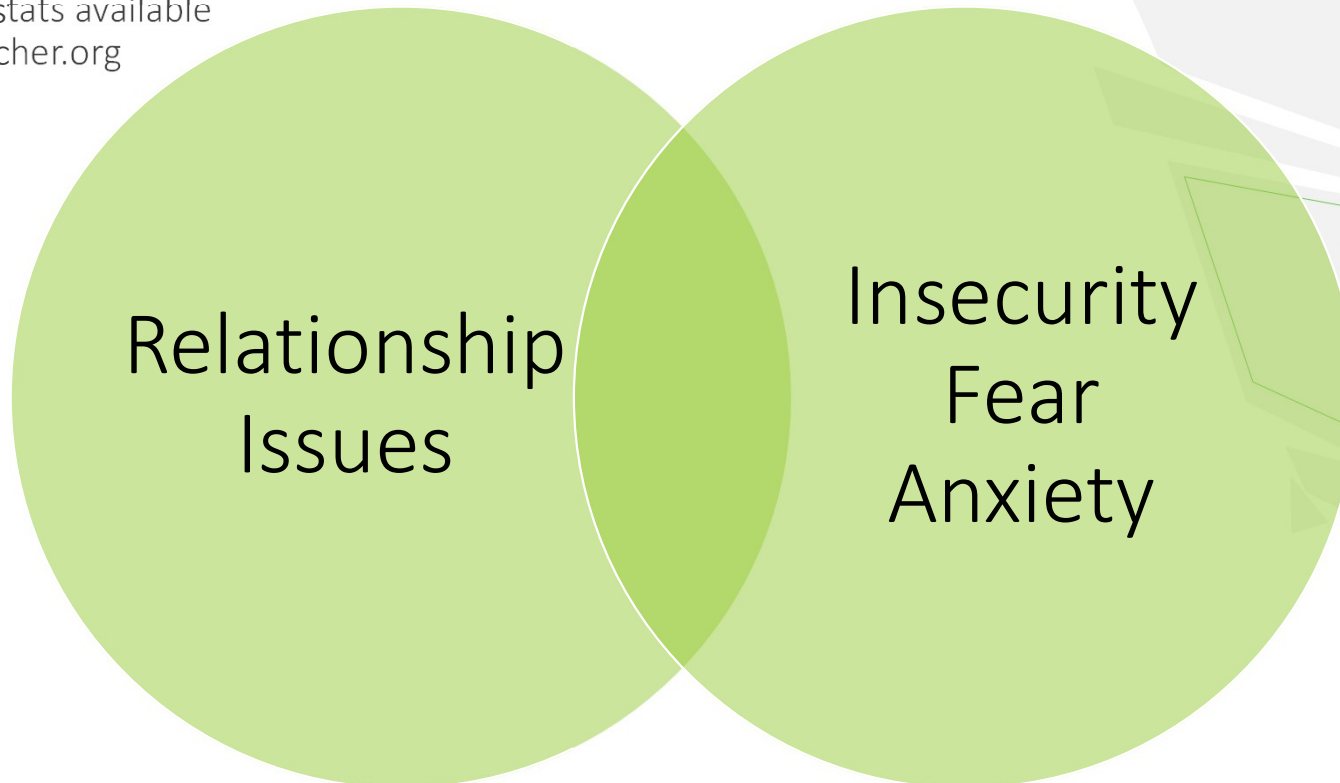


Multiple Abortions

2014 Stats – most recent available from www.guttmacher.org

Reasons Most Frequently Cited for Abortion

2014 most recent stats available
from www.guttmacher.org



Is it a real choice?



**64% of women
having abortions
report being
pressured**



By whom?

- Partners
- Parents
- Grandparents
- Friends
- Society

Rue VM, Coleman PK, Rue JJ, Reardon DC. Induced abortion and traumatic stress: A preliminary comparison of American and Russian women. *Medical Science Monitor*, 2004 10(10): SR5-16.





Are there psychological effects?



Trauma Symptoms

Trauma symptoms after the abortion are common



Mental Health Disorders

A survey of 5,877 women found those who had abortions were at higher risk for various mental health disorders



Mental Health Problems

Of the 15 disorders studied, abortion contributed significantly to 12

What are the psychological risks?

Suicide

6 times higher rates

PTSD

65% have symptoms

Depression

65% higher risk of clinical depression

Anxiety

30% more likely to report symptoms for generalized anxiety

Eating Disorders

39% have eating disorders

Substance Use Disorder

5 times more likely to abuse substances

ABORTION

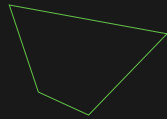


What's going on for you?

