

Why do Young Women Abandon Their Newborns and Psychotherapeutic Strategies to Prevent this Phenomenon?

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Abstract

Seven mothers in the age of 17 to 26 (mean age 21) were consulted due to the abandonment of newborn infants. Six women had adjustment disorder; the motive for rejecting children of most women (6 people) was subjective experience of shame, fear of parents and society due to lack of legal relations with partners. All mothers shared a certain personality profile marked by dependency, weak self-esteem, immaturity, absence of affective support, psychological isolation and poor communication with partners and parents. Lack of early pregnancy detection and poor social support contribute to this negative phenomenon. During the consultations of the psychotherapist, 2 women had changed their decision and took their newborn children. Proceeding from the above, addresses possible prevention strategies, necessity in providing competent, compassionate care to pregnant women. The psychotherapist has to help women to accept their pregnancy, to reduce the severity of anxiety-depressive reactions due to disruption of communication (with a partner), to reduce the severity of negative emotions of shame, fear, disgrace in connection with an illegitimate unwanted pregnancy. After giving birth, the mother should be allowed to see her child and give him breastfeeding while she is in the hospital. Partners and parents should be invited to conduct joint psychotherapy. The therapist should work towards establishing emotional ties and a satisfactory relationship between the pregnant woman and her partners, parents. Long-term psychotherapy can help the personal growth of women, which is necessary to take responsibility for their fate, including the fate of the future newborn.

Introduction

Open abandonment is defined as a child being knowingly left behind by his or her parent, who may be known, and whose intention isn't to come back however to willingly relinquish parental responsibility. Further, no other family members are able or willing to take on the responsibility to parent and take care of the child. Secret abandonment is defined as a child being secretly left behind by his or her parent, who cannot be identified, and whose intention is not to return but to willingly relinquish parental responsibility anonymously. Additionally, the majority of countries do not keep national records of the number of children (aged 0-3) abandoned at maternity units. Where countries do keep records, Romania had the highest number of children abandoned per year at maternity units (3.6 per 1,000 live births), followed by Slovakia (3.3 per 1,000 live births), Poland and Lithuania (1.7 per 1,000 live births), and France (1 per 1,000 live births). In some countries it is no longer illegal to abandon a child, on condition that the child is left somewhere safe. It's assumed in Western countries that women who abandon their kids must have some kind of psychological issue that has prevented their major bonding with their children. But many other factors across the globe contribute to the decision to give up an infant to an organization, or simply leave it in the street. And the biggest ones are founded around the pressure surrounding "acceptable" motherhood. In countries where the cultural and legal punishments of having children out of wedlock are severe, unsurprisingly, mothers who abandon their children

are more often than not unmarried. While statistics aren't available to the public, the United Arab Emirates, which observes Sharia law and therefore views childbirth outside of wedlock as against Islamic doctrine, has seen repeated cases of infant abandonment in public places and charges of adultery against mothers with illegitimate children. And Sudanese society, UNICEF reported in 2003, often carries strong beliefs "that an abandoned child will inevitably follow the 'immoral behaviour' of the birth parents, that unmarried mothers should be severely punished, that illegitimate birth was [sic] a sin, and that children born out of wedlock would be found to have 'shameful' origins that would affect their childhood and future marriage prospects." Both countries follow Islamic doctrine in raising and caring for all abandoned children, but the lack of tolerance for unwed mothers is a powerful motivating force for abandonment.

Treatment approaches to abandonment trauma include:

Interpersonal therapy (IPT): focuses on social relationships and re-establishing normal roles in your life. This may include trusting others, increasing low self-esteem, setting emotional boundaries, increasing intimacy, strengthening social situations. The goals of IPT at our treatment centre are to help individuals establish a sense of mastery and control over life through establishing interpersonal relationships. Our treatment staff may use cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) to teach you to identify inaccurate thoughts and learn to replace them with positive, accurate thoughts. Dialectic Behaviour Therapy (DBT) integrates various strategies and validates your experiences, stabilizes your negative emotions, and helps you cope with stress. You will learn to accept your experiences, view them without emotion, and establish a plan to move past them.

Group therapy: We provide a variety of group therapy options at our treatment centre. Our process groups will allow you to process your experiences while our psych educational groups will educate you about your difficulties, treatment, and other topics. The benefit of group therapy is that you will find you are not alone in what you've gone through and will be with peers who understand first-hand your experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Intensive family therapy – Family Week: Families and loved ones are crucial in supporting you during your recovery. It can be difficult for those who've experienced abandonment to identify loved ones they feel comfortable involving in their therapy. We encourage you to identify at least one person in your life that you trust and will likely remain a stable presence in your life. Helping your loved one understand your experiences, disorder, treatment, and aftercare plan can help them understand you better and improve your relationship. Some of the sensation-based, experiential techniques include: Art therapy, Creative expression, Ropes courses, Equine therapy, Music therapy.

Results

The project aimed to establish the extent, causes and consequences of child abandonment, as well as good practices in terms of prevention. The extent

of child abandonment across the EU was determined via an EU-wide survey. This was further supported by interviews with staff at 10 maternity units in each of the partner countries. The causes of child abandonment were identified by reviewing the existing literature and interviewing staff at maternity units. The consequences of child abandonment were established through reviewing the literature and legislation in each of the partner countries. Good practices and services that prevent child abandonment were identified by reviewing the existing literature and legislation, as well as conducting interviews with 10 services that work towards preventing child abandonment.

Mood Symptoms of abandonment trauma may include: Intrusive, debilitating anxiety, Chronic feelings of insecurity, Chronic depression, decreased self-esteem, Feelings of loss of control over life, Self-depreciation, Isolation, Obsessive thinking and intrusive thoughts about the abandonment. The severe, long-term consequences of childhood abandonment should be addressed as soon as possible; however, this does not always happen. A child may grow not knowing there is an alternative to the way they feel. These adults may feel hopeless; that their future won't be any better than their present or their past. Many have come to believe that they caused the abandonment and deserve to live a life of misery. While the fear of abandonment is a normal in childhood, at our adult residential treatment centre, we know that there are many adults who experienced actual or perceived abandonment during their development which may, for some people.