

Bridge to Healing


Impact Report



Feb. 2025

BECAUSE ONE PERSON CAN...

Sometimes our impact comes not in the form of changing a mind but rather in the form of being a bridge to healing, connecting someone who is hurting with the best resources available. In this Impact Report, Kaitlyn Donihue gives us an example and shares about her important work with Deeper Still, an abortion recovery ministry. We're inviting you to avail yourself of the resources she suggests and also offer them to friends in need. When you mention your concern for unborn children at church or with friends outside of church, you're likely to encounter people revealing their past experiences with abortion, experiences that for many continue to be unresolved. Offering them resources like Deeper Still can be life-changing.

 - Steve Wagner, Executive Director

...CHANGE THE WORLD

Recently I received an email from a woman I spoke to at the Justice For All (JFA) table a few years ago at a conference in Michigan. She shared that she'd had an abortion many years ago, and our seemingly insignificant conversation at the table led to a life-changing decision. Here's her story, shared with permission:

I experienced some trauma as a child. As a result, when I became a teenager, I began living a secretive, promiscuous life. I became pregnant, and because I was a minor, I was forced to have an abortion. I wanted to have my baby even though I was a teenager. I experienced a lot of guilt, shame, depression, isolation, confusion, and doubt. I didn't know how to communicate those feelings, and I became bitter and lost.

I got into another relationship and became pregnant again. This time I was able to decide on my own, and I determined that the guy I was with was not a responsible person and would not be a good dad. He wanted the baby and begged me to keep his baby. I was so emotional and irrational that I said, "This is my body, and I am the one who makes the decisions." Even after he begged and pleaded with me, I went ahead and had an abortion. He was so hurt and lost – just broken.

We got pregnant again and ended up having my daughter. I cried out to God and asked Him to please help me raise my child because I was tired of being selfish. I prayed and trusted God.

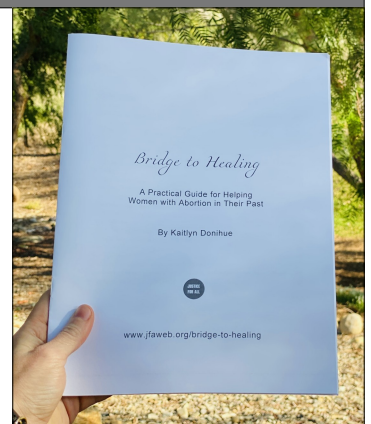
I started going to church regularly when my daughter was three years old. I began volunteering in the nursery, in the choir, on the hospitality team, and in the church office.

Two years ago, I read a JFA newsletter, and it talked about Deeper Still retreats for post-abortive women. I felt compelled to learn more. I went to the retreat, and it was everything [Kaitlyn had said in her newsletter]. I found



Lori Navrodtzke (center) works for Hands of Hope in Tucson and directs Deeper Still Arizona (deeperstill.org). Lori has volunteered at many JFA events, like the one pictured above in Texas in 2011. Read Lori's testimony, including a reflection on JFA, at jfaweb.org/healing-after-abortion.

Kaitlyn's report, "Bridge to Healing," (below) features results of interviews with many women discussing ways we as members of the body of Christ can be more helpful to those with abortion in their pasts. See jfaweb.org/bridge-to-healing to view or download the report.



deeper freedom and healing.

The Deeper Still retreat took me to another level of healing, and I am so glad that I continue to go deeper in my healing. The retreat helped me do more work and process what I was experiencing. I felt so loved and cared for at the retreat. I never felt judged or looked down on because of my choices and mistakes. During the retreat, I felt safe. I was able to build friendships with women that I keep in touch with to this day. I now volunteer when I can, and I tell men and women about Deeper Still because men and women need to go.

As her story demonstrates, one reason talking about abortion is so important is that conversations about abortion can become opportunities to extend the message of Christ's forgiveness to men and women who have lost children to abortion and to give them resources for healing. I never dreamed that God would use a simple conversation at a conference to connect someone to my JFA newsletter list, and through that to Deeper Still and healing.

I know this woman is not alone. We have other readers who have experienced abortion. If that describes you, I would encourage you to consider attending a Deeper Still retreat (deeperstill.org). Your local pregnancy resource center likely also provides resources for healing after abortion. Consider taking advantage of these resources.

As part of my JFA work, I serve as the Director of Deeper Still West Michigan and Deeper Still Northeast Ohio. We encourage women and men that healing is a process, and, regardless of the healing God has already worked in our lives, He always wants to take us deeper in our healing and in our walk with him.

Reaching out for healing can be scary, but many women and men have testified that it was one of the best decisions they have ever made. Here are some testimonies from people who have attended Deeper Still retreats:

"I definitely feel lighter, freer, and like a weight has been lifted. Like I'm more positioned to go deeper."

"I had significant peace from my Deeper Still retreat. I used to torment myself, and I do not do that anymore."

"I came to the door with trepidation, uncertainty, and fear. It wasn't but five minutes, and I felt the warm, welcoming acceptance and God's holy, powerful presence. And I know without a doubt that God wanted me here for the weekend to do His work in my heart. I didn't realize how deep I had stashed it. After 50 years it was so wrenching to dig so deep in my heart and memory because I had put the event so far back and so so deep for so long. But through God's power and the angelic team I was able to get it up and out. It was a safe, loving environment, and I didn't have to do it alone. The team encouraged me to keep going on, and I did until I fully surrendered it to Jesus."

"To be able to acknowledge my children, their life and such great value, was so healing."

Some of us have personal experience with abortion and need this healing ourselves. Some of us have people dear to us who are hurting and need these healing resources. All of us can have conversations about abortion with the goal of being an ambassador of Christ's forgiveness toward women and men who have chosen abortion.

– Kaithyn Donihue, for the JFA Team

"Some people might perceive our conversations to be mostly intellectual disputations about philosophy. In reality, though, because our dialogue method emphasizes listening, asking questions, caring for the whole person, and seeing people's current beliefs on abortion as very connected to their histories, our conversations provide unique opportunities to serve as a bridge to healing for those who are hurting. We regularly teach in our workshops that our role is not to attempt to provide the therapy that someone may need regarding his or her past. Few of us are qualified for that role, and we should be careful not to assume it's simple or easy to provide that care. Our role is to serve as a bridge to healing resources, and that is a role any of us with just a few minutes of training can begin to do."

– Steve Wagner, Executive Director

Be a Bridge to Healing:
jfaweb.org/bridge-to-healing

