

The Unspoken Coercive Element of Abortion

By [Hannah Wegman](#) | March 3, 2016

When it comes to abortion, we discourse on subjects like rape, incest, the life of the mother, and viability. We converse over conscience and taxpayer funding. But there's one region where we rarely venture but, quite frankly, ought to more often: *Coercion*.

When a woman, especially a young woman, faces an unexpected pregnancy, she may respond as one would in a crisis situation. Women in this position can be very susceptible to outside pressure. Coercion takes on many forms. Read testimonies from women who've had an abortion, and you'll hear statements like, "My mom told me to," or "I was threatened with ultimatums by the people I trusted." During crises, a woman will sometimes distrust her own decision-making ability and be swayed by others who pose what sounds like a simple "solution." This not to shift blame to outside forces but simply to show the immense power words can have on a woman at a time when she is seeking stability.

Stalwarts on women's "choice" seem to overlook the fact that when a woman signs on the dotted line, there is often, behind the pen, someone holding her writing hand. According to one medical journal, in a study on women who've had an abortion, 64 percent said they [felt pressured](#) to do so. However, to be both transparent and fair, the study is on the high end of the spectrum as a Guttmacher report [displayed](#) a much lower result. But, no matter what the true number is, the percentage is not the point. The crux of the matter is that any type of coercion is going unchecked. Even a pro-choice advocate, Daniel Callahan, acknowledged the irony [in his work](#), "An Ethical Challenge to Prochoice Advocates":

"... [i]t is remarkably difficult to find much prochoice probing into the reality of coerced abortions. It is as if there is an embarrassed, sheepish silence on what would seem a matter of obvious concern for those committed to choice."

Intimidation can come from not only the abortion business but equally from parents, husbands, boyfriends, doctors, employers, coaches, friends, and trusted advisors. Employers [have threatened](#) job loss; schools have threatened to revoke athletic scholarships; boyfriends have threatened to break off relationships, and the list goes on. For example, Concerned Women for America didn't need to go far, as our Southern California Area Director, Kori Peterson, recently [shared](#) her story of being coerced as a young woman to abort her baby by her boyfriend at the time. Coercion not only involves blackmail or intimidation through words, though; women have also been bullied through force or violence. In extreme cases, pregnant women have been forced into a clinic at gunpoint or faced miscarriages through beatings or abortifacient drugs.

Clinics should be better at screening for coercion, but it appears that some may be more concerned with the bottom line than what is truly best for the patient. If the pro-choice movement is so concerned about a woman's "choice," why aren't more advocating for a stricter screening process to ensure the woman, not an outside force, is choosing the abortion? In that vein, abortion clinics' "don't ask, don't tell" policies are dangerous and potentially cover up cases of exploitation in the name of privacy. Reportedly, investigators [have found](#) that molesters and abusers have paid for their victim's abortions to cover up their crime.

Even more common, women aren't being given the facts they need to make an informed decision. Rhetoric today is deceptive, painting abortion as a risk-free, run-of-the-mill procedure. In a recent article titled, "20 Tips for Your First Abortion," [the writer says](#) this:

"4. Make the appointment. Don't be offended that the person on the phone doesn't give a [expletive]. Take the nonchalance as a sign that it is no big deal. It could be a teeth cleaning."

How distorted to compare aborting a human being to visiting the dentist. Yet, these are the voices bombarding women today — and research shows abortion clinics may not be telling the whole truth, either. In the aforementioned study, 84 percent recalled that they weren't sufficiently informed. Patients should be informed that after having an abortion, the suicide rate of women [increases](#) to *six times* higher than women who choose to give birth and that many women suffer post-procedural trauma. Or what about the real shocker — that it is not just a blob of tissue inside of them but a human being? Why aren't clinics getting specific? Because when you start laying out for women all the realities during their uncertainty, it almost guarantees that some will choose life.

What is it that abortion giants fear most? They fear the exposure of truth. A choice involves more than one option; if clinics were truly concerned, they'd give patients all the facts and more than one choice. Women should be told how developed their child is — that he or she has a heartbeat and responds to his or her mother's voice. Women should be told about the risks and side effects of having an abortion. If they're scared or feel they can't afford to care for the baby, women should be told about the adoption option. Americans must expose and protect against the intimidation of outside influences on our women.

But also, we must recognize coerced abortion doesn't just happen as a result of words; more often than not, it's the result of a lack thereof.

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