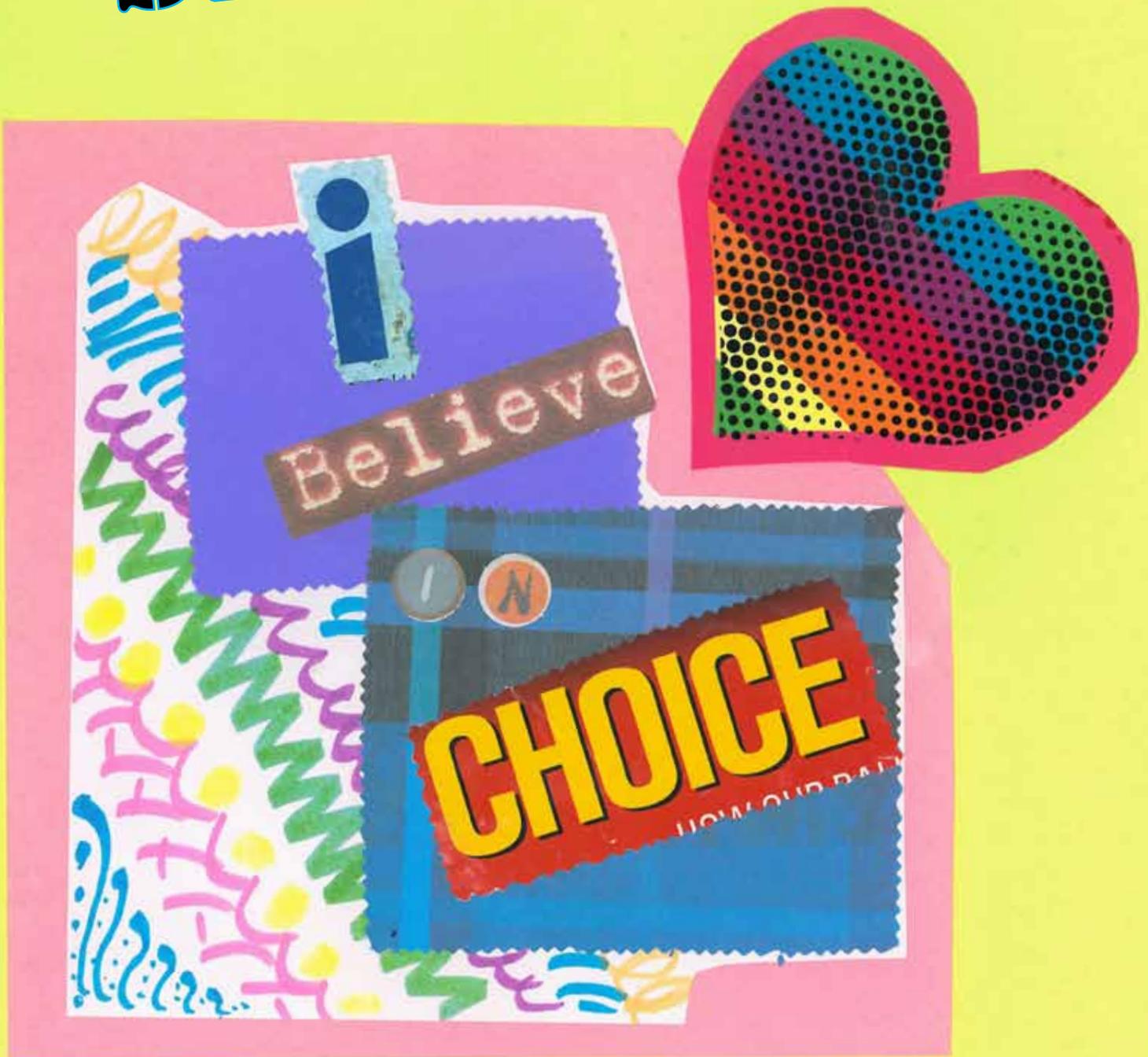


Prince Edward Island Women

SPEAK OUT!



... our experiences seeking our reproductive rights



The long fight for local access to abortion in Prince Edward Island was quiet for a long time. Not dormant – no! But quiet. Activists meeting a few times a year to see if there was a new tactic that might change our situation as the only province of Canada with no local access to surgical abortion. Letter-writing campaigns to decision-makers, largely ignored. Notes in reports about the hardship caused by lack of access. Information sharing, person to person and organization to organization. Help and support for desperate women. Head-shaking at the annual onslaught of anti-choice vigils. Hat-passing to collect funds for women who could not afford to travel off-Island for needed medical services.

- A culture of silence.
- A culture of fear.
- Stigma and shaming.
- Discrimination against women who are young or poor or vulnerable.
- Discrimination against women. Period.

Since 2011 we've **turned up the volume on the fight** for local access to abortion services and reproductive rights.

PEI women are speaking out!

This 'zine includes stories PEI women have shared about their struggle for reproductive rights. It includes stories of accessing Plan B contraception, tubal ligation, medical abortion, and surgical abortion. It celebrates the history of activism and creates a historical record of recent events. You will read about public rallies and events and anniversaries as well as private choices, heartbreaks, and hopes.

Many submissions were inspired by Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie's ground-breaking research project, "Understanding for a Change." Some submissions were created just for this 'zine. Some submissions were written to be read at a Speak Out! in April 2012. Readings from this event can be seen on video here: <http://vimeo.com/peiabortionrights>

The Abortion Rights Network is made up of organizations and individuals. The Network and its members, especially the fearless PEI Reproductive Rights Organization (PRRO), have done information sheets, guerilla posterings, speak outs, rallies, protests, anniversary parties, letters to editor, letters to the government, and more. We've done this in a spirit of joyful solidarity and hope, convinced that as a community here on PEI, we are ready to trust women and support their choices.

This gorgeous messy zine is dedicated to all the women who contributed their stories and all the people on PEI and across Canada who **speak out**.

In solidarity, The PEI Abortion Rights Network



RED ROCK

LIBERALIZATION

YOU NEED TO KNOW WHY PEI NEEDS ABORTION ACCESS?

Because a young woman expelled her fetal remains on a kitchen floor from a poorly cared for medical abortion. Because a physician told a young woman to try overdosing on Vitamin C to get rid of her pregnancy. Because a young girl brutalized herself to bring on a miscarriage. Because our Island doctors are pretending our right to abortion access doesn't exist. Because advocates for local access, need to shut-up or they risk their job security. Because doctors are afraid of personal attacks if they step forward in favour of local access. Because the feminist advocates who have been working for access tirelessly for decades, deserve to see their blood, sweat and tears become a reality. Because the current 'status quo' is classist and puts low income individuals at a disadvantage. Because we are putting our Island's women at risk. Because it's my body, and it's your body and choice over that body is crucial.

Because over twenty years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down Canada's anti-abortion law as unconstitutional. *"Forcing a woman, by threat of criminal sanction to carry a foetus to term unless she meets certain criteria unrelated to her own priorities and aspirations, is a profound interference with a woman's body and thus a violation of her security of the person"*- Chief Justice Brian Dickson, 1988.

A FEMINIST

Because abortion access has been deemed a constitutional right, and we shouldn't have to ask for it.

ABORTION

empower

CHOICE

EQUALITY

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L

FROM 1993 to 2006, members of CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League) maintained an abortion information telephone service. Volunteers responded to women who called looking for sympathetic doctors and/or information about services and procedures. Many called because they had nobody to talk to about their decision, and more often than not, because they didn't have enough money to pay for their abortion.

Many women were lone parents, supporting 1, 2 or 3 children on extremely low incomes. Many had experienced violence in their relationships. Almost all of the women felt isolated in their situation and in their decision-making.

Money was then and continues to be a huge barrier for women. In some cases, because the financial burden was so heavy, women delayed their appointments to the point that they eventually had to travel to Montreal or Toronto for later-term abortions, which of course was even more expensive. In one case that I remember, a high school student sold all her CD's and collected bottles the week before she was to travel to Halifax. She couldn't ask her parents, for fear of being kicked out of the house.

It should be a source of embarrassment for our government officials that so many Island women actually depended on fundraising efforts to get the medical care they needed - there was a community of women who at the drop of a hat, would contribute whatever they could afford to help get someone over to Halifax or Fredericton. Sometimes, when she was in a better situation financially, a woman would pay back some of the money we had given her, so that it could be used for someone else.

There were so many other obstacles - it was not uncommon to hear about a doctor who had deliberately misinformed a patient, as a way of blocking her from getting an abortion. Women were told it was illegal to have an ultrasound for the purpose of getting an abortion, or they were told they couldn't get an abortion until they were 14 weeks pregnant.

Some doctors had anti-choice material in their offices. We heard from other women that they had tried calling Birthright. The experience had left them feeling judged, which was stressful, and resulted in and a delay in getting proper information and ultimately an appointment for an abortion.

Interestingly, some of the calls to the abortion information line were from service providers - it was a little ironic that these government workers were asking for help precisely because government policy was so lacking.

Resistance

AND CONTROL

On several occasions members of CARAL accompanied women to Halifax or Fredericton, leaving very early in the morning to get there before 8, and returning to PEI later in the afternoon - it was a whole lot easier to explain if you didn't have to stay away overnight. It was also cheaper if you had to miss work and pay for childcare.

MY BODY

The way in which the PEI government has dealt with and continues to deal with abortion, in its refusal to allow the service to be offered in this province, has caused confusion and fear. It has caused unnecessary stress to women who have decided they cannot carry their pregnancies to term. PEI is not the only place where women are made to feel there is something wrong with their decision to terminate a pregnancy or where privacy is an issue.

But the multiple barriers, from getting information to making appointments and travelling out of province, combined with the smallness and close-knitted-ness of the place makes it harder to be private.

It also makes it extremely difficult for some women to talk through their decision with anyone, which increases the stress and the likelihood that there will be unnecessary lingering doubts later on.

RESPECT

Empowering

CHOICE

ABORTION

Despite the discouragement from the medical establishment, despite the financial barriers, despite the pressure from the anti-choice movement, women in PEI have persisted and have done what is necessary, to exercise their choice. Their resilience is amazing.

In honour of all those women who have persisted, and in honour of the women who have been denied their choice, we must continue to press this government to put into place the policy framework and the processes to ensure that women no longer have to leave their home province to have an abortion. The status quo is unacceptable.

The attention that has been brought to this issue over the past year or so is a result of the courage and imagination of many women: all the women of PRRO, Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie, the Campus Alliance for Reproductive Justice, members of the PEI Abortion Rights Network. There have been stories, films, rallies; and these have had an impact - information about off-Island abortion services is more available, and there is heightened awareness of the need for government action - action that has been sorely lacking for decades.

