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Exhale Launches New Website and Updates Brand As Pro-Voice Movement Grows

New features create an online community of women and men who shape what's next after personal experiences with abortion.

Oakland, California –

Exhale, the nation's premiere organization addressing the emotional health needs of women and men after abortion, launched today a new website that will include community features and an updated brand, nearly a decade after the organization began providing post-abortion counseling to women and men in the San Francisco Bay Area on the nation's first after-abortion talkline. The new website expands Exhale's image from a service provider to an online space for Exhale's growing community of women and men with personal abortion experiences, the people who shape the way our culture addresses emotional wellbeing after abortion.

The launch is a continuation of Exhale's commitment to the Pro-Voice Movement, which Exhale initiated in the belief that peace in the abortion conflict will be led by people who have personal experiences with abortion. As the Pro-Voice Movement's hub for innovation, Exhale tests, incubates, and advances strategies for the cultural change its members want and need.

"Our community of women and men with personal abortion experiences are at the forefront of shaping the future of a new public discourse around emotional wellbeing after abortion," says Aspen Baker, an Exhale co-founder and its Executive Director since 2002. "Our community members lead by example. We care about each other's wellbeing and we show it by listening to one another with dignity and respect. We engage our friends and family in conversation about our experiences, and we lead new community dialogues with our shared stories."

Exhale plans to launch new website features in phases over the next year. The next phase, scheduled for December 2011, will allow women and men to post reviews of post-abortion services; share images and stories of their wellbeing after abortion; and create and send e-cards that express care for someone who has had an abortion. That phase will also include publication of new free guides for health care providers to improve their post-abortion counseling practices, and guides for women and advocates to share stories publicly in ways that empower, not exploit.

Exhale's new website reflects how the Pro-Voice Movement has grown over the last decade in response to community's needs. Women and men need access to private spaces where they can get emotional support without judgment, such as the talkline, but they also need to connect with one another in groups, to express themselves without fear of judgment, and to have the tools and information they need to navigate the challenges and opportunities of sharing their stories in public spaces, including online.

To that end, Exhale launched a blog last year called “16 & Loved” and asked visitors to post messages of support for the three women featured on MTV’s abortion special, “No Easy Decision.”

“The ‘16 & Loved’ campaign was a pro-voice public show of support for the three young women who shared their stories on MTV’s groundbreaking abortion special ‘No Easy Decision,’” says Baker. “Our community stands together when one of us takes a public risk. We’ve heard from our community that they want ‘16 & Loved’ to keep going for all women who’ve had abortions. We are working with our members to create a new version which will launch this December.”

Exhale’s groundbreaking talkline is now a national, multilingual service, the No. 1 post-abortion referral of abortion clinics nationwide, and the inspiration for a slate of new after-abortion services that have opened across the country.

“Exhale has always been a community of women who have had abortions, who have come together with our friends and family to support each other,” says Baker. “We’ve been listening to women and men share their stories privately through our talkline for ten years, and we have responded to their needs every step of the way through the development of new programs, strategies, and trend-setting ideas. We have a unique perspective on abortion wellbeing and a decade of expertise to build upon. Today, we continue our tradition as a community-led and community-driven organization by unveiling a website that helps our community members connect with one another. This website will support them as they shape what’s next in their own lives, and as we all work together to shape how our culture responds to each person’s unique experience with abortion.”

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