What are you thinking or feeling right now?
Have you had a “wow” moment?

What's going on “inside”?

They usually don't realize that
they are grieving the loss of a child



“It's the unforgivable sin.

“It's with me every day.

“I'm so afraid and
confused.

“I had no other choice.

“The abortion has left a
hole in my soul.

What have post-abortive people said?

“I don’t want anyone else to go through what I have been through”

“My life took a downhill spiral. How was I to cope? There was only one way, bury it”



“I made the biggest mistake in my life, and I can’t take it back. Every day, I ache to hold my baby”



“No one told me that I would hurt so badly. No one told me that I would feel so empty. No one told me that I would never be able to forgive myself for what I had done”



“I just have such a feeling of guilt for what I did to that baby. I can’t even look at pictures of developing fetuses after the three month point because all I do is cry and actually get sick to my stomach”

Feminists for Life
reprinted with permission from Rachel’s Vineyard

What about men?



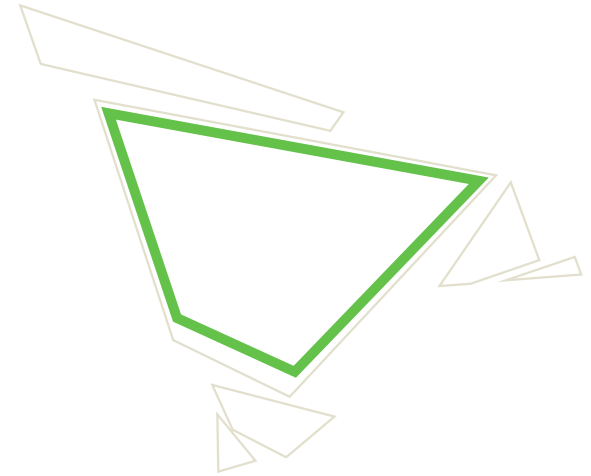
“Women who abort are sometimes called the ‘walking wounded,’ but there are millions of men [like me] as well who carry this pain in their hearts. We are everywhere, yet almost all of us remain alone in our pain.



A Silent Cry

<https://youtu.be/qGzoUUqyRqk>

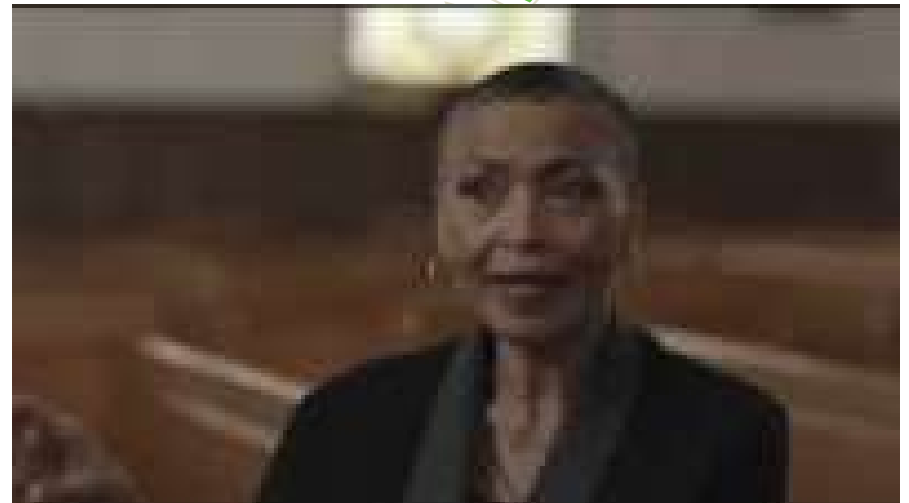
- What resonated with you?