Several of the women who are involved today were some of the main organizers in the 1980's, leading the fight to keep abortion services in hospitals in Charlottetown and Summerside. Similarly, in the wake of the 1988 Morgentaler decision, pro-choice activists mobilized to speak out against the PEI government's shameful response - a motion to ban abortions in PEI.

As we have seen again over the past year, this

government is extremely resistant to doing the right thing. By clinging to their archaic, patriarchal position on abortion services, politicians of all stripes have created an environment in which women are silenced- an environment in which some women facing unplanned pregnancies delay getting the treatment they need because they are afraid to talk about their options - an environment in which it is possible for people to believe abortion is actually illegal and therefore dangerous, improper and wrong.

We know it's not any of these things. We know it is a safe, legal and medically necessary procedure.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS



REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS RALLY

The Canada Health Act states that everyone in Canada should have access to necessary health services, including abortion. Abortion is a safe and legal service. The Province of Prince Edward Island will pay for abortion done at a hospital but not at a private clinic.

There are no abortion facilities on PEI. Island women usually travel to the QEIII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, NS, or the Morgentaler Clinic in Fredericton, NB.

Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre

The Termination of Pregnancy Unit
(902) 473-7072

- A hospital clinic
- Covered by PEI Health Insurance
- A referral from a PEI doctor is required.
- Abortion is available up to 15 weeks, 6 days of pregnancy. It is important not to delay since there are several steps that will be required.
- Blood test and ultrasound must be done on PEI, before going over (arranged by referring doctor)
- You will need to have someone with you.

Please note: When you call this number, you may have to leave a voicemail message and a number where someone can call you back.

The Morgentaler Clinic

Fredericton, NB

<http://www.morgentalernb.ca>
(506) 451-9060

- A private clinic
- Fees range from \$600 - \$800
- You do NOT need a doctor's referral; simply phone and make an appointment.
- Abortion is available up to 16 weeks of pregnancy. (If beyond 16 weeks, referral is made to another service, either in QC or ON)
- Blood test and ultrasound will be done at the clinic.
- You will need to have someone with you.
- Appointment process takes ~3-4 hours, with the actual abortion procedure taking 5 minutes.

PEI Doctor Referral

Some doctors in PEI may refuse to provide a referral. The Morgentaler Clinic or the Termination of Pregnancy Unit will provide the name of an Island doctor who is willing to provide a referral.

This Notice has been brought to
you by **CONCERNED ISLAND
WOMEN**

A TRIP TO REMEMBER

Q.

What do Women in PEI have in Common with Women in Ireland?



On the Road...

Oh fuck.



A.

They both have to journey over Water to get an abortion safely.

I WAS 18 WHEN I HAD MY FIRST CHILD. I was not ready.

I told my boyfriend that I wanted an abortion. He disagreed, said he wanted this baby, that we would be a family. We didn't have a healthy relationship and he was quite abusive although, I didn't see it that way at the time. He already had two kids that he wasn't looking after for whatever reason. I didn't know much about abortion at the time... only that I wanted one. I looked into it a bit and it seemed really out of reach. I had no money, no car, no support. I could not figure out how to make it happen.

I had that child. I raised that child with very little, often no support from its father. The one that didn't want the abortion.

I remember the day I found out I was pregnant very clearly. I was terrified.

DESPERATE

I felt trapped. I did not want a baby. I was trying to finish high school, go to university. I had plans. A baby was, most certainly, not one of them.

One year after I had my first child, I found myself pregnant again. I couldn't believe it.

When I gave this guy the news he was really excited. I was dumbfounded. Hadn't I told him what I had been through?? Hadn't he been there for most of this year watching my struggle with accepting parenting?? How could he be so excited about what I saw as the worst possible thing that could happen in my life at the time?? I was just starting to get my life on track again. I was finally learning to love the child that I had. I was going to college. I was struggling, but I was getting somewhere.

I went to a walk-in clinic to find out what I had to do. That was a fail. The female doctor that I saw refused to give me any useful information. She did say that I would need to get an ultrasound and that I would have to go to my family doctor for that. I told her that I wasn't comfortable going to him, hence the walk in clinic. She said that was too bad, that he needed to know. That she couldn't (or wouldn't!?) do anything for me. Told me I should really rethink my decision, that it would affect my entire life. Not very helpful. She did not tell me that I could have it done (and covered) in a hospital off Island. In fact, I did not learn that until years later.

So a couple of weeks passed. I was too scared to go to my family doctor. I had no idea what I was going to do. Time was passing. I looked into home abortions... what I could do or take to get rid of the pregnancy. Nothing I read was sounding very promising and I was terrified to try anything and have it not work... and then have to deal with those consequences. When I was looking into all of this I came across the phone number for the morgentaler clinic. I decided to give it a call and see if they could tell me how to get that ultrasound.

So I called them and they informed me that I actually didn't need an ultrasound, they could do that for me. That was a big relief. They said they could see me pretty quickly. I think it was within a few days, maybe a week. I made the appointment and said I would call back if I couldn't make it. I still had no idea how I was going to pay for this or get there. I still didn't drive, and I was a student. No income. I knew though, that I had to make this happen.

...continued...

I told my partner that I was getting an abortion. That I was going to find a way and that was that. He was very upset. He had this image of us living happily ever after, being together forever as a little family. Smiles and rainbows. Well let me tell you, that was not the image I had. I pictured a screaming baby, sleepless nights, dropping out of school, losing my mind.... you get the idea.

I wasn't in love with this guy and I didn't want to be. He was nice enough and pretty good to me but that wasn't enough for me. I didn't want to be tied to him the way that I was to my child's father. I wanted to stay on the track I was on. I didn't want to be derailed. I didn't want another screaming baby. I was just learning to enjoy parenting one child, I had no room in my life for another. I was barely more than a kid myself. I had no money. I did not want to be a single parent of two children. All I could think of was a million reasons why I had to find a way to get that abortion. He told me I would be murdering our child.

I got the money, which was definitely not an easy task. I called my sister because it occurred to me at this point that she had done this before and maybe she would be a good source of information. She ended up being able to take me (after trying to talk me out of it). I was lucky.

We left the night before as soon as my partner got home from work. He had to watch my child. I didn't have anyone else. My appointment was first thing in the morning so it was easier to leave the night before. That meant coming up with even more money, though, to stay somewhere the night before. Anyway, I came up with it and off we went. I was really dreading the whole experience. I was pretty upset.

We arrived a few minutes before we had to because I was nervous and wanted to be on time. I had no idea what I would be facing. My sister drove as close as she could to the door to drop me off (they had told me on the phone to do that). I was surprised by all the protesters. I was pretty naive at the time, I thought this kind of stuff only happened on t.v. I was scared to get out of the car. I started to cry, I was totally overwhelmed. A very kind volunteer from the clinic came out to get me and pull me through the protesters. And I literally mean pull because they would not let me through. They were surrounding me, screaming in my face, very much in my space. I do not like to be touched at the best of times. I guess they seen my crying as a sign that they could "save me". Boy, were they off base. It was really awful. I will never forget the way I felt that day, going into the clinic. I felt so deeply violated.

I don't remember much about the actual procedure. It was relatively painless and quick. I was pretty upset with myself for being in the situation. I felt guilty that I had gotten pregnant. I remember that more. The nurses talked to me about making an appointment for after care and gave me the name of a doctor I could see in my town. I knew, though, that I would not be seeing that doctor. I was too ashamed to call and say why I needed the appointment. I knew the doctor. I didn't tell the nurse this, I just took the information and some antibiotics to take with me and I was off. I ran into a problem taking the antibiotics. I could not keep them down.

continued...

I was scared. I didn't want to do any long term damage or anything. They had given me a number to call if I had any problems, so I called it but it was just an answering machine. I just gave up and didn't bother taking the antibiotics. Again, I was lucky. I did not get an infection.



I spent a lot of time on the couch afterwards. I was depressed for weeks. I thought I was selfish. Stupid. I kept seeing those protesters. I kept hearing about me a murderer. I kept not regretting it. It took me a long time to shift from feeling bad about myself to angry with the people who had made me feel that way about myself. Angry at the professionals (I use the term loosely) who had tried to block my access. Angry at society for accepting this. Angry at the lack of support.

I did not and have never regretted my decision. I did what was best for me and for the child that I was raising. I would not go back and change it. I would not be where I am at in my life if I had not made the decision I made. Choosing to have that abortion was one of the best and most responsible decisions I have made. It was right for me.

"I woke up in the morning after having had unprotected sex with this guy I thought I was dating.

I liked him more than he liked me, and I wonder now if that had anything to do with the fact that I didn't insist we use a condom.

I was wracked with guilt and shame, how could I have let something like this happen?

I would have to get the morning after pill.....which meant I was a very very bad girl, that much I knew for sure.

After I took the pills and began vomiting, I remember thinking to myself, 'you deserve this'."





I WAS 25 AND IN MY FIRST SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP with a man who is now my husband. My experience of accessing abortion services in Nova Scotia was without obstacles, everything happened quickly. I had only recently come to learn that my story was not the norm, I like many people, did not know the truth many women face when accessing services.

An appointment was made for me to have an abortion. Once that appointment was made, I felt settled, and stopped crying. It was as if a switch had been flipped. I told only my partner and a friend at work. I told the friend from work only because I needed someone to go with me to the appointment, otherwise I'm quite sure I would have discussed it with no one besides my partner.

IF LAWS WERE
THEY CAN A

The moment the doctor said 'you are pregnant' I burst into tears. I didn't say much and she immediately made an appointment with a social worker. A social worker and I talked for what I remember to be a couple hours, although I can't recall the exact timeline. I couldn't articulate my objections to having a baby very well, but my body could. I couldn't stop crying.

Imagine having nothing to hide.

Over the years I heard bits and pieces of news stories talking about abortion, the stories were mostly the same. They said that women never get over an abortion. That women always regret abortion. When I'd hear these stories, I wondered if I'd been in denial, because all I felt was relief. Was I supposed to feel grief? Was I supposed to feel regret? Was something wrong with me that I failed to feel these things? I of course didn't ask anyone, no one talked about abortion. So occasionally I would try and feel bad about having an abortion, to see if anything welled up inside me. But it didn't. I would try to ask questions about that pregnancy, the 'what ifs', force myself to feel bad. I would even try and think about my abortion when I'd been drinking, thinking perhaps if my inhibitions were down, I'd let feelings come to the surface. Still, nothing. I did not feel bad about having an abortion, I didn't feel anything, except relief. Looking back I wish I had heard stories like mine. I wish someone had said among all the 'here's what can happen' discussions, that some women feel relief.

