



New Name ~ Same Game

By Trudy M. Johnson, M.A., L.M.F.T.

People ask me why I am taking the word “abortion” out of my life. Some say this is calling it something to make “it” sound better. Others say I am trying to dilute the message of what it really is. Actually, I’ve been chewing on a way to reach more hearts who have chosen to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy. Right now, what we have doesn’t seem to be working.

The very word abortion incites a plethora of political and even religious rhetoric. Abortion in itself is a debate that will go on until the end of time. We argue for. We argue against. In the meantime, millions of women sit in silence. They are now connected to the “A-word” in a whole new level. This makes them part of the argument. The necessary inclination is to now “take sides.”

I’ve been party to a lot of grief work in my career. It never ceases to amaze me how long and how hard women try to keep their “secret” to themselves. Even though “this” is my line of work, many, many ladies do not confide their “secret” to me until well into the therapy treatment plan. Since I am “pro-woman” I want a way to speak to the heart of the issue instead of getting pulled into a political or cultural debate.

For this reason, I choose to refer to “the word” we are talking about that starts with an “A” as “voluntary pregnancy termination” or “vpt.” This terminology pulls us out of the victim category into a category of responsibility. Saying the choice was voluntary puts a different spin to the choice. I am the one who chose, therefore I am a responsible person, not a victim of some “A-word” circumstance.

Using the “text message” language of “vpt” can be empowering. Moving from victimization is a positive action that can lead us out of denial into the grief portion of processing a choice decision. While moving out of denial can be painful, it is also very freeing.

It is my strong opinion that helping ladies see their choice as a decision they made will be the encouragement they need to get them out of the “blame or denial game” and into a more healthy state that includes processing the grief.

Feeling pain means we are alive. This is why referring to the choice as “vpt” is a healthy move towards reality and closure. For me this seems better than staying stuck in the blame game for a “political procedure” incurred on us against our will. “Vpt” truly is

about taking responsibility for our choices. And of course, moving on to processing the grief and reaching closure.