

Warning Signs for Referral to a Professional Counselor*

1. Potential to harm the self or others
2. Disabling depression & incapacity to function
3. Emotional instability
4. Excessive anxiety
5. Hearing voices, excessive fears, and lack of awareness of surroundings
6. Persistent signs of PTSD which may include re-experiencing the traumatic event (e.g., flashbacks) or avoidance (e.g., emotional numbness)
7. Evidence of eating or sleeping disorders that threaten physical or mental health
8. Evidence of substance abuse
9. Inability to cope with daily demands (i.e. inability to care for self or dependents in basic ways)
10. Past or present abuse resulting in any of the aforementioned warnings signs

Prepared by the *Alliance for Post-Abortion Research & Training*

*When any of the above warning signs result in significant impairment of functioning, an immediate referral to a mental health professional is indicated. The client's safety and well-being should always be your first consideration. It is possible that the client's abortion can either cause or worsen any of the above. Appropriate intervention, establishing a caring relationship, and your commitment to assist your client are invaluable even if referral is indicated.

This list was compiled by Catherine T. Coyle, RN, PhD and Vincent M. Rue, PhD and is an adaptation of that provided by the *American Psychiatric Association* which may be accessed at <http://www.healthyminds.org/Main-Topic/Choosing-a-Psychiatrist.aspx>.