I remember going to the appointment and being a bit nervous, but otherwise I felt fine, emotionally. My friend kept asking if I was okay. I WAS okay. The nurse came out and took me into a small room and got me ready for the procedure, telling me how it usually goes, what I might or might not experience. She asked if I was okay. I WAS okay. As the procedure went forward the nurse kept trying to hold my hand, but I said I was okay. And I was, I felt fine, didn't feel anything uncomfortable, wasn't upset. Went home, took a nap. All I felt that day, and every day after, was relief. I was back to work the next day, and life was back to normal.

After having given birth to two children years later I realized that the feeling I had of not wanting a pregnancy, was every bit as strong as the feeling I had when I wanted a pregnancy. My body knew when pregnancy was right, and it knew when it was wrong.

RE WRITTEN,
SO BE RE-WITTEN.

When I look back on my experience I'm a bit shocked I did it almost entirely on my own. Shocked that I made those decisions by myself. I was an adult, granted, but it was the very first time I took control of my life. I had lived doing everything I was told, guided in everything, by my parents. In that context I see having had an abortion as a pivotal moment. I was self-aware for the first time in my life. There could be no regret in that.



HER ASTONISHING FIRST-HAND

I knew as soon as I saw that positive on the test that I couldn't or wouldn't continue this pregnancy. My first step was to go to the women's clinic for a referral for an abortion. I also explained that I was still breastfeeding my baby and that my milk was starting to dry up due to this unwanted pregnancy. I was not ready to give up that relationship with my baby and the longer I was pregnant, the more likely it was that I may not be able to get my milk back. The doctor told me to give up breastfeeding. I was so angry. She told me it would be impossible to get my milk back. She was wrong and I knew it from previous experiences. The doctor told me she could send me for an ultrasound as part of the referral for abortion to Halifax. She said it would take weeks and that she would have to put on the paperwork for the ultrasound that I wanted an abortion. Then she said, "PEI's a small place, remember." I stated I preferred to have a medical abortion here. She told me that no doctor on PEI would do that and that it wasn't an option and gave me a lecture on birth control. I felt dejected. I felt belittled. I felt like I had hit a wall. I knew what she said was untrue.

My next step was to try to contact the doctor I had heard was performing medical abortions. I called to make an appointment. As s/he was a GP and I was not their patient, I was told s/he could not see me. I hit another wall.

"WE HAVE JOURNEYED FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE, DARKNESS TO LIGHT."

Thankfully I started spotting and I saw it as an opportunity. I knew if I went to the hospital with bleeding, they would give me an ultrasound and I could find out how far along I was. The size on the ultrasound and the numbers on the blood work did not match up. They said that the pregnancy had stopped being viable. They talked about having me stay for a d&c in the morning. I felt such immense relief. This was all going to be over. Then the obgyn came in. He decided that it was too soon to tell any of this for certain and that I would have to come back later in the week to have another ultrasound. I cried. The nurses were so sympathetic. But only because they thought that I had a terrible scare and was worried. I felt like such a fraud. I wanted to scream. I wanted to beg the doctor to do the d&c. I still didn't know how far along I was for sure and I was scared. I got dressed and I went home. Another wall.

I called the GP's office who was performing medical abortions again and begged for help. They took my contact info but still no appointment. I didn't know how to get through. I was losing hope. My breast milk was gone. Precious time was passing. I asked my husband to call, to beg on my behalf.

The next day, I returned to the obgyn I had seen at the hospital. He gave me an ultrasound in his office and told me I was 8 weeks. This meant that I could

potentially stay pregnant for weeks as I waited to go to Halifax for a surgical abortion. It also meant that time was running out for a successful medical abortion. I told the obgyn that I wanted to terminate. His demeanor changed completely. He became cold. He said that I would have to call back the next day for that. He said I needed to go home and think about it. I told him that I had thought about it. He wouldn't listen to me. He told me again that I would have to call back after I thought about it.

POETRY OF EXILE

"I JUMPED FENCES"

WOUNDED EXILE.

FROM THE GROUND UP

At this point, I pushed my fear of my family doctor's potential scorn aside and asked for his help. I was very pleasantly surprised to find he was prochoice and willingly wrote a referral for a medical abortion to the other doctor. Finally...an ally! I cried when he told me that he would. Tears of relief...of gratitude. The funny thing was, he was only doing his job.



Returning home, I found my husband had been successful in booking an appointment for me with the doctor to have a medical abortion the next day! I felt hope as the wall crumbled. The doctor put me at ease and I felt no judgment as s/he explained the abortion and asked if it was what I wanted. I said I had never been so sure about anything in my life. S/he gave me the injection in the office to stop the fetus from developing any further. S/he explained to me that there was another step and that I would have to insert some pills in my vagina in 3-5 days. S/he asked if I wanted a prescription to get them or if I would rather s/he gave them to me in the office so that I could avoid any stigma at the pharmacy. I decided to take them from the doctor directly. That was it. The abortion went exactly as described. I went back for blood work to make sure it was complete. It was just so simple when the wall came down.

FRESH START

FOR YEARS, YOU CAN'T LET BAD PEOPLE SHOOT YOU DOWN."

I am so grateful to that doctor for having the courage in this hostile Island to honour and to protect my rights as a woman. S/he gave my life back to me. I have no idea if I'd have tried to self induce. I didn't know I could feel so powerless and desperate. I felt violated through the entire experience when other people were making decisions about my body and my life. It took a long time to feel secure again. I cycled through so many feelings of relief and exhaustion but the strongest was anger at the blocks to safe abortion

CONQUEROR

I am still angry for all the other women. I wonder how many women never got through the wall? I am one of the lucky ones. How many women are still struggling? How many never get there?

Listen up



When I was 5, 12, and 16

I was assaulted, raped, and told my body was for men.

And here I am, a grown woman and you're telling me I have to do it all again?

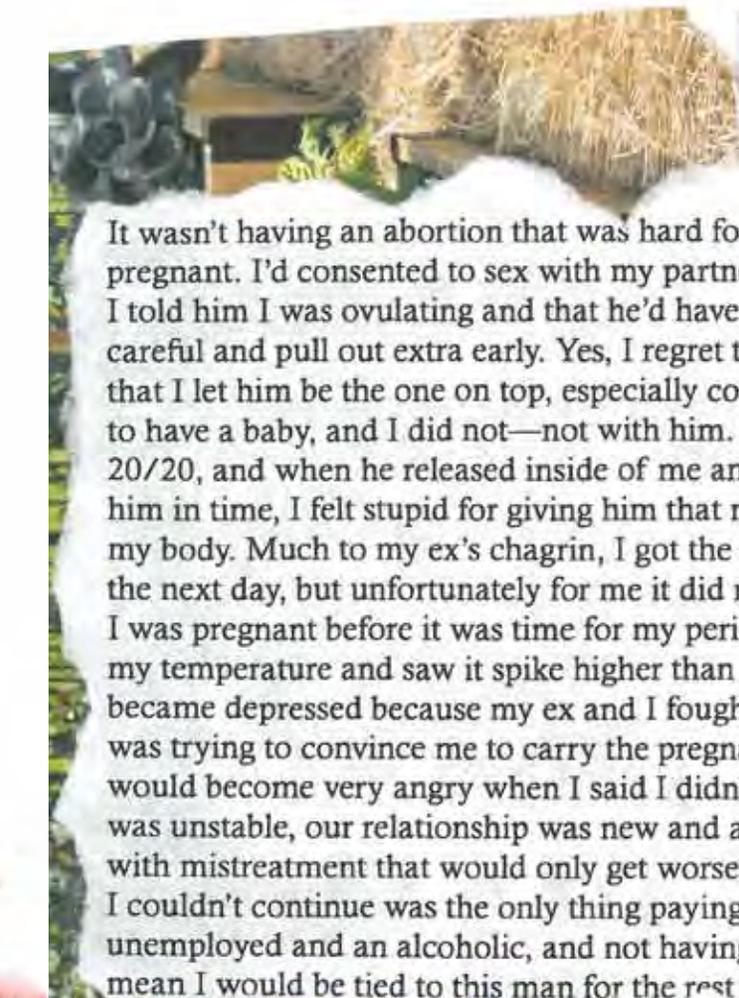
If I am poor, or without support, that my body is not my own?

Bullshit. Abortion is legal. PEI government deal with it.



Colleen MacQuarrie, Ph.D,
reproductive justice researcher & academic activist





It wasn't having an abortion that was hard for me, it was being pregnant. I'd consented to sex with my partner at the time, but I told him I was ovulating and that he'd have to be very very careful and pull out extra early. Yes, I regret this allowance, and that I let him be the one on top, especially considering he wanted to have a baby, and I did not—not with him. But hindsight is 20/20, and when he released inside of me and I could not stop him in time, I felt stupid for giving him that much control over my body. Much to my ex's chagrin, I got the morning after pill the next day, but unfortunately for me it did not work. I knew I was pregnant before it was time for my period, I was charting my temperature and saw it spike higher than ever before. I became depressed because my ex and I fought every night, he was trying to convince me to carry the pregnancy to term, and would become very angry when I said I didn't want to. My ex was unstable, our relationship was new and already fraught with mistreatment that would only get worse. My café job that I couldn't continue was the only thing paying our bills. He was unemployed and an alcoholic, and not having an abortion would mean I would be tied to this man for the rest of my life.



Thankfully this happened in Ontario, where barriers to reproductive choice are relatively few. I was able to book an abortion, but I did have to wait for the blood work to go through. Those weeks I waited were some of the hardest I've ever had. It was the only time I'd considered jumping out a window. I wondered whether I'd feel badly about having an abortion, but it's been seven years and I've never regretted my decision. Soon after I had the care I needed, I was strong enough to move out and break up with the person who had impregnated me against my wishes, and return to the life I wanted to live.

IT WASN'T UNTIL I GOT PREGNANT that I realized it could happen to anyone. Before that I subconsciously held the unexamined belief that girls who got pregnant and had children at a young age by accident were irresponsible. That they made bad choices and it was their fault.

Until I got pregnant I believed that birth control worked, that condoms worked, that the morning after pill was an effective back-up if anything went wrong. I believed that pregnancy was always preventable.

I learned the hard way that I was wrong. I felt betrayed, that I had done everything possible to prevent pregnancy, and it had happened anyway.