Relatives and loved ones can grieve too



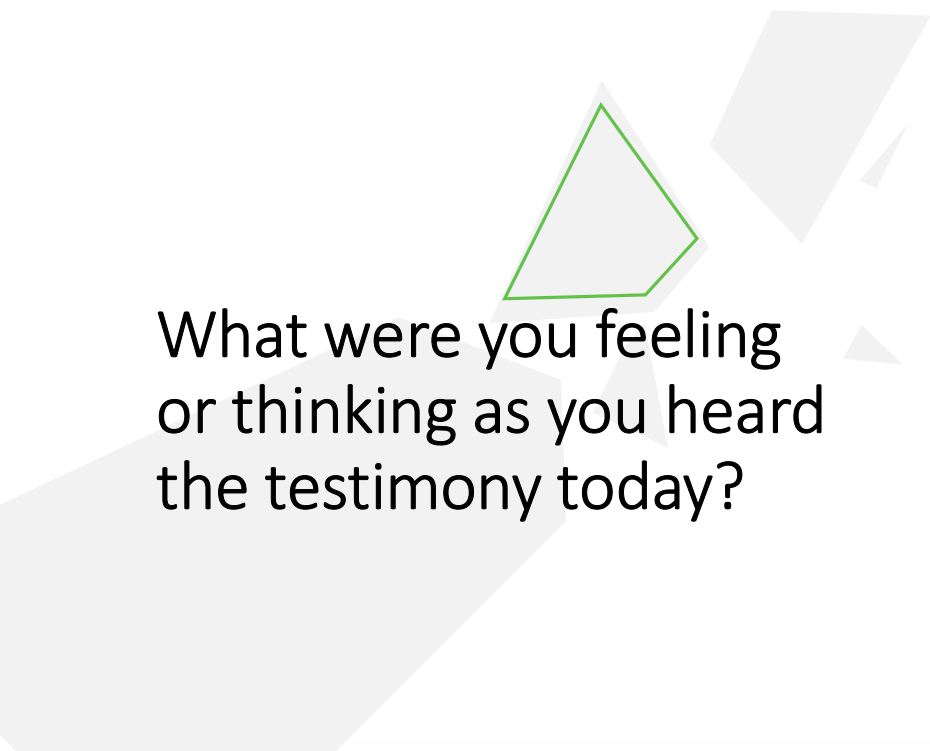
One person's journey



[Project Rachel: Helen's Story - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRAwJC4pyZw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRAwJC4pyZw>

Project Rachel Ministry

A series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of gray and green, including triangles and polygons, arranged in a dynamic, abstract pattern on the left side of the slide.

What were you feeling
or thinking as you heard
the testimony today?

A cluster of small, green-outlined triangles of various sizes and orientations, scattered in the upper right corner of the dark gray section.

A question for you

Think of someone you know who has had, or
contemplated, or been affected by abortion.
Whether you realize it or not, you all know someone.

Remember

Avoid Triggers

Use general, non-judgmental terms

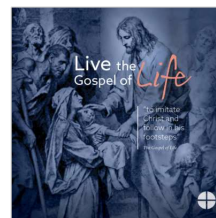
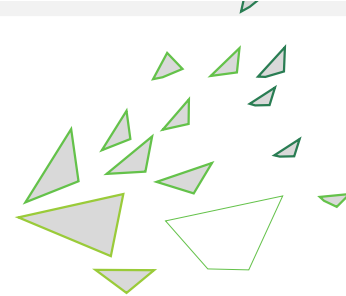
Stress that help, forgiveness and healing are available

Validate the effects of abortion

Be mindful that graphic images or displays may alienate post-abortive women or men who could be our most “qualified” and effective ministers

What about Pro-Life materials?

Posters, flyers, signs, displays, pictures and words we use could be unintended, but serious “triggers” for those suffering the trauma of abortion (i.e.: PTSD)



Posters

Use general, non-judgmental terms

Flyers

Remember 1 in 3 women, and many men, have had an abortion and are part of our community; meet them with love and kindness

Signs

Communicate message of the intrinsic value and beauty of life

Images


Avoid graphic images and words

Displays

Stress that help, forgiveness, understanding, and healing are available

Speeches

Validate the effects of abortion



What can you say to a friend who has had an abortion?



I see/hear your pain

“I can see (or hear) how much pain the abortion(s) is causing you.”



I recognize you felt you had no other choice

“I understand that you felt you had no other choice at the time.”

“I believe that if you had to do it all over again, you’d make a different choice.”



You are not alone

“You’re not alone – you don’t have to carry this pain alone anymore. There is help.”

In other words

Empathize

I hear your pain.

Support

I am here for you.

Love

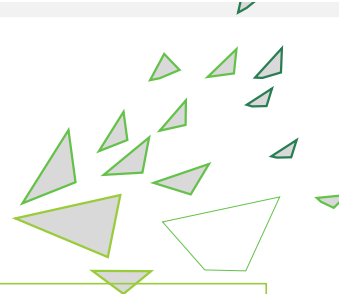
I love you no matter what.