I was a university student out of province. I was with a guy, a nice enough guy, but not someone I wanted to be serious with. Being pregnant has been one of the most difficult times of my life. I felt wrong. Suddenly my body was not mine anymore, I felt like it had been hijacked – that an auto-pilot program that I hadn't even known was there had been switched on and it was taking me somewhere I did not want to go. I can't under-emphasise how much I hated being pregnant. I was always sick. I didn't know what I could eat that would make me feel good. I had to leave class to vomit. I was struggling with depression and anxiety. I felt crazy and angry.

I told the guy I was with, and that I was going to try an abortion. He accepted and supported my decision. Later he reflected that sex had far more consequences for me than for him. Ain't that the truth. Pregnancy is about women's bodies – bodies, minds, hearts as one being. But it doesn't matter where your mind and heart are at - once pregnant it simply comes down to options that run strait through our bodies.

First I tried to induce a miscarriage with some advice from a friend who I think was kind of flakey. I tried tinctures, I tried overdosing on vitamin C. I guess I thought if I could take care of it myself it would be better. I guess I wanted to have at least that much control over what was happening to me, since pharmaceuticals had failed at prevention.

But also, I didn't have the first idea how to go about getting an abortion. I was from PEI and that was hardly common knowledge. So I wasted valuable time. When the natural methods hadn't worked I finally went to talk to my women's studies professor, who had mentioned in class that she had experience as a single mom, and having abortions. As soon as I told her I needed an abortion she was no-nonsense. Since I was from PEI, living out of province she knew the procedure wouldn't be covered, and she immediately got me the number for the Morgantaler Clinic. She even offered to come along. I called, made an appointment for immediately after exams, and got my boyfriend to split the cost of the clinic. I had some money from my student loans. My roommate drove us. I had a lot of supportive people around me.

I felt so much relief afterwards, and so much energy. I had my mental health back and I could take care of myself again. Yes, I did need to take care of myself. I should say that it was important to me to create ritual around the choice that I made, to acknowledge the potential life that I had chosen to end. I was grateful. I was sad. I was optimistic. I felt no regrets.

For the next few years, I would talk about this experience to friends – I didn't want my experience to be silenced, or invisible. I wanted to make it ok to talk about it, I wanted other women to know that they are not alone.

The clinic staff were friendly, respectful, and compassionate. The procedure was intense, not painful, but I was grateful. The nurse talked to me, to distract me from what was going on, but I knew what I was doing, and that it was important. There were protesters outside the clinic when I left. I gave them the finger. My boyfriend said it was rude for me to flip off the older ladies. I said that them being there was a big "fuck you" to me, so I was just returning that in kind.

And now for
a different
Story...



The Pressure Cooker

My Reproduction Rant!

I have long been dealing with **unwelcome opposition** over my choice to **never reproduce**. Society is made uncomfortable by the very idea of gals like me and I have faced endless **stigma and ignorance** in regard to **MY choice** from every imaginable source.

I politely inform those with the nerve to ask me when the grandkids will be arriving, that the answer to their **extremely assumptive and intrusive** query is: Never (or at least not from this particular offspring). This statement is inevitably met with a condescending chuckle as they inform me that I will change my mind someday/when I am older. The implication here being that I will one day abandon my childish resolve and reproduce so that I might lead the fulfilling and meaningful life I could never aspire to have otherwise, because **what kind of a woman would I be** if I never filled this role? Please. The idea, that a woman can be placed in a position where she is old enough to have children but not old enough to decide she has no desire to, is laughable.

So I calmly tell them I've known for a very long time that I have **no intention** of going down that road. When I finally convince them, or they get tired of trying to convince me, I most often hear that some people just shouldn't have kids. Shouldn't have kids? Okay, let me get this straight, because I don't want to pop out some sweet little munchkins that automatically makes me an unfit mother?

Right, my **unwillingness to reproduce** obviously renders me incapable of being loving or nurturing. Another common **misconception** is that I must hate children... How could I?! And how dare anyone make that accusation? My mother has, for several years now, run a daycare out of her home. While I lived there I watched several sets of children grow up and I have adored each and every one of them. And I'll tell you what else, I'd bet good money that I know a fair amount more about raising children than many of the people who criticize my decision did when they first became parents.

Then there is the matter of access to tubal ligation. The health care system basically tells me **"TAT CHANCE!"** Again with the thinking that I, childless at 25, am only capable of making life I will be responsible for, but not deciding to give up the option. Liability weighs heavy on the minds of doctors and, in these cases, makes for an invasive and farcical screening process. Knowing that I may be **denied this simple and greatly desired surgery** based on my answer to the question "What happens if you meet a man who wants to have children?" infuriates me. Oh well, since you put it that way, I guess I would just up and abandon **my entire belief system**, in the name of winning a man whose ideals clearly do not mesh with mine so that I might finally become a valued member of society and achieve ultimate happiness through motherhood via wedded bliss.

Ugh.... I'm sure you can tell I'm not the type. As I wrap up this airing of grievances I wish to point out that just because I have no intention of reproducing does not mean I am ruling out having children. As someone who was adopted I know that my family is no less a family than any other. I can have children without physically producing them. The sad reality is there are an endless number of babies out there who are in desperate need of a home, if the day comes that I feel ready and have a **strong desire** to be a parent, I am positive one of those little bundles will do the trick.

In closing, if you know a woman you've been subjecting to this crap, you are on her nerves. **Stop it.** Respect the valid decision she has made for her own life. Understand that it may not have been the **right choice** for you, but it is for her, so kindly butt out. On the other hand, if you have been subjected to this groundless treatment know that you are not alone, that the people trying to put you in your place are wrong, and that **your choice is legitimate.**

Must-Have
KIDS

"The state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation."

Of course, women were not trusted to choose an abortion for themselves. Therapeutic Abortion Committees, comprised of three doctors (mostly male) were set up in hospitals, to determine if a woman could have an abortion. These committees interpreted the "health of the woman" in all kinds of ways. Some (mostly in urban hospitals) were quite loose in their interpretation and often granted approval. Other committees (mostly rural) rarely approved the procedure.

Fortunately, when I found myself pregnant a few years after the bill had been passed, I lived in a Southern Ontario city that usually granted approval quickly and with no fuss.

I had just turned 16 when I suspected I was pregnant. I had begun exercising the power of my sexuality as soon as puberty hit, never considering any of the ramifications of this behaviour. All I wanted to do was to have some fun, graduate high school and get out of my abusive family home. I did not want to be pregnant. I went an older sister with my suspicions. We immediately agreed on two things: that there was no way I was ready to have a child and that the parents should not be told.

I remember going into to the operating room the next morning; I remember waking up. I remember red blood on crisp white sheets and a thick wad of fabric between my legs. I remember friends visiting and their uncharacteristic seriousness. I remember sleeping.

A friend picked me up at the hospital the next day. We went back to his parent's rec room and drank martinis. I remember feeling very old.

I've been pregnant 5 times since this abortion. Three of the pregnancies ended in early miscarriages. One fetus died at 5 months and was delivered in hospital. I've given birth to one perfect child.

I was 14 years old when Pierre Trudeau spoke these words. His bill to amend the Criminal Code, decriminalizing homosexuality and contraception and allowing abortions to be provided when the health of the woman was in danger had just been passed. It was 1969.

The thing was that at age 16, I needed parental approval. My sister was legally an adult and suggested I use her ID.

My sister arranged an appointment for me with a gynecologist, a young East Indian woman. (I did a Google search and surprisingly, after 40 years, she's still practicing. I remember being treated with compassion and respect. There was no judgment, no lecturing. She examined me and determined how far along I was. She told me to expect a letter from her office with the date of the procedure. It arrived a few weeks later.

I went into the hospital the afternoon before the abortion, telling my parents I was sleeping over at a friend's house for a couple days. My boyfriend, a sweet boy that I later married, stayed with me until the evening. We held hands and acknowledged the choice I was making.

Sometimes I imagine the ghosts of these potential lives hovering around me but never once have I regretted my decision to abort. I trust that women are capable of making their own reproductive choices and would like to see these choices supported.

I'm Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie, Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Prince Edward Island. I want to share some preliminary results from the community based research project we launched in July of 2011. The "Understanding for a Change" project is examining the impacts that the loss of access to local safe abortion services has had over the last 20 years. From the perspective of reproductive justice, our community is telling us what is not fair and which women are unable to decide for themselves if and when they will have children and how many they will have. They are telling us about the inaccessibility of reproductive justice in PEI especially for young or poor women.

To date we have spoken with 43 participants and plan to continue our research conversations. We have spoken with many women who have tried to access emergency contraception, who have tried to self induce an abortion at home, who have travelled off Island to have an abortion, and who have been blocked from having an abortion. We have also talked with friends, family, activists, and medical personnel about their experiences in helping women access safe abortion.

Participants in the project have clearly identified that the organizations that created the conditions for losing local access have continued to operate to maintain that status quo over the last 20 years. Participants perceive these organizations have been bolstered by a powerful, well-funded, and well organized religious anti-choice lobby that has targeted all levels of our secular society, including our local legislature, health, and educational systems. As a result of this lobby, participants feel an intense, well documented aura of stigma, shame, and silence has pervaded our community regarding women's reproductive justice in general and access to abortion in particular. As an example of the lack of reproductive justice, women spoke about uneven access to birth control, about being refused access to tubal ligation because they did not meet criteria (didn't already have 3 children or were not yet age 25).

Prior to the initiation of this research, information about how to access abortion was difficult to find, not even the Provincial Dept. of Health could tell women who phoned their front desk how to access an abortion from PEI.

Since the project started however, a spark has been ignited in the community, and citizens have organized anew; so that now, thanks to PRRO, the government has posted information on their website.

Our work is not done, our results are preliminary, but what has become painfully obvious is that all women who have had an unwanted pregnancy and wanted an abortion have been harmed by the lack of local access.

Our research has documented the multiple pathways women try to obtain access to an abortion, not always successfully. These pathways were fraught with barriers, challenges, and impacts on women's health, quality of life, and dignity of their person. Women who wanted to access the service at a minimum had to know who to turn to.

Women spoke of not knowing how to access abortion with no information available and of becoming desperate. They confided trying to self induce at home, ingesting chemicals or physical injury sometimes with a boyfriend helping to inflict punches to the stomach. They said, "If you limit options, people get desperate and desperate people do things they might not ordinarily do." Some of these pregnancies continued and some women sought other means to abort while others felt blocked, unable to do more, and some women spoke of being forced to bear children when they were not ready to do so.

The existing policy is that you must find a doctor who will refer you to Halifax, secure an ultrasound, and be less than 15 weeks in order for the public system to pay. However, women spoke of the tyranny of not knowing what to expect when they requested an abortion, of some physicians who refused to offer them any information or referral.

Of course some physicians have been very supportive, but women did not know who to turn to for help, which physician would provide a referral and which would turn you away. The experience of several women in the project was to be turned away and not offered a referral. Plus for most of the last decade the ultrasound wait lists have been much longer than 15 weeks and in 2008 they were 35 weeks.

The extraordinary waitlist has meant an emergency ultrasound and bloodwork which flags a woman's situation and further compromises privacy in a place where stigma and shame are prevalent. Plus women must secure transportation to and from Halifax and take a person to accompany them because the hospital requires a support person. The journey off island requires a day's leave from work, school, or parenting responsibilities, all of which must be factored into the burden of this option.

Women who didn't know about the public system, sometimes knew about the private Morgentaler clinic. This option was often available rather quickly compared to the delays in the public health system, but the delay often occurred at the point where women had to raise the funds for themselves and a support person to go. Currently the cost of the return trip to the mainland is in the 1000 dollar range by the time clinic fees, bridge tolls, transportation costs are covered and this does not even include lost days from work as a cost. For many women living in low income situations, having the funds available on short notice is just not possible. Fundraising to have the procedure is a common experience. But for some, the barriers here seemed insurmountable. For example a 14 year old in the study with no family support spoke about not having access to a car, resources, or any means to get herself to the clinic even if she could come up with the funds to go and no one to accompany her. She didn't want her friends in junior high to know for fear of the repercussions. She resorted to two weeks of intensive self harm to bring her period back because she had no other choice.

Suicide ideation was part of her story as it was with others.

At a minimum, delays in access to the procedure have compromised women's health and they have paid heavily. At worst women have become sick, have desperately engaged in self harm, and have suffered deeply from the pain and isolation of lacking access to this most basic of primary health services.



Importantly, the level of harm is not distributed equally among women. The most vulnerable and the most marginalized women have suffered the most from the lack of local access. Poor women and younger girls have been least likely to have the resources required and to desperately try to bring a period back through self harm.



As I said, our work is not done. We continue to compile women's stories about access or lack thereof. We continue to hear from physicians the myriad of ways they are working to try to secure women's access to safe abortion and about their own concerns for safety in this situation. What is most telling is the deep level of fear in the physician community to speak about their experiences for the fear of the repercussions on their lives and their family's lives in this community. We hope that more physicians will contact the project to share their stories in anonymity and confidentiality and add to our understanding of this issue. We also invite more women who have been harmed by lack of access to local abortion services to contact our project, to lend their voices to the movement to change access, and to bring this primary health care service to women who need it.



I'm sitting here in my cramped apartment with my cat nestled beside me, purring & looking at me with all the love I need to get by in this world. I've been stepping back, you know, assessing my life and it's crappy state. Re-evaluating the major decisions (mostly poor) that brought me here. Well, mostly poor except one.



We were finally able to flee. Once we were alone and collected our thoughts, I brought up having an abortion to him. Not only were we so incredibly incapable of bringing a child into this messed up life we were living, I literally did not even want to go through a pregnancy, then said no the typical he'll never abandon me promise, then said no abortion. It's his child too, and if I went behind his back, he promised he'd never speak to me again. My heart felt dead. (In hindsight, I should have taken him up on that last promise.)

When I was 19 I had an abortion. From the moment that choice was brought to the table for me, I knew it was the right one.

It was my choice alone to make, but I feel that it's still important to understand what led me to that choice. I was young, impossibly poor, barely able to take care of myself, and in a rather poisonous relationship. That Guy I was with was a good man, he cared about those around him, worked hard, but the two of us together equaled bad news and were both too naive to see it at the time.

When I found out I was pregnant, my best friend was at my side. I went to some clinic that was supposed to help young women like me. She gave me one of those sticks to pee on. It felt like a fucking year waiting for the results. She slammed me with the news, 'positive'. My whole world crashed down around me. She gave me a hug, and I was too numb to even attempt a hug back. I think I just stared ahead.

She loaded me up with literature about being pregnant, what to expect, etcetera. She said if I needed to come back to talk, or something, I was more than welcome. Not a mention of what my actual choices were. And, to be completely honest, I didn't think I really had any. This was now my life.

I don't remember telling That Guy. I do remember telling my mother. Well, he told her. She freaked out. I don't think I ever saw her lose her shit like that. I don't remember what she said, all I remember was laying on the couch feeling completely numb and wanting my life to end right then and there. Somewhere within her tirade she brought up abortion. There was a spark inside of me, but wasn't yet able to vocalize anything beyond "I'm so sorry mom".



My mother knows me better than anyone else. She knows that when I make up my mind, there is absolutely nothing she can do to change it. She also knows when I need help. And I needed it in spades. The time line is a bit fuzzy, the whole ordeal fairly blurry now, but I do recall us talking privately about an abortion. She told me it wasn't up to That Guy, or anyone else for that matter. It was my body, and if I didn't want this to happen, I had the power to stop it.



My mother was behind me 100%. Armed with that confidence, I went to my family doctor. He said I had 3 choices, all up to me. No matter which one I chose, he'd be there. I said "I chose abortion. I don't want this."



His smile was gentle as he left the room, came back with a phone number to a clinic. I didn't want to go to a hospital, my mother had already insisted on a clinic. I trusted her on this. She's never led me astray.

Calling the clinic, while terrifying at first, wasn't actually that scary in the end. The lady on the other end was nice, I could tell she was experienced. The clinic was in Halifax, a province neither of us had been to in over a decade. I got her to repeat the directions probably 20 times. Having to go for an abortion was traumatic enough, getting lost in a foreign city on your way to one would be utter hell. This was not the age of iPhones, GoogleMaps, or other fancy gps devices.



I felt like I was living two lives. The life my mother and I knew, which was my reality, and the life with That Guy & everyone else. I didn't tell him what I was planning. I was so torn. News was spreading, and I was trying to make up logical excuses to keep it under wraps. I know people who have had miscarriages before 4 months, so I suggested once I reach 4 months, we'll make the news public. He was excited, I was in mourning. Not for the soon to be aborted fetus, for what my life had become. I knew that I could never trust him again, he was not the person I wanted to share my life with.

My body started to change. I could feel my belly getting bigger, it was getting hard. My breasts started leaking milk. I was craving things. Much to my surprise, ice cream and pickles was the big one. Morning sickness, which, luckily was suppressed if I didn't let myself get hungry. Quite the feat for a pregnant lady, let me tell you!

The Day Before arrived. I said I was going to stay at my mother's. We had to leave incredibly early. We had to drive the 4 hours over, get it done, drive the 4 hours home. They were only open 1 day a week, thankfully that was my normal day off. Calling in sick at my work meant someone either gave up their only day off, or someone else worked a 12+ hour shift. Mom could only take the one day off without rousing suspicion, plus paying for a hotel room was not in the budget. Hell, this abortion wasn't even in the budget. I'm thankful she never once batted an eye over the cost. I was wrought with enough guilt over putting her through this.

YOUR BODY:
BLOATING!
WEIGHT
NUDE
skinny
fat

We left at something stupid like 5am. I don't really remember the drive over. I fell into numbness. A survival instinct, I suppose. I know there were protesters across the street because the lady on the phone told me there would be, although I don't actually recall seeing them. They didn't matter. We were assured they weren't going to say anything to us so I trusted that. Even if they did yell things at me, they weren't going to change my mind, just make me angry.



Once inside, there were forms to fill out. There were also other people in the waiting room, but I don't really remember them. I tried not to look at them. I had to speak to a counsellor. I had to tell her how I got pregnant. We discussed how to best prevent it in the future, all things I knew and practiced. I don't think she really wanted to do it, apologizing before she started. I was insulted that the system would force this. This situation was hard enough to deal with. My mother had The Sex Talk with me growing up, quite often, too. This was a mistake. A horrible accident. You bet I already learned my lesson before I even made that first phone call.

... Now, as he
rt sexuality,
to toast his

I had to have an ultra sound. They found out I was farther along than originally thought. It was going to cost more. My heart sank, but there was little I could do. This had to be done. It was either a couple of hundred extra right now and then it's over, or a life time...

They took me to a waiting room with some comfy chairs and blankets. Again, I tried not to look at anyone. Someone was getting an abortion right then. I was next. The girl was moaning and wailing. My mother whispered to me that it was dramatics. Shortly after, a worker (volunteer?) came in and gently, more politely, let us all know that she wasn't actually in any physical pain, it's just how some people react, and even that reaction was rare.

My turn. Still numb. I followed direction like a robot on auto pilot. They took me to the chair, the doctor poked and prodded, which was extremely unpleasant. I hadn't even so much as had a pap smear before. A nurse held my hand. She was very compassionate. I was so grateful for her. The doctor said I'll feel discomfort, but it doesn't hurt. Just feels weird. Not to worry. It'll be over soon. I could feel the suction inside of me. I stared at a spot on the ceiling while the nurse let me squeeze her hand as hard as I needed and she stroked my hair. For those moments, which felt like an eternity, she was my hero.

**MASSIVE
SCANDAL!**

It was over. It was finally over and I was so fucking relieved. I went back to the room with chairs where I was told to sit as long as needed, eat a cookie & drink some juice. I did my best to be strong for the other women waiting, to let them see that it would be ok. But I was so tired. Every bit of me.



COURAGE

The way home was a disaster. We got lost twice then I made mom pull over on one of those crazy ridiculous highways buzzing with vehicles far more accustomed to it than us, so I could throw up out the window. I can't imagine what she was going through, watching me go through this. She gave me so much strength.

We eventually pulled into a Tim Hortons, neither of us had eaten in awhile. As we walked in, I muttered to mom that this ordeal was the worst thing I had ever physically gone through. She seemed a bit surprised. I wouldn't realize the deeper meaning behind my statement until many years later.

The next day I broke the news to That Guy, except it was a slightly different version. I said I had a miscarriage, but I was ok now. It wasn't really that bad, a lot of blood & a lot of pain. I don't really want to talk about it any more. He gathered that I hadn't been feeling well and that's why I stayed at my mother's. I let him believe that. One less lie for me to utter.

I was never really questioned after that. People don't want to upset you when you've had a miscarriage. I had already asked my doctor if it was possible for it to happen at home, and not need a visit to the ER. He assured me, yes, that was a plausible cover up. While I knew people who had miscarriages, I didn't actually know what actually happens.

I went to work the next day. I said I was just getting over the flu, so was feeling pretty off. I was still weak and numb. It was hard. Every happy pregnant woman I saw made me want to burst out in tears. Even though I absolutely didn't want it, I felt like I should have given that to That Guy. Everyone's lives were trotting along around me, none the wiser. I wanted to scream at them all. All the lying, the shame, the guilt.

Now, this is important: I didn't regret my choice. Not then, and not now. It took me a long time to work out why I felt so ashamed and so guilty. I felt guilty for having to lie, naturally. I felt shame, not over my decision, but because society told me I was shameful and awful. Society made me feel like this was my fault, I did wrong. Society told me I should feel remorse over terminating this very much unwanted pregnancy, and since I didn't feel remorse over it, that must mean I was terrible. I felt I had to hide what happened. If I told anyone the truth, they would turn on me. Call me a whore. Hate me.

Even when a friend got pregnant and decided to have an abortion. She was very open about it in my group of friends. Everyone supported her without hesitation. I still couldn't tell them. Even to this day, the only people who know, besides the (now closed) clinic, is my mother and her best friend. I hope that some day I will have the courage to put a face to this story.



I HAD AN ABORTION IN 1978 when I was 24 years old. I became pregnant while I was in university and using an IUD for birth control. I was not at a stage in my life where I was at all prepared to have a child. My boyfriend was supportive but it was clear that was **my decision** to make.



Choose

I did not even consider continuing the pregnancy and having a baby which I would then give up for adoption. That was not something I could have done—I can only imagine the heartbreak that must entail. And if I had done so, I would have wondered everyday how the child was doing and I would still be wondering. I recognize this may be the best choice for other women, or the only choice they have. I could not live with myself knowing I had brought a child into the world and left his or her fate to others. **I thank my lucky stars that I had the option of an early and safe abortion.**

her

Remembering





CHOICE



I was fortunate to live in Montreal in 1978. It was a simple matter of phoning the Morgentaler Clinic and making an appointment. The people at the clinic were compassionate and professional — the procedure was short and relatively painless, entailing only some cramping afterwards like a heavy menstrual period. I have never regretted my decision for a moment. Several years later, at an entirely different stage of my life, I had 2 children who are now adults and are the apples of my eye.



When I moved to PEI in the mid-eighties, I was astounded to discover there was no access whatsoever to abortion, and to learn of the hurdles a woman had to go through to access an abortion off Island —including expense, delays, and often an unwillingness by her physician to provide timely information (or actually providing misinformation). It was my first experience of the unevenness of the Canadian medical system. It is hard to believe PEI women still face these same hurdles almost 25 years after the Supreme Court struck down Canada's abortion provisions in the Morgentaler decision of 1988.

We are so proud to be here today to stand with you on this important issue. The PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women has been officially pro-choice for more than 20 years. While some individual members have not identified themselves with the pro-choice label, none have stood in the way of women's access to a safe and legal medical procedure.



It's time for local access to abortion services on PEI.

It's time to trust women to make tough choices.

We'd like to take a moment to honour the organizers for breaking the long, tense, awkward silence about access to abortion services on PEI.

We'd also like to take a moment to honour the many women here who through their actions have shown that being pro-choice is not something you just are, it is something you do.



We honour the women here today who work for girls and women to have better lives as well as better choices.

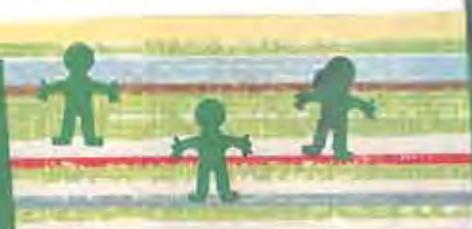
We honour those who work for women's health, dignity, and equality.

We honour those women who have endured violence or abuse or stand beside those who still do.

We honour survivors of rape, sexual abuse, and all forms of sexual violence or those who stand beside survivors.

We honour women with intellectual disabilities because these women have too often been denied the right to conceive, give birth, or parent, and we honour their friends and advocates.

We honour midwives, doulas, and childbirth educators. We need them fully integrated into our systems for reproductive health.



We honour parent supporters, early childhood educators, and others who share in our collective care for children.

We honour men who take no for answer, men who take responsibility, and men who support women's access and choice.



We honour women who have given up children for adoption and those who have adopted them and parented them.

We honour most of all the women here who have actively supported other women's choices - by going with someone to Fredericton or Halifax, by giving money, by giving women a place to stay, by holding someone's hand, by listening, by supporting someone through a pregnancy they chose to continue, by caring for girls and women and babies they chose or that they were forced to carry as a result of no access to choices.



We honour the women who stand here with their wives, husbands, partners, lovers, siblings, mothers, children, grandchildren, grandmothers, and friends.

We honour you, and we honour each other when we do our best to make choices accessible in our messy, complicated, tough, beautiful lives.



PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women the November 19, 2011, Reproductive Rights Rally, Province House, Charlottetown

Rally ♀

Saturday November 19th, 2011 was the date set by the PEI Reproductive Rights Organization (PRRO) for the first rally for reproductive justice to happen in almost 25 years. The Campaign Life Coalition announced that they too would hold a rally - same time, same place - a counter rally to the renewed demands for access to abortion services on PEI.

Saturday was a chilly but sunny November day. On Friday evening I had volunteered to distribute flyers to promote the rally at the Charlottetown farmers market - a weekly event, where folks shop for local produce, chat with friends, and enjoy brunch. My Saturday morning routine involves the leisurely enjoyment of this weekend ritual; bean burritos and lattes, socializing, and stocking up on eggs and veggies.

But this week anxiety churned in my gut - I was on a mission. In a place like PEI, the countless familiar faces and can be overwhelming at the best of times. Despite my convictions and my eagerness to promote the rally, taking a public stand on reproductive right in PEI is speaking the unspeakable, and I felt unsure of the responses to expect.

I didn't feel prepared for this on an empty stomach.



My partner took on the mission of acquiring the requisite food and coffee, and I nervously got to work distributing flyers. I made my way through the busy market, handing the flyers to anyone with a free hand.

"Oh, good for you!" and elderly lady told me. A man approached me trying to sell tickets for an AIDS PEI fundraiser - what a relief. AIDS PEI is an underfunded, overworked organization. In addition to their core mandate and member services, they also serve as the go-to organizations for every aspect of sexual and reproductive health that the powers-that-be wish would just go away. I visited their booth and bought a raffle ticket. We exchanged flyers, and I was hearted by the moral support and solidarity.

It became easier after I was fed and caffeinated- the support was verbal, the indifference or opposition silent, for once. Vendors and farmers bound to work the market until close expressed their support and their anger about PEI's lack of access.

By the time my partner and I made our way to the rally, I was buoyant. It had been 25 years since anything similar had happened in PEI, and I knew it would be awesome. When we arrived, the well-funded religious right was already present, their chartered bus parked nearby. Evangelicals and conservative Catholics held professionally printed signs and banners. They lined the street, and congregated on one side of the rally. At 15 minutes to high noon they outnumbered us.

But when noon hit, our numbers exploded. People with creative, handmade signs showed up; some claimed space facing the street to keep the rally accessible. Tables offered not just information, but hot coffee, tea, water, and home-made muffins, cup-cakes and cookies. Friends greeted each other with hugs and tears, and the positive energy grew. The excitement and joy was indescribable - we were finally here, at the steps of our government, demanding equal access, demanding rights that had been won over 20 years ago. Each person who was present had moved beyond fear of right-wing backlash.

The brave and fierce Kandace Hagen spoke to open the rally.

Following Kandace, I read a from the Abortion Rights Coalition of Canada (ARCC) letter to the PEI Health Minister. Representatives from the PEI Health Minister, PEI, PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and a midwife spoke, as well the NDP and the Green Party leaders. A particular treat was J'Nan Brown's presence. Her stories are the history of this movement. J'Nan is a local elder of feminist activism, and was instrumental in founding the pro-choice movement on PEI.

The media, which normally refuses to cover events that occur on evenings or weekends, was there, busy constructing the rally as a showdown, hoping that a violent shouting match would break out so that they could cast us as shrill, hysterical radicals. The rally remained peaceful, as was the intention.

Following the rally I was left with a feeling of gratitude. Tremendous, deep gratitude for the women who made this rally happen, who broke the long-standing silence. And gratitude for those who fought this fight in the 80's and before. The many generations that I greeted warmed my heart.

I was left with hope. We may not have the resources or the infrastructure of the religious right who hold rallies on a regular basis. But we do have everything we need to break the silence and move beyond the fear that has been imposed upon this province. When we broke spoke up the whole country and paid attention. We have justice on our side; we have the law on our side. This time, I hope we can win.

WE
CAN
WIN



REFED ROCK

The opening address given at the first Pro-Choice Rally the Province of Prince Edward Island had seen in over twenty years.

I am grateful to be here today.

By which I mean we are indebted joyfully to those men and women who have been fighting for decades for the civil liberties of women.

We are assembled here to take back the right to abortion services that was stripped from us in 1982. As the majority, we will no longer be silent, we will no longer fear discrimination and we will ensure our women have the right to fully funded abortion services on their own soil.

We live in Canada's only province that not only refuses to fund all abortion services sought by Island women, but also tolerates physicians who do not ensure a woman's safety during this period by denying a referral to the QE II in Halifax and denying access to medical requirements related to the procedure.

We are endangering our women.

We need to send a clear message that is not, nor has it ever been acceptable.

That we will not tolerate being denied the same health access as the rest of Canada...

We are not assembled here today to debate the morality that clouds the issue of abortion.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1988 that each woman's body is her own. With that control comes the right to decline the call to motherhood when it impedes on the sanctity of our person. We are here today, to demand that right as our own.

HURT WOMEN
And we're fighting back!

November 11, 2011

**DEMONSTRATE
YOUR SUPPORT.**





JUST WANTED TO SHARE THIS THOUGHT:

As I was walking in the access march with all the wonderful people who were there, I couldn't help but be moved to tears which remained in my eyes the majority of the event. In part, I was brought to tears by my anger and frustration over how women in this province are treated within the healthcare system. I cried for all the times that I have been personally humiliated when asking for birth control, a pregnancy test, or begging for a referral to a gyno from a walk-in clinic doctor. I cried because I knew that my difficulties (and much worse) have been experienced by a number of women on PEI, some of whom were surrounding me in the streets. I cried because I can't fucking believe that we have to take to the streets to fight for our right to have these very important healthcare concerns addressed. My tears weren't all angry, though. I also cried because I was extremely moved to be in the presence of so many people who are helping to remedy this situation. I felt a lot of gratitude for PRRO and those of you who have spent untold hours bringing this issue to the forefront in the past year (not to mention those who have been doing so since the eighties). I felt connected and supported and like my health and the health of other women mattered. I just wanted to extend a big thanks for creating that environment.