Help

I know where you can get some help:

Project Rachel

[www.portlanddiocese.org/
projectrachel](http://www.portlanddiocese.org/projectrachel)





A little further discussion

What did you find helpful today? Not helpful?

What one thing can you do to be a bridge to God's
mercy for someone you know or meet who is
suffering from an abortion?

Do you have any questions?



Prayer

Thank you

Lord, thank you for this opportunity to share your message of forgiveness, hope and love.

Give us grace to help those suffering the effects of abortion for it is not ours to judge but ours to help heal by sharing your message of love and compassion.

Through Christ our Lord.

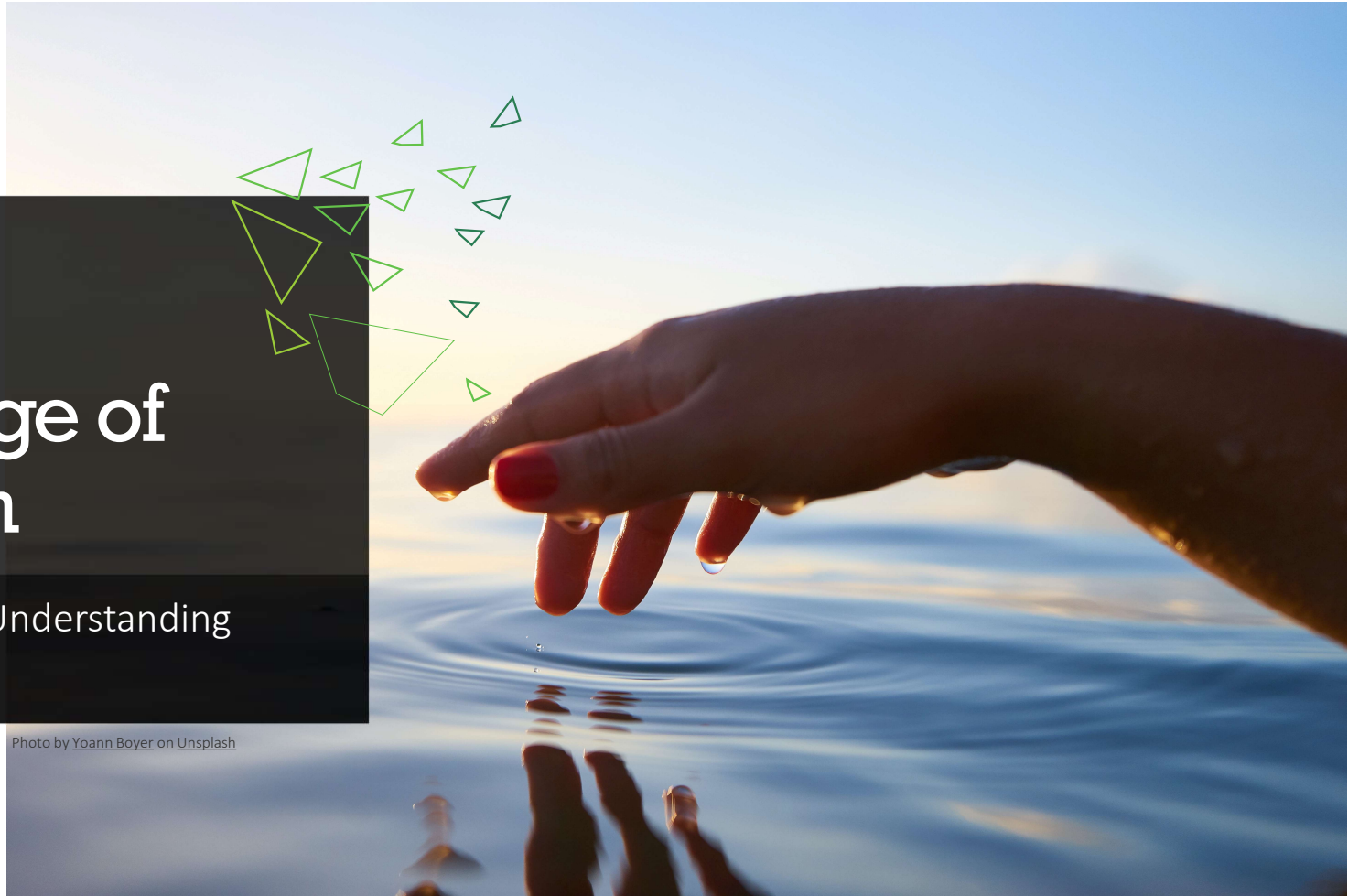
Amen.



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