Identity, Politics & Resistance



I could start this essay out with a rhetorical question like, "Have you ever felt completely alone and hopeless?" but I will spare you and start with facts. I am 21 years old. I had unprotected sex with my boyfriend because -hey- my other friends react badly to birth control pills too and they're all doing it. I am going into my fourth year of university. I was pregnant but not anymore.

I won't leave out any details of my story – emotional or physical. I am wary in writing this because though I am very confident in what I have to say, I do not want to be pegged as an emotional woman wanting pity or attention. What happened to me is still fresh and naturally I am still reeling from my experiences. I am writing this because I desperately hope for the rights of women to be acknowledged and respected.

I feel unable to be open with my identity but I hope one day I can be. I take courage from those who have been open about their stories and those who have been brave enough to stand up for something and hold their head high. I am lucky to have met just a few of those people and I thank them for giving me a chance to have a voice.

I found out I was pregnant on Canada Day, July 1st, 2013. It happens as it always happens – my period was late. As I took the pregnancy test, I was nervous but confident it wouldn't happen to me. I give you permission to mutter 'idiot' under your breath if it helps you move on. I remember feeling so empty in the beginning.

Choice. I felt like I had none, I had suddenly lost control of my own body. I had decided long ago if that were ever to happen, I would abort. But now, this was real, and suddenly I wasn't so sure. That is hellish, that feeling. That feeling never went away. Even when I reconsidered my options and acknowledged that if I wanted to have a baby right now, I could. Even when I realized my boyfriend and parents would be there for me no matter what. Even when I decided that having an abortion was the right choice for me, I was still never able to regain control of my body. Why? Because abortion services on Prince Edward Island remain secret and inaccessible. I experienced very little guidance and support when going through what I went through because there is no open dialogue on the subject. It breaks my heart to know how many women have and will go through this alone. It is a horrific state of affairs when you have to play trial and error with women's reproductive rights.

My boyfriend had a friend working for the Abortion Rights Network of PEI and I was able to get facts and information about what my choices consisted of. It was through this contact that I first heard about medical abortions which are possible within the first nine weeks of pregnancy. First, you get an injection that stops the growth of the fetus and then about five days later you insert pills vaginally which expels the fetus. The drug injected is a chemotherapy drug which halts rapidly dividing cells. Typically, the expulsion process is fairly painful and the bleeding is heavy. The shot is administered by a physician but the second part of the process is completed at home. In order for it to be successful, time is crucial. Anything past this time period, a surgical abortion would have to be performed.

I was quite sure I was under the nine week deadline and from what I read on the internet, medical abortions were painful and scary but not very invasive and once the pills were inserted, it was all over within a day in the privacy of my own home. I could get the procedure done immediately. Also, no surgical abortions are performed on P.E.I. so I wouldn't have to spend any extra money in travel costs. A medical abortion was recommended to me. The stats that anything would go wrong were low, and the doctor who performs the process had positive results in the past. I was told: "Generally the earlier, the least amount of disruptions and lower likelihood of complications"... "It'll be just like a really bad period- the worst period you've ever had." I did not have access to women and their stories for more accurate guidance. Instead, I had the internet.

There is only one doctor on P.E.I who performs medical abortions and the cost is absorbed by the Doctor so that women won't be put under undue inconvenience or be subjected to any negative judgement. Unfortunately, the situation gets very convoluted very fast. I was unable to contact the Doctor myself due to confidentiality and it was recommended I go to the Women's Health Clinic to get a referral. I was told that enough P.E.I. physicians have heard through their professional lines how to refer for a medical abortion and that most physicians should know this option is available. I called and told the receptionist my situation and that I needed to get in touch with the Doctor who offers these procedures as soon as possible. The receptionist told me they didn't know anything about medical abortions and that she was unable to help me.



The politics of choice. Yes, it is extremely important to keep all of this confidential. Afterall, women should be able to continue to access the medical abortion procedures without being hassled. It's currently one of the few avenues for women needing abortion. Medical abortions are being done on PEI, and apparently it's no secret. The media knows, physicians know. Did you know? I know women who have had surgical abortions and I am quite positive they weren't presented this opportunity. I just happened to have the right connection and thankfully those connections helped me get an appointment with the Doctor five days after I found out I was pregnant. The Doctor brought two doctors in residency in to observe, though I was not asked if that was okay. I wasn't looking for any answers, I was looking for confirmation from a medical professional that what I had researched already was true. It was all pretty vague but the stats weren't. The procedure vary rarely goes wrong with 95% going smoothly. I just happened to be that 5%.

The injection wasn't bad at the time. However, it appeared to set off about a month and half spurt of nausea but maybe that was only side effects of my anxiety. Five days after the injection, I inserted the pills. The Doctor told me the expulsion process would begin within two to three hours. Nothing happened for five hours. Finally, I had average cramping and expelled a few strange shaped clumps of blood and placenta. I had the typical effects, but it didn't hurt as much as it should have and I didn't bleed as much as I should have. I knew that right away but I wanted it to work so badly that I was in denial.

Credible websites say 90% of women will expel anytime during the first 24 hours. Nobody had told me this. Unfortunately though, this stat wasn't even accurate for me.

I had no way of contacting the Doctor during the process- no email, no personal number, nothing. Most of my attempts to phone the office were useless as the hours appeared to change daily. I desperately turned to my contact -the liaison between patients and the Doctor- for help but to no avail. They told me they were too busy and if I really needed help I should go to emergency. So, I stayed quiet and I waited.

I was able to book my follow up appointment three days later. The Doctor didn't come in to speak with me, instead the nurse took a blood test with very little communication. The results came back saying that my "hormone levels are higher than they should be". I went back three days later to repeat the process (still no Doctor). This time, the nurse was even colder as she got the job done and left me crying. During both of these follow-up appointments, I had prepared and expected to talk to the Doctor about my experience and my concerns but he was never there. The Doctor phoned again with my results saying "my hormone levels are lower than the last test but still higher than they should be". I was told they should regulate with time and within two weeks I'd get my period. Very vague. But I kept quiet and waited.

I wrote down how I was feeling throughout this process. Mainly, I felt uninformed. I was informed of what would happen if it all went smoothly but I had no information of what would happen if it did not. The Doctor appeared so nonchalant and the entire process was so impersonal. I was expected to remain calm and collected and ignorant about what was happening inside me. It wrecked havoc on my state of mind. If I couldn't trust a medical professional, who could I trust? Why haven't I had an ultrasound? Why am I not being taken seriously? Why have I been nauseous all day, every day? Why do I feel like I have no control over my own body?

I took another pregnancy test and it was positive. Was the fetus still growing inside of me? In the case that everything hadn't been expelled, would my hormones remain higher than usual? What does that even entail? What are the risks I am facing? Why did I still feel so alone and unable to speak up? I knew that time was of the essence and if I had to redo the medical abortion or if I had to go off-Island for a surgical abortion then I needed to have answers immediately. It was reigning terror on my emotional and mental state. It is at this point in my experience that I started to grow resentful and angry.

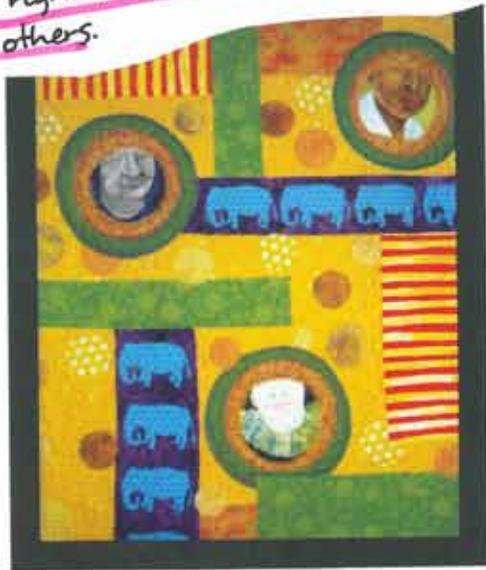
I finally got in touch with the office and told them that I still hadn't gotten period. On Doctor's orders, the nurse told me to come in for a third blood test. This was the last straw. I said I was very concerned about my health and that I needed to talk to the Doctor in person. I didn't understand what we were going to gain and I had fears the tests were becoming redundant. I wanted to hear of solutions to the problem I am facing. I suggested further measures be taken and that I be looked at more closely. I wanted to know what state my body is in. The nurse told me "the Doctor would be able to see me for a minute tomorrow". Good enough for me. I had an appointment with the Doctor the next day. Again, without asking me if it was okay, a doctor in residency sat in. The Doctor suggested I have an ultrasound which I gladly agreed to and told me I would get an appointment within a couple of days. I had another blood test taken- my third in less than a month. I never got a phone call concerning the blood test results nor did I get a call from the hospital for an ultrasound appointment. I tried to take it as good news. Doctor's only phone back if it's bad news, right? All throughout the process, I tried to take the neglect I was receiving as positive news thinking that if it was truly important I wouldn't be ignored. So much time was wasted. Keep in mind that at this point it had been more than a month since I'd had the medical abortion.

I tried phoning the Doctor numerous times a day for nearly a week until finally I got hold. The Doctor told me the hospital should have called a week ago for an ultrasound. In fact, the Doctor expected that I had already had the ultrasound. An appointment was immediately booked for a couple days later. The ultrasound was painless but scary and unknown. I was amazed when the Doctor phoned me later that day. I was told there was leftover lining that hadn't been expelled and that if I did not get my period within two weeks then greater measures would have to be taken that potentially held greater consequences. My greatest fear was that my period wouldn't come and I'd need a procedure called dilation and curettage which has risks for miscarriage in the future. I want to be a mother later in life, more than most things. What if I missed my only opportunity? Nonetheless, it was the best news I had heard thus far. Nothing was still growing inside me and I was ultimately safe and healthy. The relief I felt was staggering. I had finally been treated like a human being with a medical condition that needed immediate attention.

Thankfully, it took a little less than a week for my period to come. I was ecstatic that it had arrived. My summer had passed me by, I was anxious and depressed but finally I knew I was going to be okay. Not so thankfully, I was very uninformed of what would happen to me when my period did come. This was the real abortion, and I hadn't been prepared for it whatsoever. The Doctor told me an estimated 3cm x 3cm mass would come out with my period. Not that it wouldn't have been notable, but I did not expect the amount of pain nor the amount of blood I experienced. I was under the impression that the majority of the lining/placenta had been expelled a month ago when I had undergone the procedure. I was sadly mistaken. The night I got my period, I started to get painful cramps so I popped an extra-strength Tylenol thinking all would be well. I was wearing a tampon at the time when all of sudden the power of a contraction pushed the tampon out and blood splattered all over the floor as I ran to the bathroom. For the next three hours, I had contractions every minute. There was constant pain but at every 60 second mark I felt the most pain I have felt in my life. It's difficult to describe pain, isn't it? I couldn't cry, I could barely moan. It left me breathless. If it had gone any longer or if I had lost any more blood, I would have demanded to be taken to the hospital. Large amounts of blood, clumps, large masses, and shapes of things I didn't understand came out of me with each contraction. I took another extra-strength Tylenol that the Doctor had recommended but it did nothing for me. It wasn't that I didn't know what was happening, but I hadn't expected nor was I warned about this. If it had happened when it was supposed to when I was mentally prepared than maybe I would have been less disturbed. I still think about this night daily and cringe. It is amazing what the body can take and recover from. The mind can't recover as easily. Finally at 2:00 am, the contractions ended. The clumps kept coming for days and days afterward, but I knew the worst was over.

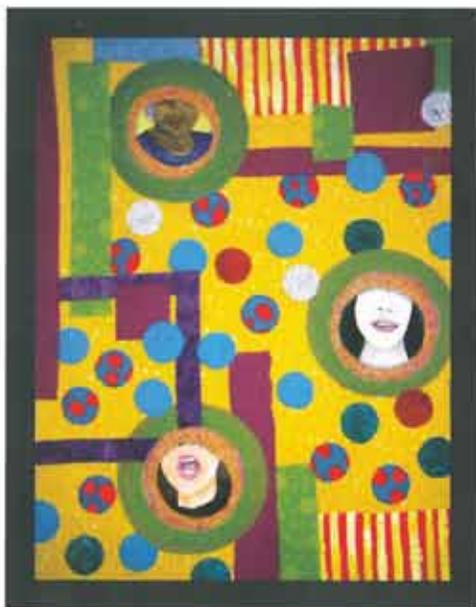
As of yet, I don't think I can accurately explain in words how angry, desperate, hopeless and alone I felt throughout that month and a half. I am disgusted by the way I was treated as a woman -as a human being- with a medical issue. Abortion is legal in Canada, on P.E.I., and yet, I was made to feel like I could not speak out about the way I was neglected and unsupported. I am disgusted at the province for dealing with this huge and important issue so poorly. I am amazed that this continues in the year 2013. The secrecy involved is, in my opinion, a huge mistake. It is what makes the process that much more difficult for women. We cannot choose, and even when we do, we do not have any control. There is no where for women to go afterwards, no support system of people who understand and can relate. I have endured some unacceptable things as a woman but I have never felt more disrespected than I have during this process. For those in need, my contact information is available through the Abortion Rights Network of PEI.

When I was invited to provide an account of having had an abortion, I thought it would be a simple thing to do: it was an unexceptional experience that happened many years ago and is something I rarely think about. But instead I find it rather challenging to know what to say about a process that was entirely straightforward, and a decision that was unquestionably the right one. Perhaps that is a testament to how much I have been able to take for granted a right that has been and continues to be denied to others.



The word for 'woman' is *soutoura*. It refers to self-knowledge, self-esteem, and self-respect. These are necessary to obtain the respect of others, something my mother regarded as essential for a woman.

AMINATA TRAORE
Malian author and political activist
(1942-)



Trust your instincts.



Ask her

When I became pregnant, I was unprepared and did not want a child. My doctor knew that, and for both of us, the only viable option was an abortion. After a brief but justified lecture on the correct use of birth control, I was immediately booked into a hospital, the procedure was without incident, and I returned home the next day. There was no angst, no questioning or doubting, no emotional turmoil, and no regret. In my mind, then as now, there was no debate.

STRONG IS

BEAUTIFUL



In fact, the only aspect of my experience that I find worthy of note is how unaware I appear to have been that others in the same situation had had to endure such egregious restrictions on their freedom to make the same choice. My abortion took place in 1988, a few months after the monumental case of *R. v. Morgentaler*, and yet it never once occurred to me that it should be anyone's choice but mine, or that the option might not be open to me. Either I was embarrassingly politically unaware at the time, or so firm in my own convictions that I assumed it was my decision to make - probably a bit of both.



FREEDOM

In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action.

DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD
Swedish diplomat
(1905-1961)

Of course I eventually learned that many people have indeed been denied that freedom. If there has been any enduring uneasiness for me, it is the thought that in different circumstances I could have been forced to endure pregnancy, childbirth or parenthood in order to produce an unwanted person, all to satisfy someone else's moral ideology. I have always believed that those who hold this notion of morality view people as numbers rather than individuals, taking some kind of biblically inspired mandate of going forth and multiplying as a directive that places quantity of life above quality. I have seen too many unloved people who were forced to endure unhappy lives because they were the consequence of this ideology. If we have to be here on this planet, let it be because someone wanted us, not because a group of strangers used us to make a point.

BELIEVE





waiting
digital photograph
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ABORTION RIGHTS MOVEMENT

UNITED NATIONS CONGRATULATES CANADA ON THEIR ABORTION POLICY.
CLEARLY DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.

Statement of Support from:

Anand Grover, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Right to Health
Mumbai, India, January 23, 2013

I congratulate Canada on completing 25 years since *R v. Morgentaler*, when it successfully moved away from a criminal regime limiting abortions to a barrier-free environment in which women are able to enjoy their right to sexual and reproductive health.

States are required to respect the right to health of women by not interfering with their right to autonomy and right to privacy and dignity all of which are critical to the right to sexual and reproductive health. The right to health also mandates States to ensure that quality health facilities, goods and services are available and accessible to all, without discrimination. This requires the removal of economic, physical and legal barriers to healthcare services, including for abortion. Criminalization is an impediment to the successful realization of the right to health of women and exposes them to the risks associated with unsafe and illegal abortions.

In decriminalizing abortion, *R v. Morgentaler* upheld these principles as crucial to women's reproductive freedom and autonomy. It recognised the fundamental right of a women to make decisions concerning her own body, ushering in an era of equality, dignity and freedom for women in Canada.

It is reassuring that the movement for greater sexual and reproductive autonomy for women has sustained successfully in Canada for all these years and I wish it bigger success in the future.

CANADA
ABORTION AND CHOICE

BE INFORMED.

TAKE A STAND.

Missed Period.

It starts as a spot.

Journey

SECRET

IF YOU HAVE LOST POWER

THINK

I think that trying to self-induce an abortion is the most silenced reproductive experience a woman can have. I don't believe I'm the only person who's ever tried something like that - especially not the only young person - that's what motivated me to share my story. It's not something that just happened with clothes-hangers in the 60s and 70s. This is something women and girls continue to struggle with (largely because of obstacles placed in the way of real reproductive choice)

It was the middle of junior high so I would have been about 14 - that's about ten years ago now. I had been with my boyfriend for a while and we had been using condoms. I know they weren't the best brand; when you're young you tend to get contraception when and where you can. I remember he used to go to local pubs and bars during the day and buy them out of the machine in the bathroom for a dollar, or whatever they would have cost. They weren't the best. They would tear all the time.

POVERTY?

I don't remember what made me think that I was pregnant, but I remember shoplifting the pregnancy test from my neighbourhood pharmacy. I made sure I took it by myself. When I saw the positive results I immediately knew that this wasn't happening - I was not having a baby! I also immediately knew that I was going to have to fix the problem myself because I couldn't trust that my family would let me make the decision I wanted. So, trying to self-terminate this pregnancy became my life for the next couple of weeks.

ALL THE BAD MEMORIES

memories

YOU CAN DO

I tried many different things. I think most people have heard the throw yourself down the stairs thing. I got pretty drunk and tried that. I drank a substantial amount of vinegar. My grandmother was really into naturopathic medicine and things like that, so I dug through her herbs ate whatever I thought might work. There were other things that I don't remember as well; some antidote involving a tampon and other herbs. In any case, something that I tried made me REALLY sick. I can't remember exactly what it was, or if it was a combination of everything I was doing, but I can remember laying on the bathroom thinking "if someone comes home, I'm probably going to the hospital and then I'm really screwed." But nobody came home and I was able to continue my daily regimen of self-abuse.

I was determined to take my life back - a life I knew was over if I let this pregnancy progress. Other than ingesting homemade concoctions I continued to try to bring on a period through physical trauma. I remember running myself into a table that I figured was the perfect height for the job. I did that until the table broke basically. There was substantial bruising from that. I remember laying down being painful, and I was suspended from school for repeatedly skipping gym class because I was scared someone would notice the bruises while I was changing.

Surprise!

I wasn't having a baby. I wasn't. If the situation progressed to a point where it looked like that was going to happen I can guarantee I would have been at risk for suicide. I simply was not stable enough to handle the experience of pregnancy - at all. It wouldn't have been a good situation. Well, it wasn't a good situation but it could have been worse - much worse. I think the ways that I tried to induce would have gotten more and more risky and, if nothing worked, suicide probably would have been a viable option at the end. Fortunately however, my period did return - whether it was from my activities or a more natural intervention. I was able to move on, and I allowed myself to forget what happened to me, or what I did to myself. However, with abortion access on PEI being discussed again, I recognize that it is important to not let memories like the ones I've shared stay shelved. Unfortunately, not enough has changed in relation to available health services and public dialog to change the experience for young women in situations similar to the one I found myself in. I don't want anyone else to put themselves through the things I did, or to feel the desperation I remember feeling. That's how I know we need local abortion access in the province of Prince Edward Island.

the rest of the

DON TALK JUST LISTEN

true

STORY



Celebrate Reproductive Justice!

On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada decriminalized abortion and made reproductive choice more of a reality for all Canadian women.

Join the PEI Abortion Rights Network & allies as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Decriminalization of Abortion in Canada!



You are cordially invited to join us for food, spirits, festivities and good old fashioned feminist cheer. A celebratory cake will be provided, as well as gluten free alternatives!



Marc's Studio
125 Sydney Street, Charlottetown
January 26th, 6pm - 10pm

We thank the community for its tireless efforts. With luck, our own province will soon allow women reproductive justice.

Contact: peiabortionrights@gmail.com

PRECARIOUS

WOMEN

JOINING FORCES

And we're fighting back!

PERIODIC
DISCOMFORT

Body Politic

No more
HURT

**Sustainable
Future**

RESPECT

SEX-POSITIVITY

**What we've achieved...
is just the beginning